Germany's Colonies Very Costly

BARON RICHTHOFEN

BERNHARD DERNBURG

HEREDITARY PRINCE ERNEST OF HOHENLOHE AND HIS PRINCESS.

By Rudolph Von Elpberg.

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IF he were not supported by the strong arm of the kaiser, Bernhard Dernburg, the Jewish banker, who has been appointed to cleanse the Augean stables of colonial corruption and maladministration, probably would find his task an utterly hopeless one. He has made a good beginning by discharging most of the incompetent underlings of the colonial department and replacing them with young business men.

By this action he has aroused the bitterest hostility of the bureaucrats. German officialdom looks down on the business man as a distinctly inferior order of creation. That a man of this class, and a Hebrew to boot, should be placed at the head of an important branch of the government, was a bitter pill for German officialdom to swallow. But that he should mark his accession to power by wholesale dismissals of men of their own caste and the bestowal of their places on mere counting-room clerks and tradesmen was still worse. It would have caused open rebellion against him were it not for the fear of his imperial master, who has given him a free hand.

But, with all his energy, executive ability and business capacity, it is doubtful if he will succeed in his colossal task, even with the support of the mailed fist. Germany has experienced nothing but failure in her colonial enterprises. The Germans in their efforts to colonize distant countries have revealed surprising weakness, and the Teutonic possessions, although enormous in extent, are little more than vast areas of desert producing no profit to the fatherland, but burdening the home country with heavy costs.

Menace of the Future.

This absolute failure in all colonial enterprise is a sinister omen for the future of Germany. The inability of the Germans to build up a great colonial empire menaces the future of the German. It must be remembered that Germany is already packed with as many inhabitants as the country can comfortably hold and within a short time the overcrowding will have reached a serious and dangerous limit. The birth rate in Germany is higher than that of any other country in Europe, and the prolific Germans, who now number 60,000,000, will have reached a total of 100,000,000 within a measurable number of years.

There is no room for this surplus population in Germany, and no opportunities of expansion in Europe. The superior diplomacy of Great Britain has already created a European coalition destined to prevent Germany from carrying out any ambitious plans in Europe. This coalition already exists among Great Britain, France and Spain, and can count on the support of such smaller powers as Belgium, Denmark, Holland, Norway and Sweden. These countries form an unbroken line along western Europe, and, in course of time, they will undoubtedly be joined by Italy and by Austria and Hungary. Russia, too, will be an early recruit to the anti-German combination.

These British schemes destroy once and for all the hopes entertained by pan-Germans that Germany can swallow up the greater part of Austria and extend her boundaries into the Balkans and into Asia Minor. British diplomacy will bring Germany to the point of desperation in Europe, and thus make successful colonizing a matter of life and death to Germany. The colonial failures of Germany must be viewed in this light in order that their full significance may be realized.

Extent of Her Colonies.

The tremendous extent of German colonial possessions renders the failure of all colonization enterprises all the more conspicuous. German East Africa covers 384,000 square miles, German Southwest Africa 320,000 square miles, and German Cameroon in west Africa 190,000 square miles. The German possessions in the southern Pacific ocean cover an area of 186,000 square miles. These colonies, together with other smaller foreign possessions, make an aggregate area of approximately 1,200,000 square miles. These colonies have been in the possession of Germany for periods varying from 15 to 25 years, and they were intended to provide a suitable outlet for the surplus population of the mother country.

The last census returns taken six months ago reveal the astonishing fact that the total white population of all the German colonies amounted in round figures to 12,000 persons. This means that there is one solitary white inhabitant to every hundred square miles of territory in the German colonies. About one fourth of this handful of whites distributed over more than 1,000,000 square miles are Europeans of other nationalities so that only about 9,000 are Germans. More than half of these Germans are either soldiers or government officials, so that Germany has been able to disgorge her surplus population to the colonies to the extent of just about 4,000 persons. These plain facts and figures reveal at first glance an absolute break-down of German colonial enterprise.

Constant Drain on Treasury.

But the whole truth about the German colonies is by no means contained in these revelations. The German colonies have not only been a failure but have involved enormous financial losses to the Fatherland. Instead of providing markets for the German products and bringing in welcome additions to the impoverished treasury of the German empire, millions upon millions of money have been spent in the vain endeavor to transform them into profitable undertakings.

