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BISMARCK
THE TRILOGY OF A FIGHTER



[Scherl's Bilderdienst

BISMARCK

BISMARCK

The Trilogy of a Fighter

by

EMIL LUDWIG

Author of "KAISER WILHELM II"

LONDON & NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

First English Edition September 1927

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN.

CHISWICK PRESS: CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND GRIGGS (PRINTERS), LTD.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCEKY LANE, I LONDON.

DEDICATED
TO
JULIUS BAB

MOSCIA, *Autumn* 1923

PREFACE

AFTER Bismarck's death in 1898 only two of the three volumes of his memoirs were published. This limitation was agreed to in deference to the wishes of his heirs, although, under the written agreement which existed, the whole work might have appeared at that time. It was feared that the third volume, which dealt with the dismissal of the Chancellor and the character of Kaiser Wilhelm II, might cause undesirable controversy, and for this reason the German nation were then deprived of first-hand information of great importance about their rulers.

The publishers had announced that they would issue the third volume on the death of the Kaiser, and when he suffered political death in 1918, and a great change had taken place in the views generally held about him, they printed it. Thereupon the Kaiser, from his home in Holland, prevented its publication by claiming copyright in certain unpublished letters, written by him to Bismarck in his own hand, which formed part of the book and were legally his property.

Bismarck, ten years after his death and twenty-eight after his fall from power, was once more prevented from revealing the truth and justifying his position.

At this juncture Herr Emil Ludwig read the forbidden volume. The embargo seemed to him absurd, and the need for enlightening the German People urgent. He therefore used the material supplied by this volume, and also by other memoirs

PREFACE

which had appeared meanwhile, for the composition of a drama in three acts entitled *Dismissal—a Fragment of History*. The indirect object of this play was to open the eyes of his fellow countrymen to the close connection between the fall of Bismarck and the causes of the World War. In the meantime, the Kaiser's opposition to the publication of Bismarck's third volume had been neutralized by the unexpected and unauthorized publication of his letters in another quarter, but Herr Ludwig's drama was better adapted to make the matter one of general public interest.

The Kaiser again intervened from Holland and endeavoured to stop the production of the play, claiming that he, as a living person, should not be represented on the stage, and, moreover, that the proposed representation was untrue and unfair. In the litigation which followed, however, Herr Ludwig won his case on appeal, the Court deciding that his representation was in all respects historically accurate and absolutely objective. The play was accordingly performed all over Germany—the number of representations already much exceeding a thousand.

Encouraged by this success, Herr Ludwig shortly afterwards wrote two other plays in which he unfolded the earlier part of Bismarck's history, and gave a view of his hero which differs in essential parts from the conception of the Iron Chancellor with which we have become familiar. These two plays, entitled, respectively, *King and People: 1862-1864*, and *Union: 1870*, have been, and continue to be, frequently performed on the German stage. With *Dismissal: 1890*, they constitute the Trilogy of which the English version is presented in this volume. A biographical index has been added, containing brief notes on the principal characters, which it is

PREFACE

hoped may be found interesting by English readers and convenient for reference.

In 1926 Herr Ludwig added to his studies in Bismarck's history a new and detailed Life, which will be published in English by Messrs. George Allen and Unwin during the current year.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS.

LONDON

September 1927.

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KING AND PEOPLE

1862-1864

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

WILHELM I (*King of Prussia*).

QUEEN AUGUSTA.

CROWN PRINCE FREDERICK WILLIAM.

CROWN PRINCESS VICTORIA.

ROON (*Minister of War*).

SCHLEINITZ (*Minister of the Royal Household*).

BISMARCK-SCHÖNHAUSEN (*Prime Minister*).

JOHANNA VON BISMARCK (*his wife*).

FIELD-MARSHAL WRANGEL.

COUNT KAROLYI (*Austrian Minister*).

VIRCHOW

WALDECK } *Liberal Deputies.*

DUNCKER }

FERDINAND LASSALLE (*Socialist leader*).

OLD LASSAL (*his father*).

COUNTESS HATZFELD.

HÉLÈNE VON DÖNNIGES.

RAKOWITZ.

Citizens, Deputies, Weavers, Courtiers.

*The action takes place at Berlin between the autumn
of 1862 and the spring of 1864.*

ACT I

- SCENE I. A BERLIN BEER GARDEN.
„ II. A ROOM IN LASSALLE'S HOUSE.
„ III. THE ROYAL PALACE, THE KING'S PRIVATE
ROOM.

ACT II

- „ I. WINTER GARDEN, CROWN PRINCE'S
HOUSE AT NEUBABELSBERG.
„ II. BISMARCK'S HOUSE, A RECEPTION
ROOM.
„ III. THE LANDTAG.

ACT III

- „ I. A ROOM IN LASSALLE'S HOUSE.
„ II. A COURT BALL.
„ III. ROON'S ROOM AT THE MINISTRY OF
WAR.

KING AND PEOPLE

(1862-1864)

ACT I

SCENE I

A Beer Garden in Berlin. A warm afternoon in the beginning of September. Citizens and their Wives in cheerful, beer-drinking groups, at tables placed under the trees of the Zelte.¹ The Citizens with speaking parts, along with a Woman who is knitting, occupy the front table, L.

FIRST CITIZEN

Waiter, another white beer!

OTHERS

Same for me!

SECOND CITIZEN

They're as slow here as at Potsdam when it's a question of granting a free pardon!

NEWSBOY (*running up with papers, in a childish treble*)

Evening edition! Speech from the Throne.

VOICES

Here, here! Give me one!

SECOND CITIZEN

King's speeches and garlic are two things I cannot

¹ *I.e.*, "Tents," a popular beer-garden at Berlin.

abide. They keep "returning thanks" the whole evening.

FIRST CITIZEN (*reading aloud*)

"It is not the mission of Prussia to live . . ."

OTHERS

Speak up, friend. Read it out to all of us.

BOY

I like that! So that nobody else will buy a copy! Besides, reading of King's speeches aloud is forbidden by the police! [Laughter.]

VOICES

Shut up, can't you?

FIRST CITIZEN (*round whom a sort of circle has been formed*)

"It is not the mission of Prussia to live in quiet enjoyment of what has already been attained. The conditions of its happiness lie in the combination of Obedience and Liberty, and in the strengthening of its armed defences."

OTHERS

Oh, ho!

FIRST CITIZEN

"It is the army that has created Prussia's greatness."

VOICES

Nonsense! The army! The Landwehr! Quite right! Silence!

FIRST CITIZEN (*continuing to read*)

"The world must learn that Prussia is always ready to protect the right."

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

VOICE (*very distinctly*)

Of course! The right of the Junkers!

FIRST CITIZEN

“For the preservation of order we need a well equipped army.”

VOICE

For conquests!

FIRST CITIZEN

“My confidence in my People is unshakable.”

VOICE

But ours isn't! [*Applause and laughter.*]

SECOND VOICE

Stop! That's enough!

[*Enter R. VIRCHOW and WALDECK, both in the prime of life. They are looking at a newspaper, and seat themselves at a small table in front.*]

WALDECK (*calmly*)

Halt Professor! Let's stop here a moment.

VIRCHOW (*nervously*)

Can one get a decent glass of beer here?

SECOND CITIZEN (*at table to L.*)

Do you know who's sitting over there? That is Virchow, with his long beard.

THIRD CITIZEN

And that is Waldeck, with his mane.

FOURTH CITIZEN

The whole Council's aboard then!

FIRST CITIZEN

Have you ever heard Virchow in the Landtag? There's a talker for you! He says just what he believes.

SECOND CITIZEN

Does he also believe what he says?

THIRD CITIZEN

There you go again!

FOURTH CITIZEN

What you believe doesn't matter, so long as it sounds well. And that's true, whether in Parliament or in the pulpit.

[They continue their talk in subdued tones.]

VIRCHOW (*quietly reading at his table*)

"But those who would rob me of the fidelity and love of my people I condemn, because their plans cannot be carried out without wrecking all public confidence." Priceless! He separates the chaff from the grain and like a king in a fairy tale divides his subjects into two classes—the good and the bad.

WALDECK (*smoking phlegmatically*)

A capital title for to-morrow's leader. We must expatiate: Provocation by the King—a reference to last year's Coronation, when he took the crown from the Lord's Table, as they call it. Then we go on to speak of March '48, when he himself ordered the soldiers to fire on peaceful citizens.

VIRCHOW

But what about Roon? You must get at Roon, for

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

of course it was he who composed this speech. I should say: It is *Roon* who wants to rob the country of the last remnants of the liberties of 1813, *Roon* who wants to convert the free Landwehr into drilled machines, *Roon* who is providing the King with an army to use against the people, while the people want its army only to fight foreign foes.

WALDECK

[People's Army, King's Army. We've said that a hundred times already.

VIRCHOW

Well, say it again! A truth becomes a degree truer with every repetition.

WALDECK

[Would you admit that that principle applies to Anatomy?

VIRCHOW

[My dear fellow, don't mix up two totally different things. Science is a beautiful thing, and politics——

WALDECK

Is also a beautiful thing? No! You really can't say that!

VIRCHOW

And why not? Fighting is hygienic. Fighting withdraws us from static back-bending over a microscope and puts us in the elastic pose of a fencer, and thus relaxes both eyes and brain.

WALDECK

And who are you going to carry on the fight with

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

just at present? For the Itzenplitzes, the Jagows, and their kind will all be taking to the woods to-morrow.

VIRCHOW

I am banking now, as before, on the Crown Prince.

WALDECK

Psha! As if the days of the King were numbered! Whereas (*sighing*) he is as sound as a bell and will probably make his round century, thanks to the Grace of God, with Whom he seems to be in partnership.

VIRCHOW

Well, we'll have to play the Crown Prince against him.

WALDECK

Tied to the apron-strings of the little English Princess! If a time ever comes when London has need of the King of Prussia, then both the Victorias, mother and daughter, will instantly become ultra-Conservatives. English morality has a double bottom.

VIRCHOW

But will our beloved and paternal Ruler be able to get anyone else to take office?

WALDECK

I could make a shrewd guess.

VIRCHOW

Manteuffel? Goltz?

WALDECK (*with a sly smile*)

What do you think? Lassalle, of course!

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

[Both burst into a hearty laugh and continue their conversation. Two Youths, with black, red, and gold sashes, begin to make a collection among the tables.]

FIRST YOUTH

Collection for the German National Union!

[The Citizens put something into the collecting boxes.]

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, neighbour, what do you give to the good cause?

THIRD CITIZEN

Always a silver groschen: half for Schleswig-Holstein and half for German unity. And you?

SECOND CITIZEN

I give three silver groschen.

FOURTH CITIZEN

We didn't see anything of that?

SECOND CITIZEN

It's all right. Look here. This groschen is for the German Confederation and that for Austria. But these two never come to an agreement, so they cancel out. I take out a third groschen for Prussia. But there's sure to come some botheration from the King, like to-day's Speech from the Throne. That takes away all my interest in Prussia. So back goes that too into my pocket. In this way I have, as a good patriot, saved three silver groschen. Waiter, bring me a white beer with raspberry!

OTHERS (*laughing*)

That is politics on the cheap!

SECOND CITIZEN

I tell you, that's exactly the way the great gentlemen in the Wilhelmstrasse reckon.

FIRST CITIZEN

No, my friend. Our Government has never yet been as smart as that.

THIRD CITIZEN

What? Do you think that because they have the brains of a sheep they are therefore as innocent as lambs? Ask Virchow there what sly customers they are.

FIRST CITIZEN

I know him as well as I know my old woman. I'll do as you say.

[*First Citizen goes over to the other table.*]

SECOND CITIZEN

Look at him showing off with his grand acquaintances!

VIRCHOW (*diplomatically invites the Citizen to take a seat*)

Of course, I remember you quite well. Didn't you make a speech a little time ago at Koepenik against the three years' service?

FIRST CITIZEN

Fancy your remembering all this time, Herr Doctor! Well, (*pointing to the newspaper*) what are we to think of the latest royal deliverance?

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

VIRCHOW

To begin with, Herr ——?

FIRST CITIZEN

Piesecke, Fritz Piesecke, sausages and eggs, in the Werdischer Market.

VIRCHOW

And an active member of our district organization.

WALDECK

Beyond the canal, round the second corner? My wife is one of your customers.

FIRST CITIZEN

That's right. And Frau Waldeck is always served with everything of the freshest.

VIRCHOW

The Speech from the Throne, Herr Piesecke? (*Becomes rather rhetorical.*) It is a signal! It is the beginning of the end!

[Some of the other Citizens cross over and stand round the table to hear what VIRCHOW has to say.]

(*Seated, but gesticulating.*) The King says he needs soldiers. Against whom? Of course, against the peaceful citizens. Why? Because the citizen is quite content with his honest old Landwehr, which did the business anno 1813.

VOICES

Hear! Hear!

VIRCHOW (*rising to his feet*)

Now, my dear Fellow Citizens, for what, I ask

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

you, do we need new skeleton corps and the three years' service? Simply to give aristocratic lieutenants an opportunity to drill and bully our young men.

CITIZENS

Hear! Hear!

SECOND CITIZEN

At the manœuvres last August, when it was so hot, the apex of my Eddy's left lung was twisted till it was like a horseshoe.

VIRCHOW

There now! That's how a healthy and respectable young man is made to pay for the aggressive policy of General Roon.

VOICE

Roon! Roon! Let's give him a groan! [*Laughter.*]

VIRCHOW

But we are not the majority for nothing! The Radicals, with their hundred and sixty seats, will set their powerful veto on the militaristic antics of Potsdam!

FIRST CITIZEN

That's the way to talk! There, Professor, you've hit the bull again! We don't want any militaristic antics!

OTHERS

What we want is peace and quietness.

[*Boy runs in from the Tiergarten side, full of excitement.*]

BOY (*as he comes in*)

Father! Mother! Here comes old Wrangel! Don't you see him, getting off his horse?

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SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

VOICES

Old Wrangel? Come on! Always among the beer-glasses!

VIRCHOW

The Field-Marshal? Here?

FIRST CITIZEN

This is his regular place. When he goes out riding he never fails to take a stirrup-cup here. Didn't you know that, Professor? Come on, Gustav, we must see the old boy.

[All withdraw to the other side, and surround the new arrival.]

WALDECK

You see, Virchow? That's our fellows all over. They've only to see a glittering coat, a military moustache, and a handsome bay, and then they'll follow them to the Day of Judgment.

[Enter, front, WRANGEL, an octogenarian in a white and blue cuirassier uniform, stretching his cavalryman's legs. He is followed at a little distance by the delighted Citizens and is offered a dram by the smiling and obsequious Landlord. He is a typical old Berliner.]

WRANGEL

How now, old fellow, still blooming in the middle of September?

LANDLORD (*rather fatuously*)

Your Excellency looks as hale and hearty as you were in the May of life!

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

WRANGEL (*snorting*)

Stow that poetic trash! Are you copying Schiller, whose marble statue I just cantered past? Keep your gush for my old nag and see that he has a bucket of water.

LANDLORD

At once, your Excellency. I'll see that the beast gets it cool and fresh. [Exit Landlord.]

WRANGEL (*calling after him*)

Yes, but see you don't give him iced water. Not too cold and not too warm! (*Drinks, then softly.*) Easy does it—as we say in the army! (*The bystanders laugh.*) That's all right! Isn't it, sonny?

FIRST CITIZEN

Well, you ought to know all about that, Field-Marshal!

WRANGEL

I used to, *rather!* That's what makes the lifeless skeleton of Boney groan when he walks about his old island in Africa. But in the meantime I've had time to forget nearly all about it. Fifty years have I been standing about waiting for a decent fight, like a student who waits fifty minutes by the clock for his girl—and she never turns up! It's fifty years since I got off old Grete at Paris, and since then not a vulture in the vault of heaven! From morning till night we yawn and pray to the Almighty as if all Prussia were a church. You laugh but you turn grey without ever having smelt powder. What sort of a show do you think you'll make before your Prussian God? (*Goes up close to the First Citizen and speaks*

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

more sharply.) Well, sonny, where do you think you'll get to with your fine gendarmerie?

FIRST CITIZEN (*annoyed*)

I mean no harm, Field-Marshal.

WRANGEL

None of us means any harm! (*Turns his back to VIRCHOW's table, after glancing towards it, and speaks very trenchantly.*) But I'll tell you one thing. If you don't clear out the fellows from the Talking-Shop in the Dönhoffs-Platz, who riddle our Army with their Liberal orations, so that the generals never know whether a professor like that chap there will grant them three muskets more or less, then you'll deserve to fall into the ditch without having fired a single bullet into the honourable carcass of a Frenchman. Do you understand, children?

CITIZENS (*animated*)

Yes, indeed, Field-Marshal!

[*Citizens escort WRANGEL to his horse.*]

WALDECK (*in front*)

You see, Virchow? "Easy does it, as we say in the Army!" *You* can't work the oracle like that!

