

# The Kaiser as I Knew Him for Fourteen Years

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Further along her chosen path than she has advanced by bathing the world in blood.

"I have nearly 70,000,000 people," the Kaiser said to me on one occasion, "and we shall have to find room for them somewhere. When we became an empire England had her hands on nearly everything. Now we must fight to get ours. That is why I am developing our world markets, just as your country secured Hawaii and the Philippines as stepping stones to the markets of the far east, as I understand it. That's why I developed the wonderful city of Kiao-Chau."

His plans in this connection were changed somewhat apparently by the developments of the present war, for he told me that when it was over the Germans would not emigrate to the United States any more.

"No more American emigration for us after the war," he said. "My people will settle in the Balkans and develop and control that wonderful country. I have been down there and I know it is a marvelous land for our purposes."

The Kaiser's vision of the part he would take in the reconstruction of stricken Europe was indicated by a remark he made to me in 1916 when I was visiting him at the army headquarters at Pless.

"Here I am nearly sixty years of age," he soliloquized, "and must rebuild the whole of Europe!"

Although the Kaiser so freely admitted his designs on the world at large, he was impatient of any expansion on the part of other nations. He often spoke of England's "grabbing" propensity and viewed with suspicion our annexation of Hawaii and the Philippines and our development of Cuba after the Spanish-American war. He professed to see in our new policy a striving after world power which was inconsistent with the principles upon which our government was founded.

He objected to our interference in Mexican affairs, although, as was disclosed by the Zimmerman note to Von Eckhardt, he was making every effort to have Mexico interfere with ours.

"What right has President Wilson to attempt to dictate the internal policies of Mexico?" he asked. "Why not let them fight their battles out alone?"

Alluding to America's threat to enter the present war, he asked: "What right has America to insist upon the Monroe doctrine of America and then mix in European affairs? Let her recognize also a Monroe doctrine of Europe and keep her hands out of this conflict!"

There is no doubt that the Kaiser imagined that the great army and navy he had built up would enable him to carry out his ambitious program without effective resistance.

The one power he most feared but for which he professed the utmost contempt was England. He had an idea that England would never dare to measure swords with Germany and that he could provoke a war when the opportune moment came without much fear of England's intervention.

In 1911, when the international situation over the Moroccan affair was particularly acute as a result of Germany's having sent a gunboat to Agadir to demonstrate that she was serious in her demands, the Kaiser had great hopes that war with France might thus be precipitated and he was confident that England would keep out of it.

"England would be afraid to war with us," he told me at the time, "for fear of losing Egypt, India and Ireland. Any nation would think twice before fighting my armies, but England particularly because she would not dare to risk the loss of her overseas colonies."

When the Kaiser's ambitious project to dominate the world is considered, his consistent opposition to the universal disarmament proposals is easily understood. Without a superior army and navy, his whole plan would have to be abandoned and his dream of world-wide dominion would be shattered.

On one occasion when we were discussing the Carnegie peace efforts, the Kaiser disclosed very positively just where he stood on the proposition.

"Look at the history of the nations of the world," he declared. "The only nations which have progressed and become great have been warring nations. Those which have not been ambitious and gone to war have amounted to nothing!"

Shortly after Wilson had pointed the way to peace in Europe in one of his notes to all the belligerent powers the Kaiser called to see me professionally and we discussed that latest phase of the situation.

"The way to peace now seems perfectly clear," I ventured. "Only your majesty's ever-increasing army and navy stands in the way. If Germany will give up her armament, it seems, we would soon have peace."

"That is out of the question for Germany," replied the Kaiser, decisively. "We have no mountains like the Pyrenees to protect us. We have the open plains of Russia with their vast hordes endangering us. No; we shall

remain armed to the teeth forever!"

## CHAPTER X.

### The Kaiser's Appraisal of Public Men.

No one ever speaks to the Kaiser until addressed. As that monarch's opinions on most subjects are firmly fixed and he will stand no opposition, any erroneous idea he may entertain is very apt to remain with him. His advisers were apt to leave him in error rather than arouse his ire by attempting to set him right. But for the fact that he was very fond of asking innumerable questions, his store of information might have been extremely scanty.