Take the case of German South West Africa. Germany has already thrown away $150,000,000 on this country, and it is estimated that a further sum of $100,000,000 will have to be spent as an irreducible minimum within the next ten years. German Southwest Africa yields nothing in return. The natives have been in open rebellion for the last three years, and apart from money the lives of thousands of German soldiers have been sacrificed in the suppression of the rebellion. The cultivated land has been devastated and the little enterprises started by Germany have been destroyed by the insurgents. German Southwest Africa shows no prospects of future improvement; on the contrary there is every reason to believe that Germany will go on sinking money without reaping any returns.

Take the case of Kiaochao, a little strip of Chinese territory, some 193 square miles in area, which Germany has leased from the Emperor of China for a period of 99 years. Germany has spent $100,000,000 on Kiaochao in six years and the aggregate German exports to Kiaochao during these six years did not amount to $10,000,000.

On the Wrong Side.

During the last 12 months, Germany spent $35,000,000 on her colonies and received in revenue from the colonies the sum of $2,500,000. Moreover the present state of affairs is not only disastrous, but shows no signs of improving. It is this hopeless aspect of German colonial enterprises that has caused a strong revulsion of German public feeling against any further disabling in colonial undertakings.

Many Germans would like to sell all the German colonies to the highest bidder or to make a free gift of them to some other power just to get rid of them. The German emperor, however, considers it essential to retain the colonies and to go on spending money on them because any other policy would be inconsistent with his imperial dignity and the prestige of his empire.

The failure of the German colonies has been due partly to incompetence and partly to corruption. Germans have always been colonizing at the wrong end. They have taken possession of a territory, have hoisted the German flag, have occupied it with a German garrison, and made it doubly secure by a force of Prussian police. These first steps having been accomplished, they set about introducing on this virgin soil a complete system of German bureaucratic government by narrow minded and incompetent German state officials.

Having laid the foundations of a model state from the German bureaucratic point of view, the German government has proceeded to invite German subjects to go and inhabit the new colony. The figures given in the foregoing show that very few Germans felt inclined to place themselves under bureaucratic rule in the German colonies. A German contrives to bear the burden of militarism, police tyranny and bureaucratic administration at home, but he always desires to turn his back on these abuses when he quits the fatherland.

Cause of Emigration.

Thousands upon thousands of Germans emigrate to Great Britain and America and other free countries in order to evade compulsory military service and to enjoy the political liberty which they cannot find at home. Political liberty and freedom of action are more necessary in a virgin country than anywhere else because enterprise is killed by any other conditions.

In some of the German possessions in the Pacific ocean there are actually more government officials than ordinary white inhabitants. In other possessions there is a government official to every two white inhabitants. There are very many more government officials in the German colonies than in the British colonies which comprise one-sixth of the globe, and contain many millions of white inhabitants.

The German farmer who desires to till the virgin soil, say in German South West Africa, must first obtain an official license to follow the agricultural occupation, then another license to permit him to keep horses, a third to permit him to keep cattle, a fourth permitting him to keep a house, a fifth permitting him to keep dogs and poultry, a sixth license allowing him to marry a wife, a seventh license allowing him to employ the natives as agricultural laborers, an eighth license permitting him to purchase agricultural implements and so forth. Such hindrances as these have driven many energetic colonists back to the fatherland before they have a fair chance of trying their luck in the new country.

Constant Official Supervision.

Those who overcome the preliminary difficulties created by this senseless system of bureaucratic control find their lives and careers disturbed at every point by a continuous system of interference and supervision.

If this bureaucratic control had always been efficient and honest, it would still have been disastrous, but it has been doubly disastrous because in many cases the worst features of misgovernment have been noticeable. All the reliable evidence available points to the certain conclusion that the rebellion in German South West Africa, which has been proceeding for the last three years and has cost many thousands of lives, besides devastating the entire colony, was due entirely to the tyrannical misgovernment of the German authorities. Similarly in German East Africa, the natives have been goaded into rebellion by the intolerable tyranny of their native governors. The German newspapers publish day after day details of innumerable colonial scandals to such an extent, indeed, that newspaper readers in Germany have ceased to pay any attention to these never-ending disclosures.