VIRCHOW

Never mind; *we* have the majority. We'll very soon rouse these old fossils from their primeval slumbers!

VOICES (*behind the scenes*)

Three cheers for Wrangel! Hurrah for the Field-Marshal!

SCENE II

A room in LASSALLE'S house. An elegant, rather over-decorated sitting-room, with rugs, bronzes, books, etc. It is afternoon. LASSALLE, a well groomed man of thirty-seven, in a fashionably-cut light suit, is lying on a divan. He is writing with his right hand on a tablet supported on his right knee, with his left hand under his head.

LASSALLE (*alone*)

There! These'll do for the chief points of my speech to-morrow. Now for a little rehearsal. (*Jumps up with youthful agility, arranges his tie before a mirror, then walks up and down, somewhat theatrically, memorizing his speech.*) "The Labour programme, because of which they have presumed to call me before this Court, is purely theoretical and therefore immune from prosecution. If you, my worthy judges, are insufficiently informed to be able to discriminate between a carefully thought-out work of political economy and the banal fly-sheet of some cheap demagogue, I shall to-day have the honour of enlightening you. The Liberals, of course, are getting red in the face and are trembling for law and order. Well, I tell this honourable Court that I snap my fingers at law and order!" [*Servant opens the door.*

SERVANT

The old gentleman has come, Herr Doctor.

LASSALLE (*hurries to door like a boy*)

What, *you*, father? Where do you come from? Come in, come in! (*To the Servant.*) Bring a bottle

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

of Burgundy. One of the '57 batch. Warm it carefully from one and a half to two minutes. Now, out with it, father!

[LASSALLE *brings in* OLD LASSAL *with filial care. The Father resembles his son, but is more typically semitic; his Jewish accent should not, however, be overdone.*

FATHER

How can I, while you are doing all the talking? Let me warm myself for one and a half to two minutes! Lord, what wonderful rugs!

LASSALLE

You've seen them all before.

FATHER

That light-coloured one over there is new.

LASSALLE

You see everything with your blind eyes!

FATHER

What do you mean by blind? I wish you could see as clearly as your old father.

LASSALLE (*good humouredly*)

Must I prepare for another sermon?

FATHER (*drawing a newspaper out of his pocket*)

My dear child! Ferdinand, my only son! What's this you've been up to now?

LASSALLE

A mere bagatelle that I mean to get off my chest to-morrow.

FATHER

Bagatelle! (*Reads aloud.*) "The notorious President of the Labour Union, Ferdinand Lassalle" (spelled with an "e" at the tail, I see!) "is accused of inciting his fellow citizens to hatred and contempt. The main hearing takes place to-morrow." And that's what you call a bagatelle! I get diarrhoea when I read that sort of thing in the *Breslau Gazette*.

LASSALLE

If I owe your visit to the silliness of the authorities, I shall bless my enemies!

FATHER

What do you mean by blessing your enemies? Are you thinking of getting baptized?

LASSALLE

My enemies would just love that!

FATHER

Why do you incite people to hate and contempt? Did you learn that at home? Ferdinand, listen to me! I am an old man! [Servant *enters with wine.*

LASSALLE (*filling the glasses*)

This will make you young again. It's a political trial, father, just like a dozen others I've been through. The Liberals are beside themselves because I oppose them even more hotly than the Government. They're inciting the people to hatred and contempt of the King. When I try to prove to the working classes that these money-bags, with the specious talk about liberty, are really out to

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

exploit the workers, then they haul me into court. And just now all the judges are Liberals.

FATHER

So you are happily sitting between two stools!

LASSALLE (*triumphantly*)

No. Rather am I reclining on the divan of my own Party and saying "*l'état c'est moi*"! I am the dictator of my movement! There, nobody can make me budge!

FATHER (*sotto voce*)

Just like you—even when you were a small boy.

LASSALLE (*heatedly*)

As the Liberals do what they like with the Government, they are in deadly fear of a man who can loose the winds of class warfare like Aeolus and produce chaos with a fiery word. Don't you understand?

FATHER

Of course I understand. Do you take me for a public meeting?

LASSALLE (*laughing, sits down beside his father and puts his arm round him*)

Dearest and best of fathers! Why do you shake your head over me to-day—just as you've done for the last twenty years?

FATHER

You're such a clever youngster. Why can't you give up this speechifying? Of course, it is a pity that there are so many poor, but clearly it is the will of

God that it should be so. Must you get into hot water with the rich by meddling with God's business? Why do you go in with a rotten firm like that when you can have a sure thing.

LASSALLE

Is there anything "sure" in these days? Are you thinking of the King by any chance?

FATHER

God help him! He is so shaky on his throne that he may well sell dead fish for live ones!

LASSALLE (*laughing*)

Then who or what *is* "sure"?

FATHER (*enumerating*)

Well, for instance, in the first place, your enemies, the Liberals are; they have capital on their side. Then there's property; that's all right. Then, there's the Stock Exchange——

LASSALLE

All that these people want is to become Ministers!

FATHER

And you, sonny?

LASSALLE

Minister? (*Sotto voce.*) That would hardly satisfy me—now.

FATHER

Lord, when I think what you could earn with that brain of yours! When you were only fifteen old Heimann said to me: "Herr Lassal, that youngster will some day make the fortune of your firm."

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE

And now, instead, I have brought all this misfortune upon you!

FATHER

What do you mean by misfortune, my dear boy? I have the best son in the whole world! But, if you don't want to make money and are out just for honour and glory, let politics go hang and go back to your philosophy books. Humboldt said that you could easily become a university professor. If you had a chair you could fully satisfy your vanity without running the risk of being locked up!

LASSALLE (*quietly, but superciliously*)

What is vanity?

FATHER (*affectionately*)

Ferdinand, why do you ask when you of all people know quite well?

LASSALLE

Is ambition a crime? Can you fancy Napoleon without ambition?

FATHER

Righteous God! To think that a son of mine should compare himself with that monster!

LASSALLE (*springing to his feet and pacing up and down*)

Philosophy! How right you are! All my labour is in vain with this stupid people, whose one idea is to obey! Ay, if only a *man* were in power! A foeman worthy of me! But these cold douches on a brain on fire! (*Pause. He stands still, looking out of the window, then turns round suddenly and asks, irrelevantly.*)

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

Father! What would you say if I some day brought home a red-haired Valkyrie as your daughter-in-law?

FATHER (*nodding affectionately*)

I should say you were touched.

LASSALLE (*laughing*)

But why?

FATHER

My child, why have you hung a French syllable on to my respectable name? Wasn't it fine enough for you?

LASSALLE (*laughing*)

It sounds better.

FATHER

I suppose the next thing will be that you'll set up a coat of arms with seven lozenges—or more for all I know.

LASSALLE

Perhaps it might make my red-haired beauty consent to marry me.

FATHER

I knew it! When you said Valkyrie you meant Baroness. What have you to do with such folk? Always in extremes! (*With impatient gestures.*) One hand to the workers down below and the other to the aristocrats up above—and you'll end by being torn in two!

[*Servant opens the door; enter* COUNTESS HATZFELD. *She is an aristocratic matron of about fifty, somewhat masculine in her bearing and always most cordial to*

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE, *who greets her like a chivalrous son.*

LASSALLE (*even more brilliant and charming than before, but a trifle theatrical as always*)

You come just in the nick of time to support my father. How do you do, my dear friend? Yes, father, tell Countess Hatzfeld yourself what a snob you think me.

COUNTESS (*at first serious and bristling a little*)
What have you to say against Lassalle?

FATHER (*with emotion*)
What should I have to say against him, seeing I am his father?

COUNTESS (*simply*)
He is the bravest man in the world. It is to him I owe my honour and my estate. Ten years he fought to save them.

LASSALLE (*nervously*)
No more! That's an old story. Damn it all, if I had been born a Prince or a Count of course I should have been a defender of my class!

COUNTESS
And a reactionary?

LASSALLE (*smiling*)
Always jumping from one bank to the other. Since I, as a bourgeois, can't be other than a democrat, I insist at least on complete freedom in my private affairs.

FATHER

Well now, Countess, who is the young lady?

LASSALLE

Not a word! Not a word!

FATHER

Secrets? Then I'd better be going.

COUNTESS

There's no secret, but there is a great piece of news. Whom do you think I just met?

LASSALLE (*violently*)

If it was a politician I don't want to know!

COUNTESS (*smiling*)

All right. Then I won't tell you.

FATHER (*coming nearer*)

Names don't matter. But, my lady, who is the girl?

COUNTESS (*after a look at LASSALLE, who smiles*)

Lately a certain fair-haired young lady took tea with me. Her father is an ambassador. True blue! Reads the *Kreuzzeitung*! Moreover, she is betrothed.

FATHER (*jumping to his feet*)

For heaven's sake, keep your hands off her! She is, doubtless, betrothed to a Count, and Counts shoot on the smallest provocation. Ferdinand, keep your hands off her!

COUNTESS

I have been trying for a week to make that clear to him.

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE

May I know—exactly why?

COUNTESS

Are you not flouting people quite enough already—*you*—a Labour leader, by living *en grand seigneur* in Bellevuestrasse surrounded by Oriental carpets?

LASSALLE (*springing to his feet*)

I am absolutely proof against these illogical and miserable arguments! (*Rhetorically.*) Is it not enough that I devote my life to this class? Is it not enough that I shake their horny hands, that I endure the reek of their stuffy meetings, ruin my throat, endanger my personal safety, sacrifice my health, my freedom, and my money? Because I choose to do all this must I bring a baker's daughter into this home of refinement and good taste and procreate mongrel sons?

FATHER (*rises, offended*)

I should have been in the Brüderstrasse long ago to meet a business friend.

LASSALLE (*embracing him*)

And what are you doing this evening?

FATHER (*emotionally*)

I have nothing to do but to love you, my boy—nothing else to do!

LASSALLE

Then we meet again to-night?

FATHER (*at the door*)

Ferdinand, keep your hands off her! [*Exit FATHER.*

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

LASSALLE (*with a changed and serious air*)

That settles it!

COUNTESS

Why need you get married?

LASSALLE

You mean I might dispense with the wedding-ring? Well, perhaps. And yet the ring is just what attracts me.

COUNTESS

You fool! You're putting your head in a noose and you'll have Hélène's fiancé to deal with.

LASSALLE

A stupid little Baron.

COUNTESS

He is young.

LASSALLE (*more and more excited*)

You mean I am getting old?

COUNTESS

On the contrary, I think you are more undeveloped than I should expect at your age!

LASSALLE

Better and better! Lassalle's getting on! He is no longer able to cope with a boy of twenty-two, who can do nothing except enumerate his ancestors.

COUNTESS (*firmly*)

You've got bigger things to do. Do you know whom I met a quarter of an hour ago?

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE

Some ass of a politician, I suppose.

COUNTESS (*slowly*)

As I was crossing Unter den Linden on my way here, all of a sudden I was saluted in the Schadowstrasse by a general.

LASSALLE (*hardly listening*)

Worse and worse!

COUNTESS

When I looked up I saw it was Roon.

LASSALLE

Roon? In Unter den Linden in the afternoon?

COUNTESS

And beside him was a giant, very smart in mufti——

LASSALLE

A giant? Bernstorff?

COUNTESS

No. Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen.

LASSALLE (*turning sharply*)

Bismarck!

[*Pause. LASSALLE goes to the window, evidently excogitating.*

(*In a low voice.*) Then he will be Premier in three days.

COUNTESS

How do you know that?

LASSALLE

He has just been Ambassador in Paris. Roon is his impresario and has been wanting to bring him to the front for the last three years. The Cabinet has just resigned. In consequence of this, Roon has telegraphed for him, and *faute de mieux*, the King will have to take a bite of the sour apple from Schönhausen.

COUNTESS (*laughing softly*)

What a head you have for plans!

LASSALLE (*gazing out of the window, in a low voice, speaking to himself*)

Bismarck! A man! The worthy Prussians have no notion what's in store for them. If these Liberal dullards smell the Junker, the game is up. I have followed this man's career for ten years. He has a devil in him, like me. An adversary indeed! Adversary? Why not ally? *Why not?* (*Turns round.*) You know him, Countess? Do you think he is dare-devil enough to throw in his lot with us?

COUNTESS

He'll do anything that serves his purpose.

LASSALLE

The problem is how to make him serve mine. (*Then to himself.*) We must win him over to Franchise Reform—suggest to him that his weapon would give him *his* majority, while, in the meantime, he would be building up *mine*!

COUNTESS

Courage, Lassalle! Courage—and prudence!

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE (*still sotto voce*)

We are united in enmity to the Liberals. We are sufficiently far apart to understand each other. (*Turns briskly towards her and changes his manner.*) I beg your pardon. Did you say it was a quarter of an hour ago?

COUNTESS

Twenty minutes ago.

LASSALLE

Walking? In the direction of the Brandenburger Tor?

COUNTESS

Apparently.

LASSALLE (*amiably, after a pause*)

It's such a fine day. Shall we go to the Tiergarten for half an hour?

COUNTESS (*smiling*)

I should love to.

LASSALLE (*opening the door, then softly*)

I want to see this man face to face. A giant, you said?

COUNTESS

Yes, indeed! He is built like a guardsman!

SCENE III

The Royal Palace. The King's private room. SCHLEIN-ITZ and ROON stand waiting. SCHLEINITZ, about sixty, in ministerial uniform, quite the accomplished courtier in features, manners, speech, and smile.

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

ROON, *fifty years old, in a general's uniform, tall and rather gaunt, a soldier of the old Prussian type, inclined to be gloomy and with a sonorous voice.*

ROON

Then you still believe in a solution through the Upper House?

SCHLEINITZ

I hear from a particularly good source that Arnim will propose a resolution there.

ROON

Why?

SCHLEINITZ (*shrugging his shoulders and smiling*)
A predatory swoop at a portfolio!

ROON

The moment requires stouter timber—oak, not a willow wand.

SCHLEINITZ (*smiling*)

Well, general, you'll no doubt produce this oaken cudgel and beat the barren rock of the Landtag with it until the soldiers gush out?

ROON

Is it now generally known that Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen has left Paris?

SCHLEINITZ (*with affected uncertainty*)

Well, it *was* reported at Her Majesty's tea yesterday—it was believed—it was said . . .

ROON

He is here, your Excellency. Will the Queen make difficulties?

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

SCHLEINITZ

Our Gracious Lady does not meddle with politics. She devotes herself to works of charity.

ROON

And what does the Crown Prince think?

SCHLEINITZ

In that quarter I am not *au courant*.

ROON (*bluntly*)

Your Excellency was, however, very much so three years since. *Then* you succeeded in excluding Bismarck from the leadership.

SCHLEINITZ (*more sharply*)

That is news to me, general. What I *do* remember is that about four years ago he, though Ambassador under me, tried in vain to get me turned out of the Government.

ROON

His Majesty!

[Attendants *throw open doors*. Enter KING WILHELM, a man of sixty-five, well set-up and erect. He is in uniform, without orders, but wears the black and white ribbon which is his exclusive privilege. An officer of the old school, but at the same time a great gentleman, he is often extraordinarily frank with his confidants and allows his repressed anxieties to become strikingly visible. After these outbursts, however, he always and

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

immediately resumes the bearing and accents of the aristocratic officer.

KING

Good morning, gentlemen.

SCHLEINITZ and ROON (*together*)

Good morning, your Majesty.

KING

Have you seen the Queen yet, Schleinitz?

SCHLEINITZ

Just for a moment.

KING

Please tell her . . . no, never mind. I'll see her later myself.

[SCHLEINITZ bows and retires backwards.

The KING is visibly relieved, sits down at the large writing-desk and motions ROON to be seated.

KING

Well, what have you to say to-day?

ROON

The mutilated budget which the Landtag . . .

KING

Read the papers, Roon! Read the papers!

ROON

Your Majesty shouldn't read them, or else you should treat them with contempt.



[*Scherl's Bilderdienst*

WILHELM I

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

KING

My duty forbids the first, my honour the second. *You* can take your ease. *You* act only by your King's command. *But I!* Everyone is free to shoot at me. I am reviled more bitterly than anyone in Prussia. (*Rises.*) To accuse *me* of cowardice! I, who fought under Blücher! During the four years I have been on the Throne we have been pinching and scraping in order to reform the Army. Yet I have had to fight these fellows for every bayonet, for every remount. And if I make use of the provisions of the Constitution, to which these very gentlemen are constantly appealing, I am told that "the King is entrenching himself behind a paragraph."

ROON

Your Majesty takes it too seriously. The writer never intended to produce such an impression.

KING

There it is, however! I have not closed my eyes all night because of this insult.

ROON

All the more reason why you must get new Ministers to protect you.

KING

They've all left me in the lurch—Itzenplitz, Hohenlohe, Von der Heydt. They all resign the moment things get dangerous. And what if the Landtag pushes you, too, against the wall?