In the course of my conversations with him he frequently expressed his views of men who were in the public eye. Upon what basis they were founded he did not always enlighten me, but even when I knew them to be erroneous I realized it was useless to try to change them and I did not often take issue with him. When I did his eyes would flash fire, but I had expected that and I continued just the same.

The Kaiser always seemed to take a particular interest in American affairs, and while he professed to despise our form of government he watched very carefully the careers of our public men. It is not unlikely that he imagined, as I have pointed out elsewhere in these pages, that he could influence our elections by swinging the German-American vote in favor of the candidate he preferred, and he made a study of our public men in order that he might know which of them would be more desirable in office from the German viewpoint.

When Mr. Wilson was nominated for the presidency, the Kaiser was quite positive that he wouldn't be elected. Perhaps the fact that Mr. Roosevelt, for whom at that time the Kaiser had the greatest admiration, was one of Mr. Wilson's rivals, blinded him to the fact that the latter had had little experience in international politics unfitted him, in the Kaiser's estimation, for the important office for which he was running.

I saw the Kaiser shortly after Mr. Wilson's election.

"I am very much surprised at the result of your election," he declared. "I didn't think your people would be so foolish as to elect a college professor as president. What does a professor know about international politics and diplomatic affairs?"

I haven't the slightest doubt that the Kaiser pictured our president as a counterpart of the typical German professor—a plodding, impractical, unambitious bookworm with no hope or desire of ever earning more than \$1,000 a year and no yearning for public acclaim, a recluse, absent-minded and self-centered, who spent the midnight oil poring over musty volumes and paid little or no attention to what was going on around him! Such a man, the Kaiser undoubtedly believed, the United States had elected as its chief executive and his surprise was more or less natural in those circumstances.

When Wilson sent 5,000 men to Vera Cruz the Kaiser felt that he had exceeded his rights.

"What right has Wilson to mix in the internal affairs of Mexico?" he asked. "Why doesn't he allow them to fight it out among themselves. It is their affair, not his!" Germany had many financial interests in Mexico and looked with disfavor upon any move we made in that direction.

When, however, the war in Europe started the Kaiser made every effort to have America mix in international affairs provided we fought on her side.

When I saw him just after the war started he said we ought to seize the opportunity to annex Canada and Mexico.

"Can't your president see the wonderful opportunity now for combining with us and crushing England?" he asked. "With our fleet on one side and America's on the other we could destroy England's sea power. This is America's great opportunity to dominate the western hemisphere, and your president must see his chance to take Canada and Mexico!"

As the war progressed and reports reached the Kaiser of our increased shipments of munitions to the allies, the Kaiser's impatience with Wilson became more difficult to repress, and there was hardly an interview I had with him in which he did not give vent to his feelings in that connection.

"My officers are becoming so incensed at America's attitude," he told me. "It will be impossible for me to restrain them much longer."

And when, on another occasion, he accused Mr. Wilson of discriminating against Germany, he made the remark: "Wilson's in the hands of the Wall Street group!"

But, perhaps, the most bitter denunciation I ever heard him make of Wilson was shortly after we entered the war. I had been summoned to see the great army headquarters to see him, and when he entered the room

he appeared to be in a towering rage. Indeed, his condition was so apparent that the Kaiser, who was also present, sought to excuse him with the explanation that he had been very much upset and had been sleeping very poorly, and she asked me to treat him gently and tried to soothe him at the same time, but he told her to leave the room and resented her showing me that she petted him.

"We said little while I was at work, but when I was through and was preparing to leave, the Kaiser stepped toward me and said:

"Davis, Wilson is a real scoundrel! My face flushed, I suppose, at this insult to our president, and my resentment was so apparent that the Kaiser immediately patted me on my right shoulder and apologized.

"I beg your pardon, Davis," he declared, in a quieter voice. "I know you're an American and I beg your pardon for hurting your feelings, but if you only knew, you would realize what a scoundrel your president is. When it comes to throat-cutting, Wilson should have his cut first!"