The clerical member of the reichstag, Herr Erzberger, who has taken the most prominent part in dragging the scandalous conditions in the administration of the German colonies into public notice, announces that the truth about the worst scandals of all still remains unpublished. He declares that the next colonial scandal will surpass all the recent abuses discovered and exposed by the express. Herr Erzberger's forthcoming revelations are awaited with keen interest.

Police Chief an Artist.

Meanwhile details of another colonial scandal have been made public. Herr von Puttkamer, who has been deprived of the governship of the German Cameroon for perpetrating various abuses of official power, once appointed a personal friend named Leuschner to be chief of police in the district of Buea. In this position, Herr Leuschner got only commanded the native police forces composed of negroes from Liberia, but also acted as supreme judge and administrator of the district. Herr Leuschner had no claim to this important position beyond the fact that he was a talented artist whose water-colored pictures strongly appealed to the governor's artistic tastes.

After occupying this position for some time, Herr Leuschner, whose brain appears to have been affected by the tropical heat, allowed his wife to persuade him that the negroes forming his police corps were meditating the massacre of all the Europeans in the district. Herr Leuschner thereupon summoned all the Europeans and served out to them rifles and ammunition of the latest pattern. He then drew up the native police in ranks and ordered them in harsh tones to lay down their arms. The negroes, not understanding what was required of them and having perfectly clear consciences, hesitated for a moment in astonishment.

Herr Leuschner regarding their momentary hesitation as a proof of their intention to mutiny, ordered, without further hesitation, the assembled Europeans to fire on the natives. This order was promptly carried out with the result that nearly all were killed and many wounded. The uninjured remnant of the police corps broke up and fled precipitately to the adjoining district, where they besought the German chief of police for protection against Herr Puttkamer's violence.

A Queer Investigation.

Privy Councilor Seitz, who has now been appointed Herr Puttkamer's successor as governor of Cameroon, conducted an official investigation into the affair, and his judicial methods appear to have been open to cross-examination. Two members of the police corps were condemned to severe terms of imprisonment, whereas Herr Leuschner escaped without any punishment. If there had been nothing to conceal, Privy Councilor Seitz would hardly have impressed on all the witnesses of this terrible affair the necessity of maintaining secrecy. Frau Leuschner received stringent instructions from him to hold her tongue and not to gossip about her husband's acts.

The truth about the matter would probably never have been revealed if the German consul of Monrovia in Liberia had not reported to his governor that it was extremely difficult to recruit Liberian natives for Cameroon since Herr Leuschner had caused the members of the police corps to be shot down at Buea. This consul reported all the unsavory details which have now been published.

Outbreaks of this kind have been frequent. Nor have the abuses stopped the outbreaks. There have been outrages added to graft of the worst kind, whereby large sums of public money have been unlawfully appropriated by corrupt colonial officials. The young bloods who were good for nothing in their own country have been sent out to the colonies to rule the unfortunate natives who were placed in their absolute power.

Many Cases of Graft.

During the last three years no less than 48 well-established cases of graft have been brought to light in connection with colonial administration. The incompetence and corruption have not been confined to government officials in the colonies, but have permeated to German colonial ministers in Berlin. Here the officials have been guilty of corrupt practices, have intrigued against one another for personal ends, and have systematically failed to discharge their duties in a competent manner.

The health of Baron Richthofen, who died early in this year from mental break-down was undermined by his terrible experiences at the German colonial office which he entirely failed to reform. His successor, Herr von Stuebel, was recently forced to resign in disgrace partly because he himself was suspected of corrupt practices and partly because he tolerated graft in his own department. His successor was the hereditary Prince Ernest of Hohenlohe, who is a man of royal rank closely related both to the kaiser and to other European sovereigns. He was supposed to have sufficient authority to put down the abuses in the colonial office with a firm hand. After six months, Prince Ernest of Hohenlohe was asked to resign because his administration had been a total failure.

In despair the kaiser appointed Herr Dernburg to the post. The selection of a business man indicates that the German emperor favors American rather than British methods of administration.

