

Kaiser Cursed Empress Zita of Austria and Swore His Vengeance Like a True Hohenzollern That He Was

BY CAPTAIN KARL SCHWARZKOPFEN (Attached to Kaiser's personal staff)

Schiedemann the Socialist Wires Him: "I and My Colleagues Will Only Meet You in Civilian Attire." "I Will Not Meet Rebels," the Kaiser Would Have Wired, But-----

Early in October I saw signs of the rapidly approaching downfall of our monarchy. Our Kaiser himself had unwillingly been forced to face the sad reality even earlier. The truth is that we who were near him had become convinced of the coming calamity when His Majesty, against the council of his war chiefs, went to the Krupp works and addressed the workmen there, appealing to them in pitiful and pathetic tones to stand by him a little longer. Everyone in the inner circle admitted at that time that he had committed the greatest tactical blunder in his life. For his appeal to the workers of Krupp shamed him in the eyes of his subjects as a mere, yes, a desperate mortal and that his much vaunted pretense to divine partnership had been a gross imposition upon the German people.

I saw every day military chiefs of our Kaiser visit him and leave with sad and set faces. I heard many conversations between these chiefs and between them and the Kaiser and from all these I could not help becoming convinced that eventful days were at hand. Then came the collapse of Bulgaria; it put the finishing touch to the already critical situation. The doom of the Hohenzollerns were signed!

Scarcely a week after the collapse of Bulgaria I received orders from the Kaiser to hold myself in readiness to accompany him to Wilhelmshoe. I was in great suspense during those days.

The sad journey to Wilhelmshoe. Then finally the day came accompanied by Ludendorff, Prince Max, and von Berg, the Chief of the Imperial Civil Staff, we arrived at Wilhelmshoe. I personally attended upon the Kaiser during all these days. During the journey wore an undress uniform of a colonel of the Death's Head Hussars. Never in my life had I seen him so sad. He was pale and very haggard and worn. During the journey he smoked heavily and drank more wine than usual. He was nervous but never gave way to anger. Once looking out of the window he remarked to me, "What a beautiful view, nature is serene." Then after a few minutes pause he said, half to himself, "There are times when human beings wish they might emulate the serenity of nature." What did he mean? Did he mean that he wished that he himself did not feel the agonies of those trying days? It was true. The very color of his sad face betrayed his sufferings.

The Emperor's Daughter Greets Him. When the train arrived at the station the Kaiser walked out of the car, followed by General Ludendorff, Prince von Berg and myself. On the platform

General Ludendorff offered his arm to the Kaiser and together they mounted the steps of the Schloss. Prince Max and von Berg walked together while I was the last in line with the Emperor's valise in my hand.

The Duchess, the Emperor's daughter, greeted him at the head of the stairs. Then accompanied by Prince Max, General Ludendorff and von Berg, he entered his writing room, while I answered a few questions put to me excitedly by the Duchess.

Commoners Invited to Imperial Court. They were escorted there nearly two hours. Finally the bell rang, and I responded. On entering the room I realized that weighty subjects had been discussed. I was ordered to summon the court stenographers. In about five minutes I returned with two of them, one a woman, the private secretary of the Duchess, the other, a young man, the private secretary of the Court Chamberlain. While Prince Max dictated to the lady secretary Herr von Berg busied himself with the male secretary; the Kaiser sat silent and stonelike. General Ludendorff then dictated to me short telegrams and ordered me to send them at once to Herr Schiedemann, Herr Haase and Herr Elsmann, summoning them to come at once to Wilhelmshoe for a council. I knew then that the end was in sight. Never before in the history of our Fatherland had untitled persons belonging to the Reichstag been summoned to an Imperial council!

There was something wrong; and something was wrong as I soon witnessed. I at once attended to the sending of the messages. The Kaiser retired to his suite while other members of the council remained in the Kaiser's smoking room.

The Duchess Becomes Hysterical. At six or seven o'clock the Duchess came to my sitting-room and told me that her father the Emperor, was unwell. She herself was hysterical. She walked back and forth in my room, murmuring something unaloud. Occasionally she raised her voice and cried loudly, "Oh, my God! my God! What is going to happen to us all. She then threw herself in a chair and after gazing into space for a few minutes she again burst into tears. I was annoyed and felt ashamed at her demeanor. I had known her from her childhood and I had never seen her so abject in behavior. She had always been defiant. During former conversations I had heard her proclaim a defiant attitude whenever revolution was mentioned and she had always told me that whatever happened the monarchy could take care of itself and would strike to the dust

any attempt against her father's authority. "Your royal highness has heard bad news?" I asked. She had scarcely dried her eyes when the Countess Eldorff entered the room hurriedly. The Duchess jumped on her feet and made an effort to appear that she was still cool and confident. Then she turned and said to me, "Yes, we have heard much bad news. Our allies have turned traitors, but remember, they will yet receive the traitors' reward."