Whenever the sun shone for the Kaiser he grew so optimistic that he failed to pay the slightest attention to the clouds gathering on the horizon. After the Italian collapse, for instance, he was so enthusiastic about his military success in that arena that he failed to realize that America was slowly but surely forging the thunderbolt that was to strike him down.

"Now how foolish it was for your president to bring your country into this war!" he said. "Americans will now see, when it is too late, what fools they made of themselves when they elected a professor for president. Now America must pay the bills!" In this remark and others of the same import the Kaiser's expectation of being able to exact an enormous indemnity as part of his peace terms was clearly indicated, and he felt that America, having profited the most and suffered the least of any of the belligerent powers, would be in the best position to fill his depleted coffers.

The last time I saw the Kaiser when he mentioned the president was in the fall of 1917, shortly after Wilson had replied to the pope's peace proposal.

"Wilson is an idealist, and an idealist can accomplish nothing!" was his comment. "He went into the war that he might have a seat at the peace table but he will never get it. I shall prevent it!"

Of Wilson's peace notes, which were issued before America went into the war, the Kaiser remarked: "I think I am right, the others think they're right. America has all the money. If Wilson really wants peace, let him pay the bills and take care of the indemnities and the war will be over! It is very simple."

There was no man of modern times whom the Kaiser seemed to admire so much, before the war, as ex-President Roosevelt. The Kaiser was convinced that Roosevelt had prevented war with Japan by sending the American fleet around the world and showing that it was fit. This brilliant stroke of statesmanship, as the Kaiser termed it, was a topic that he referred to on several occasions. It was a forceful demonstration that was very much after his own heart.

"What I admire about Mr. Roosevelt most," he said, "is the fact that he has the greatest moral courage of any man I ever knew!" The fact that Mr. Roosevelt had given Germany's fleet twenty-four hours' notice to steam from Venezuelan waters didn't serve to lessen the Kaiser's admiration for him.

I heard him shower praise on Roosevelt many times and I haven't the slightest doubt that he was quite sincere.

After the war started, when Roosevelt showed very plainly that no matter what nice things the Kaiser might have thought and said of him, he certainly didn't reciprocate the feeling, the Kaiser was very much disappointed.

"I'm terribly disappointed in Mr. Roosevelt," he declared. "After the way my wife and I entertained him when he was here as our guest, for him to take the stand he has is very ungentlemanly. I gave a great review for him—the greatest honor I could bestow upon him and a thing which had never been done for a private citizen. He was not president then, you know, I used to admire him very much, but now I think the man has gone crazy and lost his mind. I never thought he would turn against us like that!" He did not seem to realize that a patriotic American owed allegiance to his own country.

In 1916 I asked him whether he had heard that Mr. Ford was on his way over from America in a chartered ship with a delegation.

"Who, Peace-Ford?" he inquired.

I told the Kaiser what I had read of the Ford expedition.

"How can your country allow a man like that to do this thing—a man who has played no part in the politics of his own country and is entirely ignorant of international affairs—a man who, I understand, was formerly in the bicycle business and knows very little outside of business matters?"

"I haven't the slightest doubt Mr. Ford is a great business man," the Kaiser went on, "and I am sure he means all right, but what a mistake it is to allow a man so ignorant of world affairs to do a ridiculous thing like this!"

I told the Kaiser that it had been suggested in some of the American papers that if Ford really wanted to end the war, all he had to do was to pay Germany \$100,000,000 and buy Belgium back.

"One hundred million dollars!" the Kaiser repeated, and then after a moment's reflection, as though he had been turning over some figures in his mind, "No, Davis, it will cost much

more than that to get Belgium back!"

It occurred to me that if the Kaiser really meant what he said on that occasion, all his talk about "peace without annexation" was obviously a myth and that the only hope of Belgium's redemption lay in the military defeat of Prussia. Subsequent developments amply confirmed that view.

In the winter of 1916, we were talking of the sentiment in America and the conversation turned to Von Bernstorff.

"Von Bernstorff has been doing very good work in your country," the Kaiser commented.

"Well, your majesty," I replied, "it is said in America that if he had not been such a clever diplomat he would long ago have been compelled to leave."