Cobbler Captures City Hall

THE TOWNHALL AT KOEPENICK

THE HOAXED MAYOR OF KOEPENICK, DR. LANGERHAN

VOIGT, THE COBBLER, THE BOGUS CAPTAIN.

IF the verdict on Wilhelm Voigt, the ex-convict cobbler who captured Koepenick town hall and rifled the municipal treasury, could be determined by the votes of the German people, there is no doubt he would be allowed to go scot-free by a large majority.

Though a criminal, as the author of the greatest hoax of the age, he is acclaimed a hero throughout Germany. He holds the stage as the world's champion bluffer. He has eclipsed the kaiser at his best; he has conferred immortality on the town which was the scene of his exploit; he has added a new verb to the dictionary—to koepenick; he has set the whole civilized world laughing; he has earned the undying admiration of mankind by performing a feat that would have been scouted as absurdly impossible had it been recorded in the daring pages of Dumas. Except in officialdom, which he so beautifully fooled, the only regret felt in connection with the incident is that he has been caught.

Now that his personality has been revealed to the world, the greater grows the admiration for the colossal audacity which enabled him to carry his plot through successfully. It would be hard to find a man outwardly more ill-suited to the role which he played. There is nothing about him remotely suggestive of the smart military captain. He is 57 years old, and looks older. He is stoop-shouldered, and walks with a shambling gait. He has coarse, mottled features, high cheek bones, a flat nose with big nostrils, and large ears that stick out straight. His teeth are badly decayed. His hands are horny and knotted, and his nails are broken. "Low class" is written large all over him.

It is the fetish of the military uniform which made it possible for such a man to carry out his daring coup. Nowhere else but in Germany could he have succeeded. That is one of the lessons which Germany is taking to heart.

But his capture reflects some credit on the German police. After the raid, they began to figure on the known criminals who would be most likely to undertake such a sensational robbery. It shows what a high opinion they had of Voigt's skill, cunning and audacity that he was among those they decided might have done it. Although released from a term of 15 years' penal servitude only a few months ago, his photograph, for some inexplicable reason, was not in the rogues' gallery. But the police learned that last summer, during one of his brief attempts at earning an honest livelihood by his trade, that of a cobbler, he had been photographed with his sister and had sent one of his photographs to his former employer at Wismar. If Voigt had never had that photograph taken, he might still be the Great Uncaught.

The police got hold of the photograph. The Koepenick burgomaster, and other victims identified it as that of the bogus captain, who had made them the laughing stock of the world. After that, through Voigt's sister, it proved a comparatively easy matter to find out where he was "lying low."

He was located in Berlin in a mean house kept by an aged couple who eked out a livelihood by selling newspapers and picture postcards on the streets. To them the Koepenick affair had come as a God-send, since it enabled them to sell hundreds of comic postcards depicting the incidents of the raid. Little did they dream that their lodger was the hero of it, for whose capture a reward of $500 had been offered.

Seventeen Men to Catch Him.

The respect entertained by the police for Voigt's cunning and resourcefulness was shown by the precautions taken to effect his capture. Men were posted at the front and back entrance of the house in which he lived, and at the doors of the three houses. Altogether 17 policemen shared in the glory of nabbing him. When every possible and impossible means of escape had been guarded against, four police inspectors entered Voigt's room.

The found him eating his breakfast. A piece of sausage was poised on the end of his fork. He knew that the game was up but he did not change color. "Good morning," he said, without a tremor in his voice, and swallowed the bit of sausage which as a souvenir would easily have fetched $5.

"If you have no objection," he then added, "I should like to finish my breakfast."

The inspector, good naturedly, gave the necessary permission. Misfortune had not impaired the cobbler's appetite.

At the police station he told the story of the raid from beginning to end. He was proud of what he had done. It was evidently something of a relief to him that he could at last claim for himself the applause which the world had heretofore been showering on an unknown. When the burgomaster of Koepenick confronted him and trembling with rage said, "That is the man," Voigt comported himself as the superior of the civic dignitary, and simply bestowed a haughty stare upon him.

Studying the Ways of Officers.