The Countess of Eldorff is a very cool and well balanced woman and I observed that she did not join enthusiastically with the Duchess in her childish threat. She simply bowed, but made no reply. Then addressing the Duchess she informed her that the Emperor wished her to accompany her to her father's presence. The Countess remained in the room with me. I was well acquainted with the Countess as in the past years there had been many occasions when we had exchanged confidences. I asked her if it were true that the Kaiser had come to Wilhelmshoe with especially bad news. She was very angry towards Austria. She said that she could hardly contain herself. She said that the Emperor and his staff had received direct notice from Vienna to the effect that Austria was about to sue for peace separately from Germany. The Emperor had finally realized that the Central Alliance was about to go to pieces and that Germany's fate hung by a hair.

Blames The Austrian Empress. "The treachery of the Empress of Austria is in the bottom of all this!" she exclaimed. "The Empress of Austria hated Germany. From the beginning she was pro-ally and at last she has brought about our ruin," she said. I could not help observing the untiring efficiency of our official information bureau. During the last two months or so the authorities had been giving out news regarding the coming treachery of our allies and preparing the German public to believe that our coming collapse should be attributed more to the various treacheries of our former allies than to the military and political blunders of our own government and general staff.

The Countess of Eldorff's political vision did not extend beyond the narrow intrigues of the Palace and so I did not question her reasonings. "It was the Empress of Austria, that low Bohemian, who induced Tsar Ferdinand to surrender so that the road would be open for the allied armies to Austrian territory," she told me seriously.

The Austrian Empress Writes a Bitter Letter. She asserted that two days before coming to Wilhelmshoe the Kaiser had received a letter from the Austrian Empress, telling him contemptuously that she herself had induced Tsar Ferdinand to surrender. Then she offered me a court bulletin in which was printed what purported to be a copy of the Austrian Empress's letter to the Kaiser. I read the would be letter which I believe was forged by our political department. One sentence which I give below is from memory, but I believe is very near to the text. "Our only chance to preserve the dynasty (the Austro-Hungarian dynasty) is an early peace at any price. And yet I fear that our chance is only one per cent. But Karl and I are prepared for the worst and will receive what is in store for us without a murmur. However, I should like to have you know that I myself, made every effort to induce Ferdinand to make peace with your enemies. Knowing what your twenty-five years of rule had meant and what it would have meant for Karl and I had you been successful against your enemies we resign ourselves to fate with the satisfaction that after us you too, will be no more."

Countess Eldorff then related to me how the Kaiser had shown the letter of Empress Zita to his daughter Louise. The part of the letter that had infuriated the Kaiser the most was her boasting that she had succeeded in negotiating with Ferdinand in spite of our secret agents in the Bulgarian Court. On showing Zita's letter to his daughter the Emperor had made this threat, according to Countess Eldorff. The Kaiser's Hatred of Empress Zita. "Whatever misfortune may befall us, Louise, I assure you that I will have my revenge on that low traitress. It may be that I may even lose my throne, but I swear that that woman will come to me on her knees for mercy, and may God be her protector when that day comes, for she will not have mercy from me when she sees her idiotic husband as once in my power. Emperor Must Become a Citizen. Towards ten o'clock this night I received Herr Schiedemann's answer to Ludendorff in reply to his telegrams, inviting Schiedemann, Herr Haase and Herr Elsmann, and read it to the general myself. It said: "My colleagues and I desire that the Emperor should meet us in civilian attire. We can not recognize any military authority, and do not wish to meet any members of the Imperial military staff. We desire to meet the Emperor as a civilian."

Ludendorff then walked to Prince Max and von Berg and read the tele-

gram to them, and throwing it on the table in front of them threw himself into a large arm chair and asked me for a light. Prince Max and von Berg then entered into a whispered conversation while Ludendorff smoked his cigar, seemingly dead to everything that was going on in the room. "Infernal Rebels." Finally Prince Max said the Emperor must be shown this telegram. Ludendorff made no reply and leaving Elstein at the door to take my place I went to the Emperor's room and informed his majesty that a reply from Schiedemann had been received and was awaiting his pleasure. In five minutes the Emperor, the Empress and Louise entered the room. Captain Elstein and I took our positions at the door, inside. I will forever remember the rage the Emperor exhibited on reading Schiedemann's telegram. He peered the floor up and down and cursed the rebellious party. General Ludendorff, too, showed signs of resentment while von Berg and Max sat like two wax figures and I could not judge the attitude they would take at the last. The Emperor motioned to me, and tearing the telegram from Schiedemann, he shouted, "I shall not receive the infernal rebels." Then he ordered me to send this telegram to Schiedemann: "I shall not receive rebels."