"From all I hear," the Kaiser said, "he hasn't had a very easy time of it. The American press as a whole has been conspicuously anti-German, although I understand that one of your newspaper publishers has been friendly to us. Mr. Hearst, for instance, has helped our cause very much in your country. He has been telling the truth about affairs, which is more than most of the other papers have been doing!"

Just before the king of Greece abdicated, the Kaiser referred to the attitude of the American press again.

"The way the American newspapers and the press of the allied countries generally are presenting the Grecian situation to the world is absolutely false and a disgrace!" he declared, bitterly. "They are entirely misrepresenting the facts. Mr. Hearst is the only one, as far as I can find, who has revealed the real conditions and told the truth about them. My, I wonder what the people have to say now that Mr. Hearst has finally exposed the whole thing!" It was only a short time afterwards that the king abdicated and revealed unmistakably which papers had correctly interpreted the trend of Grecian politics.

The Kaiser spoke to me many times about the writings of William Bayard Hale.

"Have you been following Hale's articles?" he inquired. "What he is writing about the war is excellent and is really the best material published. He voices my sentiments exactly, and it would be well for every American to follow this writer's work."

I had to confess that there was one American at least who was not only not following Hale's writings, but had never heard of the writer, and the Kaiser seemed to be somewhat displeased.

He referred to Hale several times subsequently and in the meanwhile I had ascertained that the man in question was the representative in Berlin of the Hearst newspapers and I subsequently learned that he had published a book called "American Rights and British Pretensions at Sea," which explained at once to me why the Kaiser was so enthusiastic about him.

In the course of one of our many conversations on the subject of American munitions, the Kaiser paid his respects to Mr. Schwab.

"What can one expect from Schwab, who is using the Bethlehem steel plant to work against us?" he asked. "He is of Austrian Jew extraction and would work against anyone for the sake of the money that's in it!"

"I'm following affairs in America very closely," he told me on another occasion, before we entered the war. "Not all of your senators are against us. Senator Stone, for instance, is taking a very strong neutral stand, I understand, and it is a pity there are not more like him."

Just before I left for my trip to America in 1916, the Kaiser called on me and I told him I was leaving.

"Well, Davis," he said, "be careful not to run against any mines or be torpedoed. You'll probably be pulled into England on your way over. We understand all boats are taken there for examination." Then, with fire in his eye, he added: "If you should see my cousin the king, in England, kick him on the shins for me!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### The Kaiserin.

Although I had frequently seen the Kaiserin in the company of the Kaiser, I did not actually meet her until she became my patient, in 1912, from which time on she visited me more or less regularly.

Without going deeply into her history, it may be sufficient to recall that when the Kaiser married her, in 1881, she was the Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg. She was a year older than her husband. She commanded no particular wealth and was not as prepossessing then, perhaps, as she became when, some years later, her hair turned white and softened her rather large features and too highly colored complexion.

My first introduction to the Kaiserin occurred one Sunday afternoon at the Berlin palace, where I had been instructed to be at three o'clock. I was conducted up the stairway and, on the first landing I met the Kaiser, who was waiting for me.

"Well, Davis," he said, "I hope I haven't spoiled your Sunday afternoon, but I assure you it was not for myself I sent for you, but for my wife. She has been suffering for several days and we are going to have a state ball on Tuesday and I want you to get her in order, so that she can attend it, as it is one of the most important social functions of the season. Follow me, and I will take you to my wife and introduce you."

We accordingly entered a very large sitting room. The empress, in a negligee of her favorite royal purple, entered and shook hands with me cordially. She looked very worn, and it was plain that she had been suffering considerable pain and loss of sleep.

She had a handsome figure and was stately in her carriage, but her crowning glory was a profusion of white hair. She was then fifty-four years old, but her hair had turned white many years before.

It was said, indeed, that the change had been brought about rather suddenly as a result of certain drugs she had taken in an effort to avert a tendency to aurodiposis which had developed.