After the idea of the coup had come to him, Voigt frequented music halls and other places where military officers resort that he might study them and their ways. The deference with which he observed they were everywhere treated, soon convinced him that the uniform counted for vastly more than the man inside of it. He had first thought of raiding one of the Berlin municipalities, but came to the conclusion that in a place where there are so many officers about, the risk was a little too great. Then he selected Koepenick for his exploit. Koepenick is a thriving city of 75,000 inhabitants situated on the eastern outskirts of the capital. Its municipal treasury, he thought, would provide him with a rich haul.

After donning a discarded uniform of a captain in the First regiment of infantry guards, which he purchased in a second-hand clothing shop, he strolled calmly along a street in the east of Berlin awaiting the return of a detachment of Grenadier guards from the drilling grounds to their barracks. He knew that they must march back to barracks early in the afternoon, and he also knew that they would be in charge of a corporal who would prove easier to deal with than an officer of higher grade.

True to his calculations, the detachment consisting of 24 men, each carrying a rifle appeared.

"Your men must follow me," said Voigt, accosting the corporal. "I have the kaiser's orders to make an important arrest and need your assistance."

Grimy and battered though he was, and much too old for a captain, none of the soldiers thought for an instant of challenging the seedy uniform of the first guards. They obeyed him like sheep. He marched them to the nearest railway station, from whence he took them by train to Koepenick. Arrived at Koepenick he ordered them to fix bayonets and march to the town hall.

Before arriving there, Voigt put the potency of his uniform to another test. It was essential to the success of his coup that all communications between the outside world and the town hall should be prevented while he held possession of it. Otherwise the frantic messages sent out by some of the officials or their underlings would inevitably have brought to the scene some big military functionary, and the bogus captain would have been immediately exposed.

Halting at the telephone exchange, Voigt ordered the official in charge to cut off communication with the town hall for the next two hours under penalty of incurring the kaiser's displeasure. The uniform triumphed again. The trembling official promised implicit obedience.

Then his uniform enabled the disreputable old jailbird to carry all before him at the town hall, and after seizing all the money he could lay his hands on in the municipal treasure chest—only $1,000—he sent the burgomaster, Dr. Langerhans, a prisoner to Berlin, under an armed guard. But perhaps the most striking feature of the affair, and significant of the subserviency of the civic to military authorities which obtains in Germany, was the aid which Voigt received from the Koepenick police.

Police Help the Raider.

The chief of the Koepenick police took orders from Voigt without question. The uniform hypnotized him as it did everybody else. By Voigt's directions, the chief placed a squad of police around the town hall to keep the crowd back, and as proof of his zeal, actually arrested five citizens whose curiosity got the better of their discretion. In his wildest extravaganzas Gilbert never conceived anything more ludicrous than a municipal police force helping a thief to loot the municipal treasury and arresting honest men to make things easier for him.

All but a small portion of Voigt's loot has been recovered. In Germany many times the value of what he stole has been made by exploiting his feat. Two or three comedies have been put on the stage, founded on the gigantic hoax, in which the central role is that of the bogus captain. A fortune has been made out of the sale of comic picture postcards, illustrating the ludicrous incident of the raid. Only red-tape-fettered officialdom which has been held up to ridicule, feels sore over the exploit. The fetish of the military uniform has received a deadly blow. The absurdity of the semi-divinity which in Germany doth hedge about the military caste has been exposed. Ridicule may accompany a reform of the system which logic and common sense have failed to achieve. The day may come when Germany, freed from the tyranny of a military bureaucracy, may recognize that it owes a debt of gratitude to the cobbler who made the whole world laugh.

Voigt's case has called attention to another form of tyranny which needs reforming in Germany. It is the system of police supervision of ex-convicts. That made it impossible for Voigt to make an honest living. Perhaps Voigt's efforts in that direction were not particularly strenuous, but it is certain that he lost his job at Wismar, where he had obtained employment as a cobbler, because of police persecution. His master there says that he behaved well in every respect while working for him. But wherever he obtained work, police supervision prevented him from holding any situation long. It was, he says, because there was no way open to him by which he could make a living honestly that he conceived the idea of effecting a coup which he fondly hoped would bring him money enough to enable him to live without any more work, either honest or dishonest, and wed his old sweetheart. That story may be taken with a grain of salt, but that the hoary sinner has some right good stuff in him which has survived a score of years spent in jails, is shown by the fact, attested by the old folk in whose house he was lodging when caught, that he nursed there, with touching devotion, a young girl who was dying of consumption.