ROON

That won't bother me, so long as the wall doesn't give way.

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

KING (*turning and going up to the fireplace ; in a low voice*)

The wall, I can tell you, is very much inclined to do so.

ROON (*uneasily*)

Your Majesty means?

KING (*aside, almost humbly*)

What can a King do if he cannot find a Minister? Fritz may pocket the insult if he likes!

ROON (*as above*)

Your Majesty is not thinking of . . . ?

KING (*again in control of himself, looking ROON in the face*)

Get me a Minister!

ROON

I have him, your Majesty!

KING (*excited, standing by the writing-table*)
Well?

ROON

The same I suggested in vain three years ago.

KING (*disappointed*)

Oh! Your perennial candidate! He'd better stay quietly in Paris. He can be of some use there.

ROON

He is here.

KING (*rather stiffly*)

Since when?

ROON

Since yesterday. Family and business affairs . . .

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

KING (*sharply*)

Are you trying to force the man on me, General?

ROON (*unabashed*)

I am a soldier and can lead a Division but not a Cabinet. Rather than remain idly looking on while your Majesty is in need of support, I am ready to risk your Majesty's displeasure.

KING (*looks at ROON, half stern, half pleased, and then drops heavily into his chair. Pause*)

Probably he won't be willing to undertake the task now.

ROON

I'll answer for that.

KING

Well, he'll make crazy stipulations, this dangerous fellow, and after a month he'll be off too, like the rest. The only result will be to burden the country with eight more pensions. For any member of his Cabinet would be impossible ever afterwards.

ROON

He might win, your Majesty!

KING (*gloomily*)

I have lost all my faith.

ROON

He might give it you back, your Majesty.

KING (*shakes his head and looks upwards*)

There is only One who could do that.

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

ROON

Your Majesty won't receive him then?

KING

Of course I'll receive my Ambassador. The Lord Chamberlain . . .

ROON

May I not tell him myself?

KING

Well, well. Why this hurry?

ROON

Delay is dangerous, your Majesty. This evening the Liberal papers are sure to publish the news that their enemy is here, and make comments that we must forestall.

KING (*rather unwillingly, after a pause*)

Very well, let him come.

[*Folding doors open; enter a Lady-in-waiting.*]

LADY

Her Majesty the Queen.

[*Exit ROON.*]

[*Enter QUEEN AUGUSTA, a woman of fifty, proud, passionate, and dictatorial, even towards her husband.*]

KING (*at first very attentive, kisses her hand*)

Good morning, Augusta. You seldom give me the pleasure of seeing you so early.



[Scherl's *Bilderdienst*

QUEEN AUGUSTA

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

QUEEN

If only it is not too late! You never have a proper night's sleep now.

KING (*leads her to a chair while he stands or walks up and down*)

How could any responsible person sleep while these cataclysms are happening?

QUEEN

So there's nothing for it but to give way?

KING

That's my view.

QUEEN (*surprised and pleased*)

You will make some concession to the Landtag? You are at last ready to make peace with your people? (*Rises quickly and goes up to him.*) *Wilhelm!*

KING

You know very well that I couldn't reconcile that with my conscience.

QUEEN

Well, what *do* you mean to do?

KING

I cannot find Ministers strong enough to carry the Army Bill through against the feeling in the country. The Crown cannot capitulate to the people; the King can do so only in and for his own person. Therefore, I mean to give up the task and abdicate. Fritz may be able to handle the position, as he has convinced himself of the propriety of giving way.

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

Here's the draft of my public statement. My honour will not be smirched!

QUEEN (*looks blankly at the document, then gloomily*)

And so it was for this that we waited twenty years in the antechamber! For this we grew cabbages all these ten years at Coblenz! To be shelved after such a brief career, to give up everything again and sit outside in the cold, powerless and condemned to silence? *Wilhelm*, I thought you had more courage!

KING (*excitedly*)

And what does your courage amount to? To yield, step by step! What have we gained by your prescriptions during these two years? Don't you see? we are already in the middle of a revolution, though the shooting has not yet begun. Have you forgotten March '48?

QUEEN (*passionately*)

It is because I can never forget it that I warn you! If you remain obstinate we may again have the pleasure of seeing the Berlin parsons strike our names out of the Prayer Book!

KING (*quietly*)

That is why I mean to go.

QUEEN

Do you think I like the prospect of being ruled by this little Englishwoman—who is scarcely grown up?

KING

Get me a Minister then.

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

QUEEN

I could think of several who might find a way out of our difficulty. (*Pause.*) Bethmann-Hollweg . . .

KING (*gruffly*)

Irresolute and muddle-headed!

QUEEN

Then there is Schleinitz . . .

KING

He has already made a mess of it.

QUEEN

Then there is . . .

[*Enter Aide-de-camp, who announces:*

AIDE-DE-CAMP

Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen!

[*Exit.*

QUEEN (*passionately*)

Don't receive him! The mere fact that you have spoken with him would become known, and might injure you in this crisis.

KING

I will hear what he has to say.

QUEEN

He'll only make you more obstinate.

KING

My programme is ready for all eventualities and will save me from that.

QUEEN

I warn you! It would be a slap in the face for the
 "Forty-Eighters" in the Landtag.

KING

And do you know who it was that stood up for me
 once upon a time when you all lost your heads here,
 when everybody turned against me, and *you* were all
 for the plan of a Regency for Fritz, to whom now you
 hate to give way? It was this same Bismarck, who
 moved heaven and earth to organize resistance for me
 and the Party! I shall never forget that!

QUEEN

I have warned you. This man may lose you your
 throne—you—and the Crown Prince too!

[*Exit in great agitation, L.*]

KING (*pacing up and down*)

Oh, Lord! Show me the way out of this
 darkness!

[*Rings a bell on the writing-table. An Aide-de-camp appears, introduces BISMARCK, and exit. Enter BISMARCK. He is in his forty-eighth year, is still slender and very much the diplomatist, supple, accommodating, but determined. He is in evening dress with a few decorations. A contemporary describes him thus: "At that time he was still quite a man of fashion and moved and carried himself with an air of elegance and refinement. He had trodden the smooth floors of palaces and had not yet re-*

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

*nounced a dancer's privileges. The power of his keen glances was extraordinary, yet his smile was a mere curl of the lips in which the eyes had no part. He always seemed ready for a fight, though he affected a certain *laissez-aller*, and made light of anything which was mysterious. At the same time he was exceedingly impatient of contradiction." Frequent pauses occur in the following conversation.*

KING (*coolly, does not offer his hand*)

Welcome home. I didn't know—you had left Paris.

BISMARCK

Short leave, your Majesty, to see my family.

KING

Well, your political instinct has not failed you, for you've come at the very height of the crisis.

BISMARCK

That is chance, your Majesty, not merit.

KING (*sitting down*)

What do you think of the situation?

[*Motions to a seat.*]

BISMARCK

Excellent!

KING

Good gracious!

BISMARCK

What better could one wish? Resignation of a weak Cabinet, a challenge—and the way to deal with it.

KING

What do you mean by "the way to deal with it"?

BISMARCK

Show your teeth to the Landtag.

KING

What teeth?

BISMARCK

The whole thirty-two!

KING

That's a bitter jest. What we've got to do is to govern in accordance with the Constitution and at the same time get soldiers.

BISMARCK

The Army is the *rocher de bronze*, the Constitution is—elastic.

KING (*looks up gravely*)

I have sworn to observe it.

BISMARCK

No one will dare to trouble your Majesty's conscience. The interpretation of the Constitution is a question of statesmanship.

KING

Statesmanship! H'm! How old are you?

BISMARCK

Forty-seven, your Majesty.

KING

I was over sixty when I got the reins of power.

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

BISMARCK

That gave your Majesty the advantage of a past full of momentous experiences—a priceless asset in official life.

KING (*sotto voce*)

Very true! (*Aloud.*) Do you think we can carry on the government without a majority?

BISMARCK (*decidedly*)

We can always carry on the government—so long as we have breath, your Majesty.

KING

Without money?

BISMARCK (*significantly*)

With soldiers.

KING

But how can we get soldiers without money?

BISMARCK (*slowly*)

The power of the monarchical idea will be sufficient to produce them!

KING (*goes to the window. Pause. Then in a low voice*)

“Power of the monarchical idea!” God bless my soul! Forty-seven, you said? You realize that a Prime Minister who supports the Army Bill can only count upon eleven votes in the House?

BISMARCK

The younger Pitt had only ten when he assumed office. A year later he was the most popular man in England.

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT I

KING

In Prussia that could only be done if the Army won victories.

BISMARCK (*deliberately*)

Then we must have victories and take the people by surprise.

KING (*looks him in the face, with greater confidence*)

Well now, Herr von Bismarck, to come to the point, are you really prepared to risk jumping into a Cabinet over sabre and musket, as I might say?

BISMARCK (*confidently*)

I'd jump all right, your Majesty!

KING

Then read my programme here.

BISMARCK (*muttering as he glances through the programme*)

“Question of District Regulations; struggle between the towns and the landed gentry.” (*Puts the document down and addresses the KING boldly.*) Your Majesty! The question is whether the King or Parliament is to govern Prussia. Everything else is secondary. If you decide to give me your confidence a programme would be nothing but an embarrassment to both of us.

KING

What? You claim freedom of action?

BISMARCK

That or nothing. I serve my King.

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

KING

Your conditions?

BISMARCK

I feel like a Brandenburg vassal who sees his lord in danger. When one governs in such times as these one must begin without conditions and without a programme, and let oneself be guided by circumstances.

KING

You would obey me in case of need?

BISMARCK

If I disagreed I should always give reasons, but, when all is said and done, I would rather perish with my King than desert him in a fight with Parliament.

KING (*with animation*)

At last a man who can command! At last someone who understands that this is a fight to the death between Crown and People!

BISMARCK (*warningly*)

Yes, but were your Majesty to descend one step of your Throne to offer a hand of friendship to your adversaries, they would seize the opportunity to drag you down the others. We must fight.

KING (*takes a document from the table*)

Here is the abdication I had drafted. With your help I'll make one more effort (*tears up the paper, impulsively holding out his hand*) and fight!

BISMARCK (*looking him straight in the face*)

Prussia's downfall is not yet written in the stars.

ACT II

SCENE I

Winter Garden in the CROWN PRINCE'S house at Neubabelsberg. The Pavilion is in a would-be Gothic style, decorated with armour and swords; there is a good deal of chintz and wicker furniture, recalling an English country-house. From the open arches at the back steps descend to the garden, with flowerbeds in the foreground backed by old trees. It is a sunny afternoon in autumn. At the tea-table in front, L., are seated the CROWN PRINCESS VICTORIA, HÉLÈNE VON DÖNNIGES, a Lady-in-waiting, RAKOWITZ, and DUNCKER. VICTORIA, in her early twenties, is an Amazon-like figure of medium height, aristocratic rather than beautiful; she is ardently intelligent, keen, and ambitious, generally cold and—like BISMARCK—better at hating than loving. She speaks perfect German in a crisp and staccato tone, like the swish of a riding-whip. With her inferiors she affects, on principle, an easy manner which is really out of harmony with her pride. With persons of high rank, such as the KING and QUEEN, she is apt to be cool and reserved. Her dress is typically English, but quite in the fashion of the day. She sits alone at one side of the tea-table, facing her Guests, who form a semicircle opposite.

Tea is being served noiselessly by Two Footmen.

VICTORIA

You are a Roumanian, are you not, Herr von Rakowitz?

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

[*RAKOWITZ is a fashionable young man, with dark eyes and hair, speaking rather imperfect German.*

RAKOWITZ

I am a Walachian, your Royal Highness.

VICTORIA

Walachian? What is that?

RAKOWITZ

A Roumanian—against his will.

VICTORIA (*knowingly*)

I know. Just like the Irish, who are (*imitating him*) Englishmen—against their will.

DUNCKER (*a middle-class, middle-aged politician, keen and sagacious, wears whiskers and has a baritone voice*)

We might also compare the case with that of certain nationally minded Jews.

RAKOWITZ

I don't care much for Jews.

VICTORIA

Why? There are some wonderful brains among them. With us at home the first man in the country is a Jew, I mean Lord Beaconsfield, my mother's Prime Minister, formerly Disraeli.

HÉLÈNE (*a Juno-like figure with reddish hair, under a broad hat, dressed in bright colours but not inelegantly; her voice is full and rather gushing*)

Do you hear that, Janko? Your Royal Highness

has just decided a quarrel between us. At home no one supports me!

VICTORIA (*superciliously*)

Conservatives are always anti-Semitic. With us at home it is not so. But *you* (*rather pointedly*) my dear Dönniges, find it rather nice don't you (in spite of your parents' views) when chance brings you into contact with some member of that race?

HÉLÈNE

Personally, I can't say I know more than one. But he's so fascinating that he's cast a glamour over the whole race for me.

VICTORIA

A politician?

HÉLÈNE

Yes, your Royal Highness. But also a poet, an orator, and a dancer! A marvel!

DUNCKER (*smiling quietly*)

This description seems to me to fit Dr. Lassalle.

VICTORIA (*taken aback*)

Lassalle? The Democrat? Countess Hatzfeld's "deliverer"—so-called?

HÉLÈNE (*enthusiastically*)

He is simply splendid! I have no hesitation in saying, in your Royal Highness's presence, that there are not three men of equal gifts in Berlin.

VICTORIA (*smiling maliciously*)

I warn you, Herr von Rakowitz, your fiancée is fluttering round a dangerous flame.



[Rischgitz]

CROWN PRINCESS VICTORIA

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

HÉLÈNE

Oh!—I was only thinking of his mind—your Royal Highness!

DUNCKER

But *he*, my dear young lady, *he's* probably thinking of your beautiful hair.

VICTORIA

Capital, Duncker!

RAKOWITZ

My fiancée is only joking. Your Royal Highness mustn't take such remarks seriously.

VICTORIA (*acidly*)

Anyhow, it seems that our fair-haired young friend has a predilection for foreigners.

[Enter the CROWN PRINCE in uniform. He is in his prime, in the early thirties. Though he is the embodiment of fair-haired manliness, he is a trifle weak—for he is easily influenced, more especially by his wife, whom he adores. They are well mated, because he has as many feminine traits in his character as she has masculine in hers. His manners are much more amiable than hers, and he is in every way much more easygoing. As he enters, all present rise except VICTORIA. HÉLÈNE makes a low curtsey, but he raises her at once.]

CROWN PRINCE

Ne vous dérangez pas, Mademoiselle; we are in the country. (*To the gentlemen.*) Glad to see you. Good morning, my dear Duncker.

RAKOWITZ

We' were just on the point, your Royal Highness . . .

CROWN PRINCE

Well, how does it go with your examination?

RAKOWITZ

I hope in a few months . . .

CROWN PRINCE

Then I wish you luck. Duncker, just a moment . . .

VICTORIA (*to HÉLÈNE*)

Now you be careful about this democratic Don Juan! Good-bye.

[*Bows and curtseys, footmen open doors, more curtseys. Exeunt HÉLÈNE and RAKOWITZ L.; the Lady-in-waiting follows them.*]

CROWN PRINCE (*looking after the others*)

What is this obscure lineage that this youth claims to possess?

DUNCKER

Old Dönniges avers that the family dates from the sixteenth century.

CROWN PRINCE

They might well be older than the Dönniges.

VICTORIA

She's rather unbalanced! Every winter she gets a new craze, while the Roumanian Toggenburg waits patiently in the background. At present she is mad about Lassalle.



[Rischgr-

CROWN PRINCE FREDRICK WILLIAM

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

CROWN PRINCE

Lassalle? That man may be very dangerous to us some day. A regular brigand! He's splitting up the Liberal Party and is capable of anything.

VICTORIA (*mockingly*)

How amazingly like our Prime Minister! (*More seriously.*) What's the matter, Fritz? You look worried.

CROWN PRINCE

You can't get through a day in Prussia without having something to worry you!

DUNCKER

Has your Royal Highness already heard about to-day's sitting?

CROWN PRINCE (*wearily seating himself in an armchair*)

I've just come from Berlin. (*A pause. VICTORIA goes over to CROWN PRINCE.*) Do you know what Bismarck has done?

VICTORIA

Closed the session?

CROWN PRINCE (*shaking his head*)

Something much bolder than that. Virchow had demanded that the Government should ask for a Vote on Account on the ground that they couldn't spend money which had not been voted.

VICTORIA

Far too proper! And he?

CROWN PRINCE

— declared, as the House obviously intended to reject the Budget for 1863, he preferred not to introduce it at all, and should for the time being carry on the Government *without* a budget.

DUNCKER (*sotto voce*)

God bless my soul! It's a *coup d'état*!

[VICTORIA, *who had retired to the terrace, makes a sign to her husband behind DUNCKER'S back. CROWN PRINCE rises.*

CROWN PRINCE

Excuse me, I've got something pressing. . . .

DUNCKER

Your Royal Highness!

VICTORIA

Au revoir. [Exit DUNCKER L.
(*With decision, walking quickly up to CROWN PRINCE.*)
Now's the time! Fritz, you must act.

CROWN PRINCE (*still seated*)

Act! I, who may be called to power at any moment, am the only man in the country who *can't* act.

VICTORIA (*walking up and down, sometimes stopping in front of him*)

What? Whose business is it to open the King's eyes, if not his successor's?

CROWN PRINCE

At the Council of Ministers yesterday I did oppose.

VICTORIA

Who is to know that?

CROWN PRINCE

It is recorded in the minutes.

VICTORIA (*mockingly*)

And I suppose you'll read the minutes to your people when the day of reckoning comes? Does the daily flood of correspondence from all parts of the country leave you cold?

CROWN PRINCE

You mean that I should publicly . . .

VICTORIA (*standing over him*)

To-day there has been nothing more nor less than a *coup d'état*. Duncker, who is nothing if not moderate, saw that at once. If you don't speak it means you agree. You must take the earliest opportunity of letting the country know your opinion! With us at home anyone would do it!

CROWN PRINCE (*smiling*)

Even the Prince of Wales?

VICTORIA

He's never placed in such a position. But, here in Prussia, if you openly declare that you disapprove of the step which has been taken by the Government, you will break through a dull old tradition and advance the progress of your country by fifty years at one blow.

CROWN PRINCE (*reflectively*)

Supposing we got hold of the more sensible people in the Upper House, and had a meeting.

VICTORIA (*laughing shrilly*)

Oh dear! Oh dear! These old things who went to sleep about the time of the Holy Alliance! Compared with them our House of Lords is positively anarchical! You must *speak out*.

CROWN PRINCE

If I kept quiet now, the way would be open for me later.

VICTORIA (*vehemently*)

Later! Don't you see that later—and sooner rather than later—the overstrained rope may break? Do you want us to drag out the rest of our days in the Scottish Highlands? Listen to what my mother writes to-day. (*Reading.*) “All London is excited over your Prime Minister. Seeing, however, that he is what he is, you would be wise to be very critical and careful in what you say to anyone.” I shouldn't like to see the *Times* to-morrow! (*Grimly.*) Or, rather, I *should*!

CROWN PRINCE

Calm yourself, Victoria!

VICTORIA

Calm myself! When my honour, my children, our future are all at stake? An arrogant Junker, selected by the shortsightedness of the old King, is to have the power of settling our future! Do you suppose that I mean to lose power and life because

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KING AND PEOPLE

your Prussian ideas of government are still at the stage of pigtails? [Enter Footman hurriedly.]

FOOTMAN

Your Royal Highness, their Majesties are just driving up to the front garden-gate!

BOTH (*springing to their feet*)

Without notice!

[Enter a Lady-in-waiting, who helps the PRINCESS to arrange her dress. A Footman brings the CROWN PRINCE his cap. Two others quietly range through the pavilion putting things to rights.]

VICTORIA (*close to her husband in front R.*)

You must tell him!

CROWN PRINCE

If I have an opportunity.

VICTORIA (*suddenly becomes coaxing and stands right in front of him, exciting all the power of her girlish charms*)

No, Fritz, you must make one!

CROWN PRINCE

But, Vicky, the servants!

VICTORIA (*unabashed, throws her arms round his neck*)

Promise me! You must promise me! Dear Fritz, please promise me.

CROWN PRINCE (*embracing her, smiling a little irritably*)

Well, well, my darling, I promise.

[Meanwhile the KING and QUEEN have come

through the garden behind them, and are standing at the foot of the steps. The Servants have withdrawn, except an old Attendant of their Majesties. The spouses turn and hasten towards them affectionately, though somewhat startled and embarrassed.

KING (*kissing VICTORIA, much amused*)
I'm afraid we've disturbed a domestic idyll!

VICTORIA

Papa! We have been married four years!
[*General family greetings, all coming to the front of the stage. The QUEEN sits down and her Attendant places a footstool for her.*

QUEEN

And how's the boy getting on?

VICTORIA

As naughty as ever, mamma!

KING

I'm glad to hear it. Till he is eight years old he can stay with the women and do what he likes. After that he has his duty to his Fatherland. I'd like to see him.—No, just let him go on playing by himself; that's the best way to get to know children.

[*Exit KING L., accompanied by the CROWN PRINCE. The Ladies remain seated in front R.*

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KING AND PEOPLE

QUEEN

It is still as beautiful out here as if October weren't upon us.

VICTORIA (*uncertain of her opening*)

Yes, but on our morning rides we're already beginning to see a little hoar frost on the leaves.

QUEEN (*feeling her way cautiously*)

Does Fritz ride with you every day?

VICTORIA (*surer of her gambit*)

Alas, he is often too busy now.

QUEEN (*smiling rather coldly*)

Too much politics?

VICTORIA (*aggressively*)

Too little, mamma.

QUEEN (*sententiously*)

Enjoy your care-free life while you may, my children! These years of quiet happiness will never return.

VICTORIA (*on the war-path*)

Is Coblenz such a pleasant memory?

QUEEN (*with an exaggerated sigh*)

The best years of our life!

VICTORIA (*rather spitefully*)

After all, mamma, every season has its charm.

QUEEN (*as above*)

But, my dear, spring can never be brought back.

[*An uncomfortable pause.*

VICTORIA

Papa . . . seems to be quite in the saddle again?

QUEEN

He has many worries. Has Frau von Bismarck called on you yet? What do you think of our Premier's wife?

VICTORIA (*shrugging her shoulders*)

Pietistical.

QUEEN (*with emphasis*)

Piety is certainly her best feature. I wish he had some of it.

VICTORIA (*interested*)

Do you think he is an atheist?

QUEEN (*shocked*)

Bismarck? He's a terrible fellow! He is quite capable of taking off his coat and mounting a barricade himself if the people get out of hand. *Il ne pense qu'à la puissance.*

VICTORIA

With us at home such a thing would be impossible.

QUEEN (*smiling frostily*)

At home, my dear? Aren't you at home yet in your new Fatherland, my child?

VICTORIA (*equally chilly, in English*)

I beg your pardon, your Majesty.

QUEEN

Well, well, we can at any rate talk German.

[*The QUEEN rises as the two men return.*

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KING (*gaily*)

Quite a charming youngster, your boy! But you must check him a bit so that he doesn't get too much of an idea of himself. (*Threatening playfully.*) Mind, you're not to make him too English!

VICTORIA (*politely*)

How can you think such a thing, papa?

KING (*smiling sweetly*)

My child, you are cleverer than you pretend.

QUEEN (*changing the subject*)

And the baby?

KING

Doesn't count yet.

QUEEN

Ah well, he counts for us women.

[*Exit QUEEN with VICTORIA, L., manifestly with the object of leaving the men by themselves.*]

KING (*with a change of manner, gravely and kindly*)

You look pale. Is anything troubling you? Tell me frankly.

CROWN PRINCE

I read the papers, father.

KING (*sitting down*)

Drop them and go shooting. Or would you like to travel?

CROWN PRINCE

Father, that would look like running away.

KING (*earnestly*)

You are not in the battle, so there's no question of running away.

CROWN PRINCE (*uneasily*)

I am being pushed into it. Piles of letters every day—warning and urging.

KING (*quietly*)

Who urges you?

CROWN PRINCE

Both sides. "Take a hand, you are the hope of the People!" And "Save the throne by taking a definite line!" They're already saying that some Guards officers are "infected."

KING (*growling*)

My officers interfering in politics? That would be the last straw!

CROWN PRINCE (*smoothly*)

Vicky hears rumours from London.

KING

Why can't they mind their own business in London!

CROWN PRINCE

After all, we are not alone in the world.

KING (*sotto voce*)

I fear I am.

CROWN PRINCE (*affectionately*)

No. Not if you would allow me to explain to you what the feeling in the country is.

KING (*gloomily*)

At the Council of Ministers you spoke against the

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King. I came here to-day, Fritz, to find out what you mean by it.

CROWN PRINCE

I only spoke against the Ministers.

KING

They are my servants. I alone am responsible.

CROWN PRINCE (*faltering*)

But some people—think that Herr von Bismarck might drive the King—farther than he either wishes or intends.

KING (*bluntly*)

What do you mean?

CROWN PRINCE

It is said—that he has already—made over his estates to his brother.

KING (*rises ; vehemently*)

Slander! Do you know what that man did for me in those terrible days of March '48? You weren't old enough to understand—then!

CROWN PRINCE (*briskly*)

I was seventeen! And it is just on what happened during those days that I have based my programme.

KING (*looking at him inquiringly*)

And what do you mean by your "programme"?

CROWN PRINCE (*hotly*)

Nothing but an up-to-date and Liberal programme can give Prussia the Power and the Right to dominate Germany.

KING (*after a pause*)

I suppose you've learned that from Professor Virchow? What do you mean by "Liberal"? Didn't my predecessor grant the country a Constitution of his own free will?

CROWN PRINCE (*as above*)

And that is exactly what is now endangered! What Bismarck said to-day in the Landtag has no other object than to break this Constitution.

KING (*strides towards the CROWN PRINCE, having suddenly assumed the threatening air of an officer resenting an insult*)

Break the Constitution which I have sworn to maintain? *[Faces him angrily.]*

CROWN PRINCE (*erect, standing to attention*)

With my humble duty I beg to place my command unreservedly at your Majesty's disposition.

KING (*sharply*)

Fine words! I want respect for my feelings, none of your corpse-like "obedience." (*More quietly.*) Do you think I don't understand your Crown Princely feelings? (*Pause.*) I also had to wait and hold my tongue for twenty years and more, and in my case it meant waiting for a brother hardly older than myself! (*Pause.*) And when I was your age and fell in love, my father kept me on the rack for no less than five years while the Court officials were caballing and Crown experts were arguing about her birth—and in the end I had to take no for an answer. It was then that I learned to see that the old Prussian discipline was a higher law than my personal views of

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things; and I yielded and held my tongue. (*Suddenly angry again.*) What gives you the right to suspect that I am capable of breaking my oath?

CROWN PRINCE (*still standing to attention*)

I humbly beg your Majesty's gracious permission to state my view of the matter.

KING (*brusquely*)

I don't see what prevents you.

CROWN PRINCE (*firmly and more frankly*)

If Bismarck goes any further on the path which he entered to-day, he will dissolve the Landtag, have no new election, and so complete the royal *coup d'état*. Then revolution will be at the door! If this is to be the position I ask myself whether I do not owe it to my children, the rightful heirs of this throne, to make a public declaration, in the interests of the dynasty, that I have had nothing to do with it.

KING (*with rising anger*)

You propose to carry the dissension, which was painfully obvious at the Council of Ministers, into the public streets? You want to set up a banner so that the people may choose between father and son? It's mutiny! (*Turns away, sotto voce.*) This is, indeed, a trial sent by God. To-day I begin to understand the feelings of the young Fritz's father.

[KING sinks into a chair in front R., separated from the CROWN PRINCE by the whole extent of the room. Enter the QUEEN and the CROWN PRINCESS L.; they grasp the situation, and instinctively turn to the CROWN PRINCE.]

QUEEN (*severely*)

You have angered the King?

VICTORIA (*anxiously, sotto voce*)

You have—spoken?

CROWN PRINCE (*losing control of himself. Pays no attention to the Ladies, but hurries up to the KING*)

I cannot stand this!

[*Stands before the KING, uncertain what to do.*]

KING (*stands up and looks at CROWN PRINCE, hurt but calm*)

I hear you wish to travel? (*Silent amazement. Then, with cool politeness.*) Write to your mother, Victoria, that you would like to go to Balmoral for the shooting this autumn.

SCENE II

BISMARCK'S house. *A comfortably furnished sitting-room with a large table L., a sofa, armchairs, pictures, etc.*

BISMARCK and COUNT KAROLYI, both in morning dress, are seated opposite each other. KAROLYI is a Hungarian gentleman, getting on for forty, very fashionably turned out. BISMARCK is dressed more simply and comfortably.

KAROLYI (*cheery, but on his guard. Speaks in the Viennese manner, but with a slight Hungarian accent*)

Well, your Excellency, if I may venture to sum up, the Prussians are cross with us again. So as a punishment we must copy out (*imitates a schoolmaster giving an imposition*) the whole thing ten times.

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BISMARCK

If you won't smoke, Count, you'll place yourself at a disadvantage, and I hate to see my guests at a disadvantage!

KAROLYI

And what's the advantage of smoking?

BISMARCK

Your hands and your eyes are occupied, your nose is pleasantly stimulated. You are generally happier and consequently readier to take the initiative.

KAROLYI (*amused*)

Ah, but you must know, your Excellency, that when one has the honour to be the Austrian Kaiser's Ambassador, one is in the fortunate position of not having to take the initiative. It is the other side who always want to ask something of us.

BISMARCK (*significantly*)

As regards Prussia, that is one of those illusions which I was forced to dispel when dealing with your distinguished colleague at Frankfort.

KAROLYI

But you got on fairly well together there when you were co-operating in the management of German unity.

BISMARCK

Do you mean the German Confederation? That organized German *dis*unity? *That* will-o'-the-wisp was even then on the point of vanishing.

KAROLYI

I should say it was alive and well to-day!

BISMARCK

A ghost, Count—*uno spettro*, as your Italian opponents, *our* friends, say! (*Standing in front of KAROLYI.*) If I were a German Austrian I would pray to God every night: “O Lord, let these seven foreign peoples, with their thirty million wretched Hapsburg subjects, be dispersed to the four winds, each to its own country and live there happy ever after. But let us, who are the miserable minority, be united with our German brothers north of the Danube, so that we may all pray to Thee in the same language!”

KAROLYI (*still quite civil but cunning*)

Charmant! Unfortunately, as your Excellency knows, such a petition is forbidden in our Monarchy. It would, indeed, be a crime against international justice.

BISMARCK (*bluntly*)

It's not *my* prayer. *Mine* is different because I am—a Prussian. (*A pause. Sits down again, then resumes politely.*) It's not my business, and it's not in my power, to relieve your Imperial Master of his alien subjects. Whether, however, we can attain German unity so long as these strange peoples (including the noble race of Hungary) are bound up with you—I don't really know. I should be greatly obliged to you, Count, if you could tell me the right incantation to use.

KAROLYI (*cheerfully*)

After all, have we any need of magic? All we have to do is to go on working peaceably together—at the reform of the Confederation!

SCENE II

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BISMARCK (*positively*)

We have been operating on that unhappy body for the last twenty years. I fear there is only one possible reform: they must choose between you and us.

KAROLYI

But, your Excellency, that would be treason. You would deprive Germany of our traditional protection!

BISMARCK

That error rests on the false assumption that Prussia requires protection.

KAROLYI

Well, now you must forgive me if I differ! With all due respect, is *this* moment, when Prussia is suffering from serious internal quarrels, the most appropriate at which to boast of its external power.

BISMARCK (*on his feet, firmly and icily*)

None better. For the time being we are governing rather roughly—it happens to suit us—one move at a time, always on a cash basis. Vienna overestimates her power. If Vienna were disposed to carry things further in the German Confederation without us, we should have to regard that as a breach of the Federal Constitution and withdraw our Ambassador from Frankfort. You will, therefore, be well advised, at the decisive moment (*emphatically*)—which is, possibly, very near—to go hand-in-hand with Prussia—or else to remove your centre of gravity to Ofen¹—in which case in a future war you would find us on the side of your opponents.

¹ *I.e.*, Budapest.

KAROLYI (*who has listened with amazement, gets up, and after a pause, continues good-temperedly*)

Very well, your Excellency. But if you really mean what you say, namely, that I should report this at home—then you certainly wouldn't be a diplomatist of our school.

BISMARCK (*very politely*)

What school are you referring to?

KAROLYI (*taking it for granted*)

The one from which we all come—Metternich!

BISMARCK (*dryly*)

Don't know it. I'm from Lower Pomerania.

KAROLYI (*smiling uneasily, after a pause*)

I must say you did that extraordinarily well! If one could only gather whether your sphinx-like Excellency is inclined to France or to Russia.

BISMARCK (*coldly and firmly*)

I am Prussian, Count, and if, on due consideration, the interests required it I should be quite ready—it would give me the same satisfaction—to see our troops firing on all the uniforms of Europe—yes on *all*.

KAROLYI (*standing up ; after a moment*)

That is all extremely in-ter-est-ing! Especially the suggestion that we might shift our centre of gravity to Ofen. That is, of course, the dream of every good Hungarian. All the same, I shall take the liberty of reporting nothing of all this at Vienna; I'll call again in a day or two and continue the discussion when

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your Excellency is—what shall I say?—less high and mighty. We can then talk business, as I used to do with your distinguished predecessors. My compliments!

BISMARCK

I shall be delighted at any time! (*At the door.*) You see, you *should* have smoked!

[*Exit KAROLYI, laughing.*]

(*Alone.*) He wants me to think he's only pretending to be a fool. And that's what he really is!

[*Enter JOHANNA VON BISMARCK and ROON L.*]

JOHANNA, *between thirty and forty, is petite, elegant, black-eyed; rather unsociable in general, entirely bound up in her husband.*

JOHANNA

Free at last?

BISMARCK

Oh no! Not for ever so long yet! But I've got a minute or two. I'm expecting another very interesting visit presently.

JOHANNA

I kept your friend to see you.

ROON

You'll soon hate me, like everyone else! I'm the one who's really responsible for all these worries.

BISMARCK (*stands talking to ROON, while JOHANNA sits*)

I certainly have got into a fine mess! Last September, when I got your telegram at Avignon, "The pear is ripe," I was in an olive grove with a

beautiful Frenchwoman and her husband. Yes, Johanna, *and* her husband. We were walking by the Rhone, and I felt as free as in my first year at Göttingen.

ROON

And yet, three years ago, you didn't like it when you weren't sent for!

BISMARCK (*looking at him combatively, then with a smile*)

Yes, Roon! We're like that. Happiness is always where we are not. All the same, I had no notion what a mountain of hostility I should have to gnaw my way through.

ROON

Don't indulge yourself with so many hatreds, Bismarck!

BISMARCK

So you grudge me my one solitary pleasure? My ten fingers are not enough to count them on. (*Sits by JOHANNA on the sofa and playfully counts on his fingers.*) Austria—the German Confederation—the Crown Prince—the Crown Princess—the Queen. Other hand: Denmark—(*middle finger*) a very important and formidable enemy—the Queen of England—my dear Liberal friends—*item*, six of my Cabinet colleagues. Johanna, lend me one of your hands; my two are not enough. [*They laugh.*]

ROON

Do you feel better now?

BISMARCK

Sometimes I make up lists like this in my head when I can't sleep at night.

JOHANNA

But you've forgotten Napoleon.

BISMARCK (*mysteriously and slyly*)

Sh! He's my great friend! He thinks his complaisance will be rewarded by the Rhine frontier. But that transaction, alas! won't come to anything. But, in all seriousness, he's not half so bad as Virchow.

ROON

While you're in the vein, tell us, who is the worst of the lot?

BISMARCK

The very worst thing is the Family Connection! Everybody's related to everybody else and consequently is either for or against everybody else. Especially the ladies. There's the Crown Princess; she's a sister of the Hesse woman—and therefore dreads any complication with Denmark. The Queen, from Weimar, must have Central Germany spared. The English Queen is married to a Coburg, and thus related to all Europe, which, however, doesn't prevent her from playing off any one of these ties of affection against another. Even my own King, a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, is always rather afraid of his managing wife's criticism, and is for ever boggling at some point of honour. Of course, all the ladies are Liberal; that looks well and costs nothing. Government by the harem! (*Playfully.*) Johanna, look out for squalls if ever you so far forget yourself as to take up petticoat politics!

ROON

What a horrible job!

BISMARCK

You soldiers are the only people to be envied! It's—up, let off your muskets and go for 'em!

ROON

That's all very well if you're actually in command of an army! But to sit for ever at a desk, to be always preparing, to be constantly bothered by civilians whose heads one would like to knock together, and not to have the smallest prospect of smelling powder!

BISMARCK

We're the real heroes!

ROON (*taking his leave*)

There's nothing for it but to be patient and carry on. Good morning. [*Exit* ROON.]

JOHANNA

Why were you so emphatic about Denmark?

BISMARCK (*serious and thoughtful*)

That was meant for Roon. To-day, particularly, I want him to think that I'm ready for anything on that point.

JOHANNA

Doesn't Roon know all you know?

BISMARCK

I take care, anyhow, to make him let me know all he knows. Some news has come in which he hasn't heard yet owing to this morning call of his.

JOHANNA

And aren't you going to tell him?

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

BISMARCK (*by the window*)

I must first prepare the King. He's quite sure to call this morning.

JOHANNA

I suppose the King, at any rate, knows your whole programme.

BISMARCK

At the proper time he hears as much of it as he, and the moment, can stand.

JOHANNA

I only hope some of them won't do you a mischief because of all these plans of yours!

BISMARCK (*kissing her brow*)

My dear angel, all they do is to talk!

JOHANNA

Yes, until one of them takes it into his head to shoot!
[Footman enters with a visiting-card.]

JOHANNA

Your interesting visitor?

BISMARCK (*preoccupied*)

Excuse me, my child.

JOHANNA (*as she goes out*)

Now he's beginning to have secrets even from me.
[Exit JOHANNA L.]

BISMARCK (*with the card in his hand*)

They mustn't meet! It's now ten! The King never comes before half-past. (To Footman.) Charles,

you're to stay by the window. When you see the King's carriage turn into the Wilhelmstrasse, announce that the doctor has come. Now, show the gentleman in.

[Exit Footman, and re-enters ushering in LASSALLE. BISMARCK, in his politest manner, invites LASSALLE to be seated. LASSALLE takes out a cigarette, with which he plays, making the most animated gestures the while. At first he is cautious, but he soon falls into his natural manner. He often stands up, wanders about the room, fingers a book, and raps lightly on the table. He is very restless and nervous, but never transgresses the bounds of good manners. BISMARCK, on the other hand, speaking more slowly and less often, leans back comfortably in an armchair, looking on, at once serious and amused. Every now and then he takes a long pull at his cigar, carefully knocking off the ash. His obvious placidity is in strong contrast to the manner of his more nervous interlocutor.]

BISMARCK

I have to thank you for your very interesting pamphlet and also for the care with which it was wrapped up. It's a well-known fact that in most Ministries there are as many eyes too many as there are brains too few; so a double wrapper is not—without its uses. Won't you smoke? The contents of your pamphlet also have a double bottom.



[Rischgitt]

FERDINAND LASSALLE

SCENE II

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LASSALLE (*smiling*)

That, your Excellency, seems at any rate to be the opinion of the Public Prosecutor, who has confiscated it and is prosecuting me.

BISMARCK (*ironically*)

Don't tell anyone that I have a copy, else they may take it away from the Prime Minister himself.

LASSALLE

If I were as tactful as the Prussian Public Prosecutor I should at once publish this splendid advertisement.

BISMARCK (*still ironically*)

I heard with regret that you were forced, on account of it (*with gesture*), to spend some days outside——

LASSALLE (*also ironically, turning an imaginary key*)

Inside, your Excellency, inside!

BISMARCK

I hope you wanted for nothing? Books? Writing materials?

LASSALLE (*with the same ironical courtesy*)

Many thanks. I was admirably looked after. After all, it comes to very much the same thing whether a man is chained for a week, let us say, to his own study by a sprained ankle, or doing time at Moabit. The noblest minds of Greece kept me company and lulled me into complete philosophic cheerfulness. I was perfectly happy. Moreover, the folly of my conviction will advance my views more than any pamphlet I could write.

BISMARCK

Console yourself. Quite recently the magistrates somewhere or other let off a man who had publicly slandered me with the light sentence of a week's imprisonment on the ground that, as a matter of fact, I'm a very bad Minister!

LASSALLE

Usually I manage to get myself acquitted. This time my Liberal judges were particularly horrified because I had dared to demand Universal Suffrage—a reform which we'll undoubtedly have within a year or so.

BISMARCK

So soon as all that, Herr Doctor?

LASSALLE

Sure as Fate. Your Excellency will grant it yourself, if, as I hope, you last so long.

BISMARCK

Had you to give bail?

LASSALLE

A hundred thalers! An insultingly small sum!

BISMARCK (*with restrained irony*)

One hundred thalers for a man like you! That is even more humiliating than I thought the week was in my case. You should lodge a protest, and demand that the amount should be increased.

LASSALLE (*laughing*)

Our friends the Liberals should pay it—seeing that they call themselves the “moral party.”

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BISMARCK

You won't get our German idealogues to drop that virtuous pose. Their digestions wouldn't work without it. Politics being merely the art of the practicable, our professors find it an embarrassing topic, like drawers, which of course we must have, but conceal from the public gaze.

LASSALLE

Isn't our next job to deprive these gentlemen of their hundred and sixty seats?

BISMARCK

Just my dream! But how?

LASSALLE

Dissolve Parliament; reform the franchise.

BISMARCK

A very doubtful method. Should one commit suicide for fear of death?

LASSALLE

You approve of our present franchise?

BISMARCK

Nothing could be stupider!

LASSALLE (*rhetorically*)

What? And yet you would hesitate to adopt this, the most approved method of the modern Dictator, the very one which Napoleon used to fortify the Imperialist reaction?

BISMARCK (*smiling*)

The fact that you recommend it must of itself make me hesitate.

LASSALLE

I do not expect, your Excellency, to convert you to my views of things in general. But, as you're speaking in terms of practical politics, it seems to me that the gulf between us is not unbridgeable. You're fighting the Liberals; so am I. Nine-tenths of the nation are loyal to the King and are prevented from showing it only by the present mode of election.

BISMARCK (*smiling*)

In the towns, however, you have been labouring, with terrifying success, to induce the people to change this laudable attitude.

LASSALLE (*evasively*)

That—these are things that can't work out for a long time to come. For the moment co-operation between us seems possible. Afterwards we can resume the fight with greater bitterness.

BISMARCK

Are you already strong enough, Herr Doctor, to offer us an alliance?

LASSALLE (*rapidly*)

Did you not just speak of my "terrifying" successes?

BISMARCK

They are probably exaggerated by your Press?

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE (*conceitedly*)

Well, I may venture to boast that on the Rhine and the Ruhr the workers gave me a regular triumphal procession, took out the horses and drew my carriage themselves, and filled the halls to bursting!

BISMARCK (*still ironical*)

Very flattering indeed! And on what basis do you suggest that this marriage of incompatibles is to be arranged?

LASSALLE

I am against Napoleon because he has betrayed the Democracy; you are against him—for other reasons. I am against Austria *because* it is reactionary; you, *in spite* of that.

BISMARCK

What would you do about Austria?

LASSALLE (*rhetorically, standing while BISMARCK keeps his seat*)

First, we must reform the Army as you and Roon have planned. Then we must invade Austria, send all the Hapsburgs and their alien crew to the devil, deliver the German Austrians, and join them to the Confederation under the headship of Prussia.

BISMARCK (*smoking, attentively*)

Hm! And when would all this begin?

LASSALLE

Why not to-day? Could any day be more suitable for such a plan? The King of Denmark died last night.

BISMARCK (*rather surprised*)

So the special editions are out already?

LASSALLE (*curtly*)

No. But I heard it an hour ago. (*Resuming his former tone.*) The new King will grant a Constitution to Schleswig-Holstein. The quarrel about the duchies will break out again in the Confederation. The opportunity we want for breaking with Austria lies before us! That's how Frederick the Great would have acted. The very day the colours fade on the frontier posts of the South German States a united Germany is an accomplished fact.

[*Stands expectantly in front of BISMARCK. A long pause.*]

BISMARCK (*rising slowly*)

In every age there have been men who can see truly into the future, but who haven't the patience to wait for it.

LASSALLE (*changing his tone*)

Very good, very good indeed! Is that in Lessing?

BISMARCK (*dryly*)

Perhaps it is. At any rate, I say it now.

LASSALLE (*adroitley*)

Ah! I understand your plans even when you veil them.

BISMARCK

Yours are as clear as day.

LASSALLE

And so they should be! Unlike you, we have nothing to conceal. We bring a new idea.

BISMARCK

The idea of a republic is as old as humanity.

LASSALLE

As old, you might say, as monarchy, which was a popular monarchy once. That's why we must seize the chance of bringing the people on the stage again to support it.

BISMARCK

Of what period and of what people are you speaking?

LASSALLE (*more slowly, significantly*)

Of Prussia and to-day! I have long followed your career from a distance, your Excellency, and I understand men if I understand anything. It may be that you are the Man chosen by Destiny to bring about the union of the Germanic races. Allow a Socialist to implore you to do it *with* the people, not *against* them!

BISMARCK

I have never been an enemy of the people. That is an invention of the Liberals. But our people can only be held together through their dynasties. (*In a lower tone.*) Unfortunately, they are not yet fit to govern themselves.

LASSALLE (*passionately*)

You are wrong! They are the most intelligent nation in Europe—certainly not inferior to England, which governs itself. All that's the matter with them is that they have been docile too long! Did not a King of Prussia, here in Berlin, once refuse to accept the Crown from the hands of the People? Be warned.

Do not repeat the mistakes of 1848! Give the Germans a trial. You will find them as ripe as you'll let them be. Leave the Princes in their place for all I care, but create a strong German Parliament through which the People can govern themselves. If you do this men will raise altars in your honour!

BISMARCK

I don't want any altars. We are all fallible and liable to go astray.

LASSALLE (*beseechingly, but quietly*)

Destiny has turned towards you and does not veil her face. If you have been chosen to make a reality what we have been trying to do for fifty years, and if you build your house on the Throne only, instead of anchoring it deep in the masses of the people, you will implant enmity against the Throne in these masses, and on some unlucky day they will rebel—and you will have brought about exactly what you wished to avoid!

BISMARCK (*coldly*)

All the better for you if I make this mistake. It will make your revolution certain.

LASSALLE

What you could create to-day is a King by Grace of the People who would no longer hold his crown by Divine Right. What we have in mind is something that must come in the long run, and, do what you will, you can only hasten its advent. (*Passionately raising his voice.*) A time will come when no European Prince, as he looks down from heaven, will be able to descry his grandson on the Throne on which he

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

himself had sat too proudly. A time will come when all the Crowns of Europe will roll in the dust and nobody will care to pick them up. A time will come——

[Enter Footman.

FOOTMAN

Your Excellency, the doctor has come! [Exit.

LASSALLE

I beg your pardon.

[LASSALLE, *in order to regain control of himself, crosses to the window, where his interest is suddenly aroused by what he sees.*

BISMARCK

It is the lot of those of us who are getting old to be afflicted by all kinds of ailments incidental to this mortal life. You are too young to have visitors of this sort. I hope soon to have another talk with you.

LASSALLE

At any time you like to send for me. But not unless. [Going.

BISMARCK

This way, if you don't mind; it leads to the back entrance through the garden. If anyone saw you coming out in the Wilhelmstrasse, our "alliance," as they term it, would be in all the papers to-morrow. And that might—do you harm, Herr Doctor.

LASSALLE

I can't hope that it would do you any good, so I will go through the garden. (*At the door, smiling.*) By the way, your doctor must be a very great man.

He came, I see, in a royal carriage, and everyone is turning to look at him.

BISMARCK (*also smiling*)

You don't say so. Just like the future President of the German Republic!

[*They greet each other still smiling; exit LASSALLE. BISMARCK returns to the room. Enter a Footman, dusts his boots, adjusts his tie, and exit.*]

I only hope he has not spoken to the Queen since the news from Denmark arrived!

[*Exit through open door. Steps heard on the staircase. An Aide-de-camp appears, then the KING, then BISMARCK behind him. The door is closed.*]

KING (*cheerfully*)

What do you say to this stroke of luck?

BISMARCK

I am glad to find your Majesty in this humour.

KING

To take to one's bed just before the conflict and to die with a good conscience! The King of Denmark is to be envied for God's goodness to him.

BISMARCK

I am more interested in the fortunate development of the situation for Prussia which the King's sudden death—(*produces a telegram*)—Unrest in Copenhagen. The new King will proclaim a Constitution for Schleswig-Holstein and thus restore our freedom of action.

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

KING

What freedom?

BISMARCK

Freedom to take instant and resolute action to protect the mouth of the Elbe for all time from the guns of Denmark.

KING

To take instant action? But I have absolutely no rights over the two duchies?

BISMARCK

Rights, your Majesty? Had your father better claims to the Rhine, *his* father to Poland, Frederick the Great to Silesia? All your predecessors have enlarged the Kingdom.

KING (*uneasily*)

It may be so. But that kind of thing can be undertaken only by such as have peace in their own country. (*Goes silently to the window, then turns round abruptly.*) Or am I doing injustice to the Crown Prince?

BISMARCK

A son may have right on his side in a quarrel with his father—but never in a quarrel with his King. Who will obey when the Heir Apparent is in revolt?

KING

But they torment me also about my oath to observe the Constitution. This must all be set right. I will send for legal and spiritual advisers to reassure me.

BISMARCK

It is for the King to interpret the Constitution according to his own conscience.

KING

I shrink from the discredit which this controversy may bring upon the country.

BISMARCK

Rather is it an honour, your Majesty, and one which could come only to a nation like the German, consisting of so many independent units.

KING

But it hits me personally! There are overwhelming signs of it! (*Shocked, in a low voice.*) Even the people in the streets are beginning to avoid saluting me!

BISMARCK

Then I advise you to tell the first one you meet to be good enough to keep his hat on!

KING

You can still jest in these threatening times! But you will learn to tremble! I see well enough what the end of it all will be! In the Schloss-Platz there, under the windows of my palace, your head will be cut off and a little later mine too!

BISMARCK

Et après, sire ?

KING

Après ? Why, we'll be dead!

BISMARCK

We must all die, your Majesty. Could we wish for a more honourable death? You, for your Royal Rights by the Grace of God; I, in the service of my King and Master.

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

KING (*with animation*)

You are really the only man who knows how to cheer me up! You *believe* in our power to win!

BISMARCK (*with fire*)

Young David's only weapons were pebbles from the brook, but his bold heart brought him victory! I feel something of the same spirit. God has not abandoned Prussia yet. (*After a pause, in an altered and more sober manner.*) As, however, our faith in God should issue in action, I have made arrangements by which we can now concentrate fifty thousand men in any part of the country at six hours' notice.

KING (*drawing a long breath*)

You raise my courage! But in the meantime, look out for yourself. They are quite ready to seize the private property of Ministers who spend money without the consent of Parliament.

BISMARCK (*significantly*)

And what would your Majesty direct me to do about that?

KING (*embarrassed*)

I also—have children. We might, perhaps, consider the question of *transferring* your estates.

BISMARCK (*firmly*)

When I think it likely that my house may be set on fire by my own fireworks, could I, honestly, take out a fire insurance policy? If your Majesty were to command this, I should simply ask leave to resign!

KING (*relieved*)

I knew it! You, too, are an idealist!

BISMARCK (*protesting vehemently*)

Certainly not, your Majesty! (*Then gruffly.*) All I want is to get through life decently. I have, however, just seen an idealist. Lassalle has been here.

KING

The Jewish visionary? Do you wish to buy him?

BISMARCK

He's not for sale. I mean to use him for a little.

KING

But I hear he is quite crazy!

BISMARCK

Why? He wants to unify Germany. Unfortunately it amuses him to get intoxicated from time to time with the applause of a few thousand working men.

KING (*reflectively*)

There's someone else who wants to unite Germany! I suppose he too has his own prescription——?

BISMARCK

Not so bad: seize Schleswig and dismember Austria.

KING

Utopian!

BISMARCK

Well, Utopia sometimes very quickly becomes reality when the heavy guns come up.

KING (*standing up*)

What are you hiding from me, Bismarck?

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

BISMARCK

I told Count Karolyi a few home truths this morning.

KING

You wish to provoke Austria?

BISMARCK

I want to use her, and so I have threatened her.

KING

Immediately? Use her?

BISMARCK (*firmly*)

In order to enter into the inheritance of the King of Denmark.

KING

With this Landtag in our rear?

BISMARCK (*taking up a document*)

I wanted to lay this Order before your Majesty. It would free us at one blow.

KING (*looking at it*)

I see it is the dissolution of the Landtag!

BISMARCK

Why should that alarm your Majesty; the Constitution gives you this right?

KING

Yes, in order to have a new election! Would you risk that in the present temper of the country?

BISMARCK

We could wait a bit.

[91]

KING

How long?

BISMARCK (*weightily*)

Until our victories glorify the Army which they are now scheming to destroy! Does it please your Majesty to affix your signature!

[*Holding out the paper.*]KING (*hesitating*)

In what circumstances would you use it?

BISMARCK (*grimly*)

I should like—in *any* circumstances—to feel that I have it in my breast pocket.

KING (*looking gravely at BISMARCK*)

A dangerous path! [He signs the order.]

BISMARCK (*putting document in his breast pocket*)

Through danger—to victory, your Majesty!

SCENE III

The Diet. A corner of the chamber ; in the background are seen some of the semicircular rows of seats. In the middle, R., is the Tribune, the President's raised seat above, and the desk for the speakers below. Adjacent is the Ministerial Bench. There is a full house ; most of the members are seated, but some are standing in the gangways. As the debate proceeds there is a general movement towards the front. On the Government Bench sit BISMARCK,

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

ROON, *and* six other Ministers. ROON *is speaking when the scene begins.*

ROON (*from his place*)

. . . the Resolutions of the Majority would jeopardize the safety of the country; they would expose us unprotected to any enemy who chose to attack us. Of course, what you put in your Resolutions is not what you really want; if it *were* you would have to stop calling yourselves patriots.

[*Angry interruptions. Cries of "Insolence! We are no worse Prussians than the Generals! Withdraw!"*] The PRESIDENT *sounds his bell.*

PRESIDENT

I must ask you to let the Minister of War finish his speech.

ROON

What you are doing now, gentlemen, is merely factious. By means of obstruction you hope to get rid of a Ministry you dislike. That is all you want. But so long as we enjoy the confidence of our Master, we will *not* give way!

VOICES

Neither will we!

ROON

I take my stand on that as a soldier, and as the responsible head of an Army that was victorious at Rossbach and Leuthen, at Leipzig, at Belle Alliance, and on many another battlefield, and once more call upon you to vote the money for which we have asked.

[*Cries of "Not a groschen for this Government!"*] *Great disorder.*

PRESIDENT

The Prime Minister is in possession of the House.
 [*Some Members come nearer.*]

FIRST MEMBER

Come on! It's Otto the Great himself!

SECOND MEMBER

He'll be sure to put his foot in it!

[*BISMARCK rises. A sudden calm. He speaks with studied courtesy and is most business-like.*]

BISMARCK

Gentlemen! Every aspect of the question which has led to such regrettable friction between the Government and the Representatives of the People has been thoroughly examined from the point of view of constitutional law. I have now the honour to report the results of that examination to the House. In the first place, as the House will recollect, you reduced the Army vote by one-fifth, whereupon the Upper House threw out the whole vote. What does the Constitution prescribe in such a case as that? Nothing. There's a hole here. (*Shouts of laughter. Cries: "A hole? He's found a hole in the Constitution!" Grimly.*) I said "a hole." (*Silence.*) The Constitution confers rights on the Landtag alone. But on the other hand the Landtag has no rights outside the Constitution. The King, on the contrary, derives none of his rights from the Constitution. His Royal prerogative is independent of and unimpaired by it. (*Disorder. Cries of "Jesuit! Very good! Bravo!"*) If, therefore, a doubtful question arises as to the respective powers of the Crown and Par-

liament the King's free judgment must decide. This House has used its rights in a way which would destroy both the Army and the Country, so the King as *bonus paterfamilias*, as the Head of the Family, if I may so put it—(*Cries of "Spendthrift!"*)—as the Head of the Family, has no choice but to take the conduct of affairs into his own hands. Once more then, I ask you, even now, to accede to our proposal.
 [*Dissent and uproar.*]

PRESIDENT

The debate is open. Dr. Virchow.

VIRCHOW (*goes to the Tribune amid vociferous applause. Speaks frankly, pointedly, and rather viciously*)

Gentlemen! The Minister of War has accused us of lack of patriotism. The most patriotic thing that he could now do for this unhappy country would be to resign his post as soon as possible. (*Loud applause.*) By so doing he would avoid polluting his military honour by a scandalous breach of the Constitution he has sworn to observe. The veil is torn, and anyone can see that this Government have now openly unfurled the banner of absolute monarchy. (*Tumultuous applause.*) But the banner of the Constitution which the people won for themselves at the cost of so much toil and suffering, lies in tatters on the ground! The King swore to observe it, and he must keep his oath. As things are, what does his adviser do? *He constructs a hole!* (*Shouts of laughter.*) He simply cuts out the Landtag's right to exist and declares that, as we cannot agree, the King must decide. For, says he, the Landtag must not put constraint on the Crown! I ask myself, does this perversion of the truth come from innocence or impudence? (*Cries of*

“*Impudence!*”) We no longer have a Constitution; only a scrap of paper remains in our hands. I must say I revere the long-suffering patience of the Prussian people! The reply of a more excitable nation to such conduct as this would be revolution. (*Storms of applause and uproar. The PRESIDENT rings his bell. Continuing.*) For fifty years Prussia has enjoyed profound peace. What need have we of a new Army? (*Loud applause.*) Is war anywhere in sight? We want to know. (*Applause.*) The new Prime Minister being what he is, we may not unreasonably suspect that a very different employment for the new army is in contemplation. Perhaps he wants to fortify himself against internal troubles, and intends to counter our constitutional refusal of supply with civil war! (*Great sensation.*) I see he is going to follow me, and I note the storm-signal on his brow. Very likely he will at last show his true colours. (*With passionate gestures.*) He who sits there, gentlemen, is the same Herr von Bismarck-Schönhausen who in 1848 opposed the first steps towards Constitutional Government, who incited the present King to fire on citizens engaged in a peaceful demonstration, and who, finally, raised his voice at Erfurt against German unity! (*Uproar.*) I say that, for the last month, following the policy of this Government has been like watching the antics of a rope-dancer when you wonder every moment that he doesn't come to grief.

[*Storms of applause and protracted disorder.*
PRESIDENT rings his bell.

FIRST MEMBER

In view of the overwhelming effect of this speech, I move the adjournment of the debate.

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

VOICES

Adjourn! Adjourn!

PRESIDENT

The Prime Minister has already notified his desire to speak.

[A cold and sudden silence. BISMARCK speaks at first rather gruffly, restraining his excitement with difficulty; afterwards more and more passionately.]

BISMARCK

The Government has no intention of making the declaration that the previous speaker has demanded. (*Hear! Hear!*) The King will decide on peace or war without consulting you. If you refuse the necessary funds, we shall take them where we can find them. (*Cries of "Insolence!"*) That does not mean that we are contemplating war, though when Professor Virchow refers to a fifty years' peace, I must say I think that his researches in the dissecting-room on the corpses of men and animals have rather impaired his understanding of the policy which is necessary for a living State.

[Stormy dissent and cries of "Enough!"

PRESIDENT

I must ask the Prime Minister to keep to the subject.

BISMARCK (*turning sharply, in a threatening tone*)

Do you mean to say I am out of order, Mr. President? I could easily devote an hour to the person who has thought fit to make a personal attack on me, and to what he has said, but, it seems, I am not

allowed to make any reply. However—(*ironic pause*) he is beneath my notice. (*Cries of "Shame!" After a pause, more coldly.*) "Shame" is an expression of disgust and contempt. These feelings, gentlemen, with which we all have good reason to be familiar, I am too polite to express. (*Interruption.*) Is war anywhere in sight? asked the previous speaker. Napoleon, gentlemen, has a war every two or three years. In Galicia revolution is imminent. Russia has half a million men under arms. The Balkans are seething. We must not be unprepared in the presence of all this. Without dreaming of any plans of conquest and merely to meet this situation, Prussia needs a strong army. (*Dissent.*) You have, however, spoken of German unity, which, it is said, I opposed so strongly. (*Aggressively.*) Why, then, have you not yet achieved unity? What have the professors and the other dilettanti been doing for us with all their fine phrases? It is you who are to blame, you and your factious spirit—which is the curse of Germany, and which—before God and before History—I say is guilty of having kept German brothers apart these fifty years. (*Uproarious dissent. Crescendo.*) Shout as you like! Fill the air with your impotent cries! Henceforth we shall know how to extricate this fateful question from the preciosities of your rhetoric! We shall put the Kings of Prussia in a position to forge their weapons for themselves, so that, *in spite of you all*, they may one day bring the struggle for German unity to a victorious conclusion. (*Violent uproar. Members press to the front.*) Come on, gentlemen. I have a devil in me, and in spite of your supreme authority which changes its face every three years, and in spite of your strangle-hold on the Army,

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

I mean to prepare the weapon which will achieve German unity. For Germany is looking, not to Prussia's Liberalism, but to Prussia's Power. And German unity will be achieved, not by your speeches and your majorities, not by your newspapers and your shooting-matches, but by blood and iron.

[BISMARCK is reduced to silence by the torrent of interruptions. The PRESIDENT rings his bell in vain. Amid the cries a loud voice from the rear is clearly audible.]

VOICE

Bloodhound!

BISMARCK (*turning towards the interrupter and raising his voice above the clamour*)

Who called out that? (*A sudden silence. Then, to the general amazement, BISMARCK descends the steps and forces his way through the crowd of Members. All give way to him. In the midst of the crowd.*) Let the coward show himself!

[*Tremendous excitement. Cries of "Order!"*]

PRESIDENT

I must call both the unknown interrupter and the Prime Minister to order, for insulting a member of the House.

[BISMARCK turns round, storms up to the Tribune, stands menacingly right in front of the PRESIDENT'S chair, and shakes his fist in the PRESIDENT'S face. He has quite lost control of himself.]

BISMARCK

I am not a Deputy, Mr. President! If you presume

to call His Majesty's Ministers to order, I beg to return the compliment!

PRESIDENT

You are mistaken, your Excellency! The discipline of this House, for which I alone am responsible, extends to everyone under its roof.

[*Loud cries of "Bravo!"*]

BISMARCK (*returns abruptly to his place and pulls out a document*)

Then I have to communicate to the House a message from His Majesty. (*Sudden silence. All crowd round him. Reading.*) "On the requisition of my Prime Minister, I declare that the House of Representatives is dissolved. The date of the new elections will be made known later. Wilhelm Rex."

[*BISMARCK then leaves the House followed by the Ministers.*]

VIRCHOW (*raising his voice above the noise*)

We will impeach the Ministers of the Crown!

[*Tumult.*]

ACT III

SCENE I

LASSALLE'S house, as in Act I, Scene II. LASSALLE, elegant and nervous, is in conversation with three poor but decently dressed weavers, each of whom has a glass of liqueur before him. Two of them are evidently ill at ease, gaping awkwardly at the pictures and rugs of the richly furnished room, like peasants who have come to present their birthday greetings to the lord of the manor.

LASSALLE

So they didn't show you up the main staircase of the palace?

FIRST WEAVER (*young and good-humoured, but dull and shy*)

Oh, the staircase was fine enough, that I *will* say. But the King's own staircase must be a good bit wider.

SECOND WEAVER (*young, revolutionary, keen*)

It was wet and no doubt the palace servant was afraid we poor weavers might dirty the steps. So, of course, they took us up the back staircase, like they always do, Herr Doctor.

LASSALLE

Hm! And did they keep you waiting long?

FIRST WEAVER

A good hour, I'm sure. But it was in a beautiful

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT III

gold room, with everything very nice. And after all, it wasn't so very long, when you think of all the King has to do.

LASSALLE (*rhetorically*)

He has nothing more important to do than to listen to the voice of his People! And what about the Lord Chamberlain? Had that puppy the impudence to give you a lecture beforehand on how to behave.

FIRST WEAVER

He's a civil gentleman, Herr Doctor, that I *will* say.

SECOND WEAVER (*sulkily*)

But he didn't ask us to take so much as a drop of anything!

THIRD WEAVER (*old and tired*)

Damn it, Emil, how you do talk! We weren't asked to a wedding!

LASSALLE

When he did come, was he stuck up, or nice and friendly?

FIRST WEAVER

Eh, Herr Doctor! What a fine old gentleman the King is, to be sure! He shook hands with us all and then he said—now, what *was* the first thing he said? I was all in a muddle!

THIRD WEAVER

He said he knew very well——

SECOND WEAVER (*sharply*)

The first thing he did was to look us up and down

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

as if he had never seen such poor devils in his life before!

LASSALLE (*eagerly*)

There, you see? That was my idea! The King is not a bad fellow. But those about him never let him know of the sufferings of his people. I wanted *him*, for once, to see for himself what poverty means! Tell me all about it; it's very important for us! It is something quite new in Prussian history! You are pioneers, so to speak! What *did* he say?

SECOND WEAVER

Fine words, Herr Doctor, nought else!

LASSALLE (*angrily*)

Fine words! I suppose he——

FIRST WEAVER

Who is the leader of our deputation? You or I?

LASSALLE (*sitting*)

Well! Well! Tell your story your own way.

FIRST WEAVER

First of all he said he was glad that his Silesian weavers had made their way to Berlin. And he is going to give Herr Reichenheim a good talking to.

LASSALLE (*beaming*)

Didn't I tell you? That is where we shall score over these brigands. What next!

FIRST WEAVER

And he is going to send us, right off, eight thousand thalers out of his own savings! And, then, he's going to order his Ministers——

SECOND WEAVER

He never said "order"! He said "I'll try to prevail on my Ministers." That's what he said.

FIRST WEAVER

To get the State to intervene and help us poor weavers.

LASSALLE (*jumping briskly to his feet, half soliloquizing*)

State aid! Just my idea! That brings us very near universal suffrage!

THIRD WEAVER

And what do we gain, Herr Doctor, from the new franchise?

LASSALLE

A majority! Liberty! We'll sweep the country! Only have a little more patience!

SECOND WEAVER (*mockingly*)

Now you're talking just like Bismarck himself!

LASSALLE (*in a different manner*)

What? Did you see Herr von Bismarck too?

FIRST WEAVER

Emil says it was him. I don't know, but my uncle here—he knew him.

OTHERS

Yes, yes. He was there all right.

SECOND WEAVER

When we came out the big fellow was standing there, but he didn't offer to shake hands.

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE (*smiling*)

I can well believe that. But he spoke to you?

FIRST WEAVER

Well, he was a little standoffish, but it was all right. He only asked what the King had said, and when I told him, he laughed kind of queerly and said, "Well, I'm afraid it won't run to roast goose next Sunday!"

OTHERS

Yes, that's just what he said.

SECOND WEAVER

The scoundrel!

THIRD WEAVER

Now, keep cool, Emil!

LASSALLE (*soliloquizing by the window*)

Bismarck beyond a doubt! (*Turns round ; rhetorically.*) Perhaps, my dear comrades, the roast goose will not be quite so long in coming as Herr Bismarck believes and hopes! I have a way to force him to accept universal suffrage.

THIRD WEAVER (*dispiritedly*)

How will that come about, Herr Doctor? You can't work miracles with the few supporters you have.

LASSALLE (*offended*)

Are you so sure of that? The truth always begins in a small way. We already have four thousand in the Union. Who can say whether we may not have half a million in a few months? If then I give the word "halt!" Bismarck will have to look for his Danish war in the fairy book.

SECOND WEAVER (*standing up ; violently*)

We care nothing, Herr Doctor, for the franchise or for the war! You've worked it all out very fine with your books and your figures! But we don't know about that kind of thing. We want bread for our children, and wages, higher wages I tell you, that's what we want, not votes! And if you can get that for us the King (for all we care) may be three times as upset as he is, and his Minister three times as high and mighty!

FIRST WEAVER

Now, keep cool, Emil. The Doctor means well by us.

THIRD WEAVER

You're always shooting off that bloody mouth of yours.

LASSALLE (*condescendingly, and with difficulty refraining from sarcasm*)

Let him alone! Every one of us is free to express his opinion, even at the expense of his leader. Have another glass, my friends. And as for politics, you had better leave the ways and means to me.

FIRST WEAVER

Yes, indeed, you'll do it all right! You've learned how.

SECOND WEAVER (*still more sharply, almost frantic*)

There's nothing to learn, I tell you, mates! If you've ever been starving you know all right. And if Herr Doctor had ever had four weeks sitting at the loom, I reckon he wouldn't need any books or any

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

Union either! When we are half a million in number, or, maybe, three millions, we won't need any King, in his gilded palace, or any Doctor in his fine parlour either!

[*He claps his cap on his head and makes for the door, where he meets the Servant, who says something to LASSALLE in a low voice.*]

LASSALLE

What? Ask her to wait a moment. (*The Servant makes a gesture of helplessness.*) The devil! Not here.
[*Enter HÉLÈNE VON DÖNNIGES, in a hurry and rather excited; she is strikingly dressed.*]

HÉLÈNE

Am I *de trop*? Ah, you have visitors! (*In an undertone, but much too audibly.*) Men of the people, I see!

LASSALLE (*quickly collecting himself; becomes theatrical again*)

Yes, my dear Hélène! And very discontented people too! Lassalle has just been having a dressing-down! No, no, my friend, allow me! I know what flame consumes you; for neither books nor art, which seem to displease you, can harden a heart that has learned to beat for the oppressed.

THIRD WEAVER

Don't be offended, Herr Doctor! Don't mind Emil and his silly jaw.

LASSALLE (*laughing irritably*)

On the contrary, I ought to be grateful to you for frankly revealing the soul of the People freely to their Leader. (*More sharply and excitedly.*) Do you think that I have any more time to lose than you? Do you not understand that it is torture for me too—this patience? But I have learned to measure big things with big measures. From these books, which you make the mistake of despising, I have learned that an age is but as a moment, and that we are *all* poor men. (*Less artificially.*) Ah, gentlemen, if you could only realize how this breast of mine is convulsed when we have to wait, year after year, for the fulfilments of the future!

FIRST WEAVER

We are also very grateful to you, Herr Doctor, for having got the public grant for us from the King.

THIRD WEAVER

No one else troubles about us. And for this, dear doctor, our children's children will still be praying for you.

LASSALLE

Don't speak of it, my old friend. It is my duty. A pleasant journey to you, and go on hoping—as I hope! It cannot be much longer now!

[*Exeunt the Three Weavers, muttering and gesticulating, each after his own fashion.*]

HÉLÈNE (*laughing*)

And you think you're going to make a revolution with these poor devils?

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE (*seriously and quietly*)

For them, not *with* them. But only a mental one, Hélène. Violence is a back number.

HÉLÈNE (*changing her mood and throwing her arms round his neck*)

Forgive me, Ferdinand! How earnest, how noble you are! How you can inspire the poorest with the divine fire of your own soul!

LASSALLE (*gently breaking away from her ; darkly*)

You are wrong; that's only flattery. It's *all* wrong. (*On the divan, soliloquizing.*) Mere self-deception; one's dream was of rushing like a flame across the world—like a torch which a god's mighty hand might sweep round the uttermost edge of the hemispheres! (*With rising excitement.*) I thought I could convulse my time like a new planet and so appease the primordial fever in my blood. In order to express themselves the great conquerors did not shrink from the fiery ordeal of war—and all I wanted was to be the means of bringing happiness to mankind! (*Sceptically.*) At forty what have I attained? I have written my fingers sore, preached my throat hoarse, warbled like a tenor before a hundred judges, bruised my bones on the plank beds of prisons—all to get four thousand poor devils of German workmen to found a Trade Union.

HÉLÈNE (*sitting beside and half-embracing him*)
My Knight! My lover! Patience——

LASSALLE (*springing to his feet*)

Not patience! What I need is a million working men! Is there anything more humiliating for a strong

spirit than to have to press his gifts upon men, instead of having them snatched from him by eager hands? He was right, that insolent blockhead! What has the happiness of the masses to do with me? I am weary of striving for power! They must have their roast goose to-morrow, always to-morrow! I want rest and happiness and love. I want you, my red fox! My Valkyrie!

HÉLÈNE (*in his arms*)

You have me already, you dark stranger from the East. (*Coquettishly.*) And what do you think I have brought you?

LASSALLE (*letting her go suddenly, in a matter-of-fact tone*)
News? From——

HÉLÈNE

Perhaps from closed rooms, through the cracks of whose windows my fingers have slipped like the sand of the sea?

LASSALLE (*on tenterhooks*)

Not from the Wilhelmstrasse? A message from—him! (*Seizes her arm.*) Won't you speak?

HÉLÈNE (*angrily*)

Must I pay for my gift with a broken wrist?
[*Tears herself away.*]

LASSALLE (*excited, but softly*)

Forgive me—but speak.
[*Makes her sit down and stands in front of her.*]

HÉLÈNE

How rough you can be! Sometimes one would easily take you for a real tribune of the people.

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE (*with a short laugh*)

Is this the way? Well?

HÉLÈNE

Last night when I was with Rakowitz at the French Ambassador's, I suddenly caught sight of Duncker's face in the thick of the crowd and went up to him at once. He's always glad when he hasn't got to dance, but for the first quarter of an hour of our *tête-à-tête* I found him as close as a Secretary of State. Finally, however, he opened up and gave me a pretty clear notion of Bismarck's plans, having evidently heard all about them from the Crown Prince—and gave me to understand clearly enough that——

LASSALLE

What? Will he grant the suffrage or will he not?

HÉLÈNE

He will grant it—but after the war!

LASSALLE (*stamping his foot*)

Swindler! War! I hope he'll be hit by the first bullet!

HÉLÈNE

Does it matter now or later——

LASSALLE

If we win everybody will desert the Liberals and rush to join the Junkers! Our blockheads will be the first to go! Are you sure that Duncker wasn't setting a trap for you?

HÉLÈNE

On the contrary; his interest was evidently to conceal it from you as long as possible.

LASSALLE (*stung to fury, pacing up and down*)

I knew it was coming. Exactly what I tried, weeks ago, to persuade Bismarck not to do! Exactly the contrary of what he half promised me he would do!

HÉLÈNE (*rather scoffingly*)

Bismarck—promised?

LASSALLE (*irritated*)

Damn it! He *did* lead me to think so. How he has done me over this universal suffrage! And I, I have got my people in the humour for his Schleswig-Holstein war. I've been preaching "national" politics; I've been writing for the *Kreuzzeitung*!

HÉLÈNE (*naïvely confident*)

Take your revenge, Ferdinand, and overthrow him!

LASSALLE (*flattered*)

Yes—I'll see what can be done about that! We are not finished with each other, my fine gentleman from Schönhausen! I accept your challenge! I have only to wave my hand to call the flood back! Look! Here I have the strength of the masses in one clenched fist! In my hands I hold the hammer ready to strike in the fullness of time!

HÉLÈNE (*delighted*)

Yes, you are Thor, the dark god!

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

LASSALLE (*excited, but still half in jest*)

And you are Freia, my red-haired goddess! Look how well we suit each other. (*Stands with his arm round her before a mirror.*) Do you know this couple? He will one day be, in spite of Bismarck and the Kings, the First Man in Germany. And beside him stands the wife of the President with her red locks!

[*Voices, already heard in the ante-room, become clearer. HÉLÈNE and LASSALLE fall apart. HÉLÈNE remains involuntarily before the mirror to arrange her disordered hair. LASSALLE goes to the door and listens.*

RAKOWITZ (*outside*)

Let me in, I say, or I'll beat the door down!

[*LASSALLE instantly opens the door, goes out, and shuts it behind him.*

LASSALLE (*heard outside*)

What do you want?

HÉLÈNE (*inside*)

Rakowitz! He has been watching me!

[*She looks for a hiding-place and slips out through a second door, R. LASSALLE is forced back into the room by RAKOWITZ, while the Servant looks on helplessly.*

LASSALLE

What is the matter with you? There is no one here.

[*RAKOWITZ rushes in.*

RAKOWITZ (*in his broken German*)

If you are a man of honour, let my betrothed leave this room where you have shut her up.

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT III

LASSALLE (*again quiet, scoffingly*)

Your betrothed? Are you quite sure you're going to marry the lady?

RAKOWITZ (*boiling with rage*)

I am not here to listen to your impertinent questions!

LASSALLE (*superciliously*)

Ah indeed? And why *are* you here at all, may I ask?

RAKOWITZ

Let the lady out. I am responsible for her protection.

LASSALLE

Ah! You think you are in the cave of a dragon who carries off innocent maidens? You are mistaken. I also am a nobleman, only my lineage goes back some thousands of years further than yours.

RAKOWITZ

We do not recognize the lineage of the house of David.

LASSALLE

Well, yours is quite unknown to us in Germany.

RAKOWITZ

What have you to do with Germany? You're an alien!

LASSALLE (*sarcastically*)

You, as a Roumanian Christian, however, are quite at home here.

SCENE I

KING AND PEOPLE

RAKOWITZ

Release my betrothed!

[LASSALLE goes to the door and leads HÉLÈNE in. She stands amazed between the two men, looking from one to the other.]

LASSALLE

I have no wish to steal this lady. I leave her free to choose.

RAKOWITZ (*turning to her violently*)

What are you doing with this fellow?

LASSALLE (*stepping in front of her*)

If you insult the lady, I cannot trust her to your fury.

RAKOWITZ (*quite beside himself*)

Criminal! Traitor! Gaol-bird! Out of my way!

LASSALLE (*thrusting him violently backwards*)

Scoundrel!

RAKOWITZ (*staggering*)

You shall pay for this at the pistol's point.

LASSALLE (*superciliously*)

I shall await your seconds.

RAKOWITZ

Within an hour.

[*Rushes off.*]

HÉLÈNE (*with a complete change of manner throws herself into LASSALLE'S arms*)

For God's sake, Lassalle! He is a dead shot!

LASSALLE

And my hand is unsteady, you mean. (*Quietly.*)
Come, put on your hat, and I will drive you home.

HÉLÈNE (*beside herself*)

No, let us fly. Let us fly together.

LASSALLE (*superciliously*)

Fly? From the threats of a rival? Abduct you as if I were a nameless beggar? So that the ruling class might curl their thin lips at me? Come along, Hélène!

HÉLÈNE (*as if paralysed*)

I don't know what you mean! [*Exeunt both.*]

SCENE II

A Court Ball. Ante-room of the White Hall, separated from it by columns and descending steps. Curtains between the columns, partly drawn up, conceal the ball-room, of which only a corner is visible. Dancing couples are seen passing from time to time. Soft dance music at some distance is heard both before and after the curtain has gone up. Later it is now and then interrupted. Everyone is in full Court dress, with decorations, jewels, and tiaras. In front is a group of men talking among themselves in low tones.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

The Lion hasn't come yet.

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Sudden illness of a child, I hear. . . .

THIRD GENTLEMAN

Oh, yes! He arranges for someone to be ill whenever he doesn't want to come. He keeps half a dozen children for this very purpose.

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Let the man alone. He will wear himself out soon enough, in these bad times. And then there'll be a chance for *our* Quadrille.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Take care. In this corner we are all for progress. We are of the Crown Prince's party to the very tips of our shoes.

FIFTH GENTLEMAN (*coming from the ball-room*)

Have you heard? His Majesty's going to Carlsbad this summer.

SEVERAL VOICES

He never went there before!

FIFTH GENTLEMAN

Carlsbad, you see, is in Austria. His physician, Dr. Bismarck, won't allow him to go to the Radical baths of Baden and Ostend any more.

THIRD GENTLEMAN

Does anyone seriously believe he can hold out till summer?

SCHLEINITZ (*joining the group*)

Well, gentlemen! Is this the Congress of Vienna?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

No, else Metternich would be here! How goes it? Black? Grey? Or grey with white spots?

SCHLEINITZ

When you let an adventurer drive the coach there's some new shock every week. He has always been abusing Austria—and now suddenly he's all over the Hapsburgs. We are letting slip this one chance in a century of putting Prussia, *via* Schleswig-Holstein, at the head of the National movement. This gambler is now playing my old policy, and playing it wrong.

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

Yesterday, however, Consols were up again.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

And Austrian crowns down.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

The same old ebb and flow.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I don't see much *flow*, my dear Count.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Have you noticed that the Crown Prince has danced the whole night without ever sitting down?

SCHLEINITZ

Since his return from England his Royal Highness evidently wants to show that he is interested in nothing but sport and such like.

SEVERAL VOICES

Well put, my dear Baron!

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SCENE II

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FIRST GENTLEMAN

The *Times* puts it differently. Its account last week of the private life of the Royal Family at Berlin was the height of impudence!

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Do you gather that here we are again one heart and one soul?

THIRD GENTLEMAN

Four hearts and not one beat!

[Laughter. The music breaks off very suddenly.]

GENTLEMEN *(all talking at once)*

What's the matter? The Lord Chamberlain is beckoning. Everyone is crowding up! His Majesty?

[They hurry into the ball-room, leaving the stage empty. Voices without, then a single voice. The music begins again with a march. Various couples are seen passing. Great commotion. Male and female voices heard. Everyone is talking more or less at once.]

VOICES

Unter den Linden? Uninjured? Entirely! Knocked him down they say! Nonsense! That's splendid! What does His Majesty say? How did he look? He looked up to heaven, and then he ordered a military march to be played. Who is the assassin? Look, here they come! The King is escorting Frau von Bismarck—always gallant! Everyone is crowding round Bismarck. Come on, come on!

[They hurry out again, while the Four Gentlemen take up their original positions.]

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Did you see how calm he was? Really the man has a devil in him!

SECOND GENTLEMAN

That's better than a bullet.

THIRD GENTLEMAN

Well, he's got the whole country down on him!

FOURTH GENTLEMAN

It couldn't by any chance have been a Liberal.

FIFTH GENTLEMAN

A madman, or an anarchist!

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Look how they've all got to congratulate him, no matter how much they hate him! And we, my friends, what do we think of it all?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I never think.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

But you smiled?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

I always smile.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Now, own up, hand on heart! Confess you wouldn't have been altogether sorry if there *had* been a little accident.

THIRD GENTLEMAN

How you talk, you old cynic!

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

FIRST GENTLEMAN

The truth and nothing but the truth!

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Here comes the Field Marshal.

[*Enter old WRANGEL in cuirassier uniform.*]

WRANGEL

Well, what do you say to this, children? Old Bismarck isn't so much of a damned quill-driver as I thought. Never knows exactly *what* he wants, but he always wants something, although he *is* a civilian. Well! well! Have you heard? He carried it off quite well for an old Reservist!

GENTLEMEN

Has he told you how it all happened?

WRANGEL (*beaming humorously, with vivacious gestures*),

Suddenly there's a bang close to his ear. Unter den Linden. Instead of dodging off, he springs at the rascal, grabs with his left hand the scoundrel's right with the pistol still smoking in it, and squeezes his throat with *his* right. But he hasn't done with the beggar yet, for *he* takes the thing in *his* other hand and fires two more shots. Of course, he misses. No wonder, now we have the short term service! But by this time Bismarck's cordial embrace of his swan-like neck has exhausted his breath and the thing falls clattering on the pavement.

GENTLEMEN

Splendid! Wonderful!

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WRANGEL

Well, what else do you think he said? (*Imitating BISMARCK's clear, matter-of-fact enunciation.*) "I have known it happen that a red deer's ribs spring back all the more elastically after they have been hit." (*Laughing loudly and clapping his hearers on the shoulder.*) What do you say to that, children? These diplomats and their lingo! "I have known it happen that a red deer's ribs . . .!" Well, well, it's good for such folk to smell powder once in a way! Here comes Her Most Gracious! I'll be off! Up yonder in the Green Salon they're serving a Lafitte—the milk of the aged, says old Goethe. Come along, boys, come along!

[*Exeunt all.*]

[*Enter the QUEEN with BISMARCK in the uniform of the Halberstadt regiment. The Ladies who accompany her retire.*]

QUEEN (*at first very gentle*)

Manifestly, the hand of God was over you to-day! Your dear wife understood that. Her heart was too full to speak.

BISMARCK (*visibly stimulated by his excitement, and more aggressive than ever*)

She is a believer, your Majesty.

QUEEN

Who is not? *You* should be one to-day if ever.

BISMARCK (*simply*)

As my life has been preserved I conclude that God still needs me for my Country's service.

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

QUEEN

God needs no one, Herr von Bismarck. *We* need Him.

BISMARCK

But when He delivers us from a danger He clearly approves of what we are trying to do.

QUEEN

Perhaps He means rather, in His great goodness, to prepare us for some new trial.

BISMARCK (*emphatically*)

It seems to be your Majesty's pleasure at any rate that some such new trial should take place.

QUEEN (*still, apparently, gentle*)

I would only beg you to take counsel with yourself very seriously before you enter on a dangerous path.

BISMARCK

Had I not taken counsel with myself very seriously *before* taking the steps I did, God would scarcely have delivered me from the danger I was in to-day.

QUEEN (*vehemently, but softly*)

You are about to refuse to hand over Schleswig-Holstein to its rightful Duke? To make an enemy of everyone in Germany who cares for Freedom? To isolate Prussia? To dissolve the German Confederation without putting anything solid in its place?

BISMARCK

If your Majesty had yourself questioned me about this, instead of Herr von Schleinitz . . .

QUEEN

Why are you always so afraid of von Schleinitz ?

BISMARCK

I'm not *afraid*—even of persons of some capacity.

QUEEN

You evade my question with your sarcasm.

BISMARCK

If your Majesty yourself had asked me about the ultimate objective of our foreign policy, it would have been my duty to ask the permission of my Royal Master before I could have given you an answer.

QUEEN (*rising to her feet, excitedly*)

I am astounded at the boldness of your language, seeing that really you haven't any success at all to boast of. The King is so much worried by your new move in the Danish question that he hasn't slept for three nights.

BISMARCK (*with suppressed anger*)

I also have had three days of fever and a bad bilious attack in consequence of my official anxieties. The fight with this assassin to-day has, however, suddenly cured me.

QUEEN

So you really think that *fighting* is the only cure for the internal sickness of our country ?

BISMARCK

Nature furnishes examples which we may follow in such crises.

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

QUEEN

I have long seen how dangerous is the course you are steering. To-day, under the influence of such a merciful intervention of Providence, I had hoped to find you in a more receptive mood. But now, as the wife of a much tried man, it is my duty to say to you that your policy of force means gambling, not only with the safety of your Country, but also with the health and the very life of your King.

BISMARCK

Your Majesty's frankness makes me hope that I also may speak freely. I am not to blame, nor are my official proposals, for the King's nervous attacks. It is *your* influence which distracts him, and I ought long ago to have most respectfully begged you to desist from these unconstitutional and irresponsible attempts to work on my most Gracious Master.

QUEEN (*rises and glares at him. Beckons to a Lady-in-waiting in the background*)

Come! Our gracious Prime Minister is very ungracious to-day.

[*The QUEEN, followed by her Lady, crosses the room, leaving BISMARCK standing alone. She meets the CROWN PRINCE and CROWN PRINCESS coming up the steps.*]

QUEEN (*half aloud*)

See what you can do with this man. He becomes madder every day! [Exit the QUEEN.]

BISMARCK (*alone, pulling at his collar*)

Confound these tight collars! I felt better an hour ago when I was busy choking that fellow.

VICTORIA (*going straight up to him*)

Your Excellency is ill? After such a shock wouldn't it have been better to go and have a quiet rest?

BISMARCK (*very aggressive both in look and tone*)

If I had, no one would have believed that I had escaped unhurt. My enemies would have been triumphant. I scarcely think I was wrong about that!

CROWN PRINCE (*approaching him*)

So far as I could see every one was delighted. They were all congratulating you.

BISMARCK

They would have congratulated themselves even more heartily if I had come to grief.

VICTORIA

The more enemies the more honour. Isn't that a German proverb?

BISMARCK

I should very much like to know whether it is not also an English one, your Royal Highness.

VICTORIA

Why?

BISMARCK

Because Lord Palmerston made a speech yesterday in the House of Commons which will bring him little honour, but many enemies.

VICTORIA (*hostile*)

It cannot bring England anything but honour in

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Europe if she won't hear of war between Germany and Denmark.

BISMARCK

Your Royal Highness speaks like an English-woman.

VICTORIA

Not at all. The Crown Princess of Germany would find complications of this kind doubly painful.

BISMARCK

Your Highness's heart is no longer free to beat for countries beyond the German frontier.—Not even if your sister were to become your enemy.

VICTORIA (*passionately, but without raising her voice*)

Do you really mean, your Excellency, that it is your business to dictate to me what my feelings as daughter and sister should be?

BISMARCK

I mean only to remind you that if you dread a conflict of affections you should do all you can to prevent a conflict of nations.

VICTORIA

You know that we are powerless.

BISMARCK

Your Royal Highness should try to mitigate the feelings of Her Majesty the Queen of England.

VICTORIA

And what if instead of that I tried to mitigate *your* desire for war?

BISMARCK

There is no question of a desire for war.

CROWN PRINCE

Our only wish is to serve the Fatherland in what seems to us the best way.

BISMARCK

One must serve the Fatherland as circumstances permit. What else do you think I am doing? Do you think it's one's dearest wish to follow a course which ends in an attack from a man with a revolver?

VICTORIA (*coldly and hostile*)

If it is not your dearest wish, why on earth do you do it?

BISMARCK (*after a pause, significantly*)

Perhaps in order to blaze a new trail through the undergrowth of this forest.

VICTORIA

Why don't you follow the beaten track?

BISMARCK

In the first place because it is blocked, and in the second because it is a long way round.

CROWN PRINCE

You mean to substitute force for agreement?

BISMARCK

Say, rather, I mean to use force as a guarantee of liberty.

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

VICTORIA (*superciliously*)

Liberty? We had no idea, Herr von Bismarck, that you had become a Liberal.

BISMARCK

I attach no importance whatever to catchwords, your Royal Highness!

[Movement in the ball-room; then the KING and ROON come up the steps. The Group on the stage turns to meet them.]

KING

I hope, my child, you are not over-straining our Premier with your clever talk. He has already had enough to-day.

VICTORIA

Oh, your Majesty, neither of us is in a position for anything but quite theoretical conversations.

[The KING offers his arm and leads her to the Ladies by the steps.]

KING

Perhaps you would like to adorn the dance with your charm.

[Two formal curtsies. Exeunt VICTORIA and her Ladies. The KING, the CROWN PRINCE, BISMARCK, and ROON remain on the stage. An Attendant draws the curtains behind them.]

KING (*sitting, while the others stand*)

You want the ultimatum this evening? Are you not exhausted?

BISMARCK

I am rejuvenated, your Majesty! The attempt on my life is a new proof that there is no time to lose. Besides, for to-morrow, and perhaps the next day, I can count on something we couldn't have hoped for, namely, the sympathy of the Press, which, of course, hates me, but which will have to take the decent line about the murderer. This friendly attitude may do much to help the war.

KING

I am still afraid of the Landtag in our rear.

BISMARCK

The Landtag is dead.

KING

Yes, but since you murdered it, its ghost has been more horrible every day.

BISMARCK

Roon's victories will lay the ghost—among other things.

KING

Are you sure of Count Karolyi?

BISMARCK

For a week past I have been talking to him on and off about our real intentions, so that he can now report to Vienna that he had already warned them. Then, *nolens*, rather than *volens*, he'll fall gratefully into our arms.

KING

I'll receive him to-morrow.

SCENE II

KING AND PEOPLE

BISMARCK

Your Majesty should see him to-night, so that there may be a Court flavour about his report. At the Hofburg they're very fond of notes beginning after some such fashion as this: (*imitating*) "Just before the Cotillon, which is performed here in an old-fashioned and economical but not unpleasing fashion, His Majesty was gracious enough . . ." and so on.

KING

You mean really that they make fun of us?

ROON

The Hapsburgs consider themselves first and the rest nowhere in all that concerns a Court!

KING

I'm quite willing to concede them *that* proud pre-eminence. Prussia, however, is now under arms. You are quite ready, Roon?

ROON

Absolutely, in accordance with the plans submitted to your Majesty.

KING

I think—my son has something he wishes to say.

CROWN PRINCE

I should like to ask the Prime Minister what he thinks will be the impression produced in the country by this undertaking. With one voice all Germany is saying: "Schleswig and Holstein belong to the Germanic Confederation." From this national enthusiasm something of the highest value might be developed,

something far better for Prussia than any increase in territory or population. . . . I mean the ideal of German Unity! But if we make war against the will of the Confederation and conquer the Duchies to which we have no legal right, the ideal of Unity will be thrown back for many years. This is the view of thirty-nine out of our forty millions; it is the view of the rising generation. As the youngest present, I feel it my duty to give this warning on the eve of action.

BISMARCK

If your Majesty will allow me——

KING

Yes; please reply to the Crown Prince.

BISMARCK

Three centuries ago the Hohenzollerns forcibly took from us Bismarcks a piece of woodland away back in Lower Pomerania. Even to-day, when I am asked to shoot there, I feel rather sore about it, for this royal wood properly belongs to us.

CROWN PRINCE

Well?

BISMARCK

Had I been Doctor Virchow, I should have accepted the office I now hold only on condition that the wood we were then done out of was restored to me. If your Royal Highness regards the world and politics from a purely ethical standpoint, and proposes to test all European treaties by the standard of their legal validity, the whole structure of the Balance of Power will soon fall about our ears. As

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regards German Unity, however, which my action *appears* to hinder, I humbly beg that you will have enough confidence in me to believe that I also have my plans.

KING (*to the CROWN PRINCE*)

And in any case you are an officer and look forward to a fight!

CROWN PRINCE (*with animation*)

I do, indeed, your Majesty.

KING

You will fight bravely, like your forefathers, my son.

CROWN PRINCE

That I can promise your Majesty.

KING (*to ROON*)

Tell the Crown Prince what post has been assigned to him.

ROON

Your Royal Highness will command an Army Corps under Field-Marshal Wrangel.

CROWN PRINCE (*with animation*)

Your confidence fills me with delight. I thank your Majesty.

KING

Make good, then. And with God be the rest!
[*They shake hands and return to the ball-room.*
Music.

BISMARCK (*looking after them, very pointedly*)

Each supports the other by the sword-belt, or they couldn't go on.

ROON

You were uncommonly frank!

BISMARCK

And he?

ROON (*shrugging his shoulders*)

He—is a Royal Highness.

BISMARCK

The Irresponsible Future! *We* are the Responsible Present!

ROON

What a blessing that scoundrel missed you to-day! Without you, we could never have unsheathed our swords to-morrow. You knocked the pistol out of his hand?

BISMARCK

If I hadn't, I should now be lying (*gesture*) in a decidedly horizontal posture.

ROON

That was the fate which someone else met an hour or two ago. A remarkable affair—the news has just become known in the ball-room.

BISMARCK

What?

ROON

Lassalle has been killed in a duel.

BISMARCK

Parbleu! this *has* been a lucky day! That young man might have made things uncomfortable for me just at present. What was it about?

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

ROON

Women!

BISMARCK

And so, although learned in the law, he lets himself be shot! That was very gentlemanly of him! But it is always better to shoot the other man!

SCENE III

ROON's headquarters in Berlin. A bare room. Numerous general staff maps, some rolled up, some hanging on the walls, others spread out on large tables. It is an afternoon in April. Orderlies come and go. ROON is standing at work before a large map on the table. An Orderly Officer stands beside him, with field telegrams on long strips of paper in his hand. ROON is quite unperturbed throughout the whole scene.

ROON

The Eleventh and four other batteries entirely wiped out? How many prisoners?

ORDERLY

Three thousand, General.

ROON

That's not many. What about the West?

ORDERLY

Rearguard fighting with the Eighth Enemy Corps.

ROON

Where did they stand last?

ORDERLY

Four kilometres north of Tondern.

ROON

When?

ORDERLY

At ten twenty-seven.

ROON

What about the Düppel entrenchments?

ORDERLY

No report.

ROON

Nothing even about the outer works?

ORDERLY

Nothing.

ROON

Is His Excellency still in the next room?

ORDERLY

Yes, General.

[Exit Orderly.]

[A second and a third Officer come in later, with telegrams, which ROON compares with the map. Enter BISMARCK in major's uniform, somewhat slovenly. He is pale and looks as if he had had a sleepless night. He walks restlessly up and down.]

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

BISMARCK

Still no news from Düppel?

ROON

Tenez ! On pourrait critiquer votre tenu !

BISMARCK

Say that in plain German. I am not afraid of the jeers of your lieutenants. What a stuffy hole this is!

ROON

Well, order your nag and have a long gallop in the Tiergarten.

BISMARCK

My legs are stiff. You said I might settle down here till we get something decisive. Is the weather better now out there?

ROON

All the roads are under water. The whole of North Schleswig is a morass.

BISMARCK

How many hours will that delay our advance?

ROON

About five or six days.

BISMARCK

That can't be! (*Very angry.*) Do you think I can continue to hold off England's damned intervention for five more days?

ROON (*annoyed*)

Then please have the scene of operations dried with bath towels and chemically cleaned!

BISMARCK (*coming close to him*)

Roon, I have your word that you won't hide anything from me. If anything goes wrong, I shall go straight to the front and never come back.

[*Enter* JOHANNA VON BISMARCK.]

ROON

I'm glad to see you, my dear lady. Please put this turbulent person under close arrest.

JOHANNA

Forgive me! I'm worried about him.

BISMARCK

Roon wants to turn us both out.

JOHANNA

I wish he would!

BISMARCK

All right, Johanna! What about Rheinfelden! What about Schönhausen! A shooting-box in the green wood! Woods where one would not see a human face. If you could only arrange that for me! No responsibility! Then I should only want a duck's tail to shake! [*Both laugh.*]

JOHANNA

Just think what it means to be married to this impossible man! At home in the country he can at any rate chop wood for an hour when he gets into one of his rages. Otto, what's the matter now?

BISMARCK (*suddenly very serious, speaks softly and slowly, with appropriate gestures*)

Last night I had a ghastly dream. I dreamed I

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

was holding the map of Germany and drawing a long thick line round all its thirty divisions to make one whole of it. Then suddenly the paper in my hands began to smoulder, curled up, and finally fell to ashes in my very fingers. Where did the flame come from? *[He sinks into a chair.]*

ROON (*again at his map*)

What's a dream!

JOHANNA (*simply*)

Our ways are all in God's hands.

BISMARCK (*gruffly*)

All the same, it's a good thing if anything should happen to have a revolver handy.

JOHANNA (*shaking her head—to ROON*)

I am going over to join your wife.

[Exit JOHANNA.]

BISMARCK (*brooding*)

My boys must not go in for diplomacy. It's an accursed profession in which a man has to see all the gravest decisions taken out of his hands with no more power over them than a lunatic sitting behind bars and mumbling prayers. (*Suddenly rising.*) Why is the attack on the entrenchments still delayed?

ROON

How can I tell here? They say old Wrangel has got it into his head that it would be a fine thing to attack on his eightieth birthday.

BISMARCK

When is that?

ROON

The day after to-morrow.

BISMARCK

Has he gone mad, the old fool? Without Düppel I am powerless in London. You told me yourself that Düppel was the key.

ORDERLY (*entering*)

Count Karolyi wishes to see the Prime Minister.

BISMARCK

May I? As you're putting up with my presence anyway it will produce a better effect on our friend if he sees his allies on a war footing.

[Orderly *ushers in* KAROLYI.]BISMARCK (*amiably*)

Yes, your Excellency, I am playing at soldiers. Have you found anything better to do?

ROON

Everything is on a war footing here, Count, so please take the only chair.