The Emperor then turned to Ludendorff who approved the telegram. I drew up the wire to Schiedemann and was about to leave the room with it when Prince Max arose and ordered me to stop. This was another incident that had never before occurred in the presence of the Emperor. Prince Max had directly countermanded the Emperor's messenger. For a second or so I felt dazed. I had received my orders from the Emperor himself, and my giving heed to Prince Max's order not to proceed with it meant disobedience in my part towards the supreme head of the Fatherland. However, Prince Max saved me from the critical position. He addressed the Emperor in cool and stern words.

He took the wire from my hand and turning to the Emperor said: "It is suicide to send this telegram to Schiedemann. Trouble is imminent. I vponets hoc eReitstiodov noinn. Perhaps now, even now, it may be too late, to avoid the catastrophe. Receive them on their own terms, otherwise I must withdraw from this council."

Prince Max Had the Whip Hand. Whereupon Ludendorff jumped on his feet but before he had time to open his mouth his eyes met Prince Max's who seemed by this time ready to burst out with anger. The two regarded each other for a few seconds and in the end Prince Max came out victorious. For just then the D.L.C. of Brunswick, the Kaiser's son-in-law, was announced. He had scarcely entered the room when Prince Max again addressed the Emperor and in still sterner voice said: "Wilhelm, for God's sake do not send this telegram."

Then the Kaiserin who had been sitting silently at the table beside General Ludendorff, walked to the Emperor and dropping to her knees begged her husband to listen to the voice of Prince Max and not to send that wire to Schiedemann. Ludendorff realized that the odds would be against him and so kept his silence.

The Emperor seemed disgusted with the Kaiserin's demeanor, and raising her to her feet admonished her not to humiliate herself and him before the men. He said: "Victoria, I am perfectly ready to listen to Prince Max." Thereupon the Empress took her place beside her daughter as the dutchesse said: "Let us hear what Prince Max has to say."

Prince Max stood at the table and in a grave voice said: "I have very little to say." Then turning to the Kaiser he pronounced these words as though he was a judge that was giving his sentence: "You must receive Herr Schiedemann's colleagues. You must receive them on their terms, and if the Socialists desire to meet you in civilian attire, you must receive them in civilian attire. And if they do not wish to meet General Ludendorff, General Ludendorff must retire from the council. We are all standing on the verge of a precipice. The storm is about to break out. We are not certain yet that even now it may be too late and that we may all be swept down the hill. We must face the fact that our power is gone. We might postpone our complete downfall a few days by resorting to civil war, but it would be only a few days. It would cost the lives of hundreds of thousands more and at the end we would all meet at the scaffold. Others have met there before and we are by no means immune. However if we play our cards in a more mainly way we may avert the worst. I advise you to receive Schiedemann and his colleagues on their own terms."

The telegram was sent to Schiedemann telling him that he would be received on his own terms and two days later the three Socialists arrived at Wilhelmshoe. (Next week the writer will describe the dramatic meeting of Schiedemann and his colleagues with the Kaiser and his party.)

HORSE RACING REVIVED. At a meeting of the officers of the Clackamas County Fair association held Friday afternoon at Oregon City it was decided to resume the horse racing at the fair next fall. Last September the races were cut off the program, and it was a disappointment to many of the lovers of racing. The date of the fair will be September 24-27 inclusive. There will also be motorcycle and auto races. The admission will be reduced from 50 cents to 25 cents.

Senator Chamberlain inspected the arsenal at Troy, N. Y., Monday and spoke three Monday night on the subject of reconstruction.

Harold H. Smith After Nearly Two Years In Army Returns. The family and friends of Harold H. Smith are rejoicing over his recent return home after nearly two years service in the U. S. navy. Harold was one of the first Salem boys to enter the service, enlisting in April 1917, and being assigned to the battleship San Diego. During his first years service the ship made five trips to France as part of a convoy for transport. Most of the winter of 1918 they operated from Halifax, having been detailed there soon after the great disaster. In May, 1918, he and two others were transferred to a mine layer and with a fleet of these vessels went to the North Sea where they operated for many months. In that period they helped to lay the greatest mine field in history, extending from the southern coast of Norway to the north coast of Scotland, a distance of 240 miles. After many dangerous experiences—as well as some pleasant ones—the fleet returned to American waters, having visited many of the great cities and places of historic interest in Europe. On the trip home they ran into a terrific storm in which some of the ships were disabled and were compelled to swing south to the Azores for coal and repairs. They celebrated Christmas on the islands, finally arriving at Fortress Monroe in the fore part of January.

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