I know the Kaiser loathed fat women. On more than one occasion he had said to me as he bade me farewell: "Well, Davis, you have kept me here talking so long you have almost spoiled my morning walk, but I'll take a walk through the Tiergarten just the same," and then he would add disgustedly, "where I presume I will have to greet all the fat Jewesses in the park!"

But to return to the Kaiserin: The Kaiserin's physician joined us, and there were several maids—very superior young women—in attendance upon their royal mistress.

After I had examined the empress and had given my advice, the physician explained to me in a low voice that it was necessary to be cautious and not do much, as he was afraid of her physical condition.

"Anything you do for her majesty," he explained, "would require giving an anaesthetic. She is not in condition to stand pain without. The only anaesthetic her majesty will take is chloroform, I've administered it to her eleven times and I know just what it means. I'm afraid of her heart at this time. Indeed, just as soon as I can get her into condition I want her to go to Nauenheim for the cure."

His alarming words caused quite a flurry among the maids and they crowded around the empress and begged her to have nothing done that day but to endure her suffering a little longer in the hope that relief would come without the necessity of an operation at that time. Their pleadings prevailed upon the patient to postpone the treatment.

This made the Kaiser very angry and he walked up and down the room impatiently.

"Here," he said, "I've got Doctor Davis to come in on a Sunday afternoon, and you want to be in shape for the ball on Tuesday, and now you won't have anything done! That's the way with the women!"

Then he turned to me and said: "Well, Davis, I'm sorry to have spoiled your day." And he dashed out of the room, apparently much provoked. I felt I had almost witnessed a family quarrel, but the incident indicated to me that whatever hopes the Kaiser might entertain of one day dominating the world, he had not yet acquired undisputed dominion in his own household!

I did not see the Kaiserin again for nearly a year, when she came to my office with a lady-in-waiting.

She arrived in her own car. Its approach was heralded by the imperial "Tadi-Tada" without the concluding "Ta-Ta," which latter was reserved exclusively for the Kaiser, and not even the Kaiserin was allowed to use it. The Kaiser's "Tadi-Tadi-Ta-Ta" was the subject of much sarcasm among the proletariat, who satirically put it to the words: "Ceteris-Salat-Ta-Ta," an allusion to the luxuries of the royal table which contrasted most unfavorably with the simple meals to which they were accustomed; while the socialists showed their sentiments very plainly by improving the words: "Von Unserm Gold-Ta-Ta" meaning, "From our money-ta-ta," referring to the royal immunity from taxation which was one of their bitterest pills.

It was not long after I had known the Kaiserin before she made clear to me that she possessed a most dictatorial manner, which was quite in contrast with that of the Kaiser, at least when he was in my office.

She objected strenuously to removing her hat—and she usually wore a large one with a veil—but finally yielded when I explained that I could not accomplish my work satisfactorily unless she did. When I placed cotton-rolls in her mouth, she insisted that as she did not like the sensation of the cotton against her lips or tongue, I would have to encase the cotton in rubber.

I told her politely but firmly that my work would be done in my own way, and she finally acquiesced, adding: "Well, if you make such a point of it, doctor, I suppose I shall have to let you have your way."

From that time on the Kaiserin came to me more or less regularly. Her lackey usually followed her into the house carrying an artistic lunch box or bag containing sandwiches and bouillon, of which the empress partook in my office. The Princess Victoria Louise, the Kaiser's only daughter, I may mention, usually came similarly provided. No German ever lets anything interfere with his second breakfast.

The empress never spoke on political subjects. She was not particularly brilliant and evidenced some reluctance to air her views on international affairs, as though she were not quite sure of herself. Certainly, she was not nearly as talkative as the Kaiser. When she did unburden herself, it was usually in connection with domestic subjects. It was said in Germany that her only interest in life was represented by the "three K's," Kinder, Kirche and Küche—children, church and kitchen—and there is no question about it that she seldom spoke on other subjects when talking with me.

The Kaiserin came to me after the war with America started, but apparently she had felt some hesitation about doing so, because the Kaiser told me shortly before her visit that she intended coming, but pointed out that she had decided to do so only upon his recommendation.

In June, 1917, I received a letter from the Kaiserin's physician inclosing one which he said had been written by the Kaiserin, but which was both unsigned and unaddressed. It requested me to visit the royal palace at Homburg v. d. Hobe, which, in conjunction with the adjoining town of Kreuznach, was then the location of the great army headquarters.

During the time I was there I could not help observing how extremely timid the servants seemed to be of the Kaiserin. One expected to find the utmost servility among the Kaiser's underlings, but I confess it came rather as a shock to me to see the maids walking so timidly and talking so fearfully when in the presence of their white-haired royal mistress. I noted particularly how very gently they knocked at the door before entering and how, after knocking, they immediately placed their heads against the panel that they might catch the Kaiserin's low command to enter the first time, and so make it unnecessary for her to repeat it. Their demeanor was particularly noticeable because the Kaiserin never seemed to display the slightest impatience or ill-temper when dealing with her servants. Indeed, she seemed to me to act no differently from the humblest hausfrau in the country.

Before I left Homburg, she asked me whether I was comfortably situated and if everything was all right for me. I told her that everything was quite satisfactory and mentioned particularly how nice it was to have food exactly as we had had it before the war.

"Yes," she replied, "we have everything. I am very careful what I eat. I watch my health very closely."

I remarked, too, how wonderful it must be to have sixty palaces like the Homburg establishment, the beauties of which had deeply impressed me, adding: "His majesty, I understand, has sixty of them, has he not?"

"Not quite sixty," she corrected. "Between fifty and sixty."

Between fifty and sixty palaces! I could not help thinking of the remark the Kaiser once made to me when talking of the manner in which American millionaires made their fortunes: "It breeds socialism!"

When the time came for me to return to Berlin, the Kaiserin bade me adieu, but uttered not a word of thanks for my having given up my practice for three days to work exclusively for her.

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Crown Prince—and Others.

I first saw the crown prince professionally in the spring of 1905, a few months before his marriage. He was then twenty-three years old. He was in the uniform of a German army officer but looked more like a corps student except for the fact that his face was not marked with a scar from dueling, as is usually the case with most members of the German fraternities. He had a habit of placing his hands on his hips and his coats were always flared in at the waist which, with the sporty angle at which he wore his cap, gave him a swagger which was quite foreign to the rest of the officers of the army. He was of slender figure, which was accentuated by his height. He was nearly six feet tall.

He came into my office, I remember, with a copy of life in his pocket. He took it out and opened it and showed me a cartoon of himself which apparently caused him considerable amusement and which, he said, he intended showing his family.

There were two beautiful rings on his left hand and he wore a wrist-watch, although at that time wrist-watches were used almost exclusively by women. I seemed to be bright and quick, but by no means brilliant.

Perhaps the quality exhibited by him that impressed me most on that first occasion was his excessive nervousness. He trembled all over. It was plain to see he was dreadfully afraid of pain, and he evidently realized that I had noticed his condition.

"I suppose the crown prince and the future ruler of Germany ought to be brave at all times," he remarked, "but I just have to have to go to a dentist!"

He asked me if I had seen any member of the court lately, and I told him that the Kaiser's court physician, Count von Eulenburg, had been to see me the previous day.

"I'm not surprised he has to go to the dentist; he eats too much!" the crown prince declared. "He can't expect to have good teeth; he's always eating. As for myself, I eat very little. I want to remain thin. I hate fat people."

The crown prince and I did not get along very well at that time. Apart from the fact he was such a physical coward that it was almost impossible to work on him satisfactorily, he seemed to have no idea of the meaning of an appointment.

He would agree to be at my office at 9:30 and I would plan my day accordingly. At about ten he was apt to call me up to say he would be on hand at eleven, and he would actually arrive about twelve. This happened several times, and I told him that I couldn't have my work broken up in that way.

Although I did not see the crown prince again professionally until 1915, the crown prince came to me in 1913, and from that time on paid me more or less regular visits. She was a woman of great charm and intelligence, and although she was more Russian than German in her ideas, and for some time after her marriage was rather generally criticized on that account, she soon became extremely popular and today is very much admired by the German people.

She was one of the most remarkable