John Barley Corn Struck "Billy" Patterson

THAT somebody struck "Billy" Patterson is a sure thing. Anyway, the fact that "Billy" was struck is pretty generally known, but the mystery about it all is the identity of the striker. The whole world has been agog about this mysterious gentleman with the strong arm who laid "Billy" Patterson low, but up to the present writing he has remained an unsolved problem as the choice of the princess in "The Lady or the Tiger?"

"Billy" was supposed to have originally been a native of Kentucky, but other states have claimed him, and once for all English papers made him a native of Nottingham. The Chinese have not yet claimed "Billy," however, and now it is too late, says the Portsmouth correspondent for the Baltimore Sun, for the truth about him is to be told here and now.

"Billy" Patterson was a Virginian. He may have been an F. F. V., but we haven't had time to look into his family history very closely. When the war between the states broke out "Billy" shouldered a musket and started to the front, but in some way he got sidetracked into the artillery, and along about 1862 found himself serving the guns behind the earthworks with which the Confederates had fortified Sewell's Point—the very ground, in fact, upon which the Jamestown exposition is now building.

These batteries dominated the waters of Hampton Roads and performed an important part in the defence of Norfolk until after the destruction of the Merrimac, when they were abandoned.

"Billy" Patterson stood one day at his gun patiently waiting to hear somebody make a noise like a Yankee warship. It was foggy, and "Billy" wanted to show his skill in gunnery by boring a round hole in the circumambient scenery with a Federal gunboat at the end of the vista. While he waited he mused on the delights of the long toddy, now for many moons missed from his daily regimen. As he mused thus sadly a hail came over the water and through the fog:

"Hi there, Johnny!"

"Hi, there! Who goes there?"

"It's me. Don't shoot, for God's sake! I'm all alone. Got any tobacco?"

"Course. Who'n hell"—

"All right. I've got a jug of whiskey here. I'll trade"—

"Sure. Come on in."

"Billy" hurried down to the beach and in half a minute a boat came ashore with a lone Yankee and a large demijohn aboard.

"Hello, Yank!"

"Hello, Reb!"

"Got the tobacco?"

"Got the whiskey?"

"Here's the firewater—two gallons of it."

"Wait over there by the oak tree," said "Billy" Patterson, probably indicating the Powhattan oak, which still stands on the exposition grounds.

"Billy" went into the works and procuring a big roll of tobacco rejoined his friend at the oak tree. The Yankee filled his pipe on the spot and began to puff with great gusto, while "Billy," disdaining cup, gourd or glass, drank deeply from the flagon.

The fog hung around all that day like the ghost of a water goddess in her winding sheet of mist. The guns were silent and no Yankee boats approached, but what kept "Billy" Patterson from his post?

The truth might as well be told first as last. When the magnificent aurora of dawn again illuminated the oriental horizon the inanimate form of "Billy" Patterson was found recumbent on the sod under the Powhattan oak.

Was "Billy" dead?

No.

Had "Billy" been hit?

He had.

Was he out?

He was out.

Who hit him? The Yank?

No.

Then, who did?

Nobody.

He was hit, you say?

Yes.

Well?

Well, it was simply a case of tit for tat. "Billy" hit the flagon a little too hard and the flagon hit him back.

A Cubic Triolet.

A gentleman whom no one would suspect of wishing to write triolets, even if it were imagined that his arduous duties left him any time for such diversions, evolved the other day one of those teasing little poems in a form which makes it a literary curiosity, recalling the word-play of the Alexandrian scholars and the lusus verborum of some of the medievals. It will be observed that each line has exactly eleven letters. It is reproduced here just as the learned Theban wrote it upon his typewriter:

THISTRIOLET
ISLITTLEFUN
SOHARDTOGET
THISTRIOLET
INFUNANDYET
EXACTLYDONE
THISTRIOLET
ISLITTLEFUN

Knock.

From Ideal Power.

The persistent man accomplishes a lot of things that are not worth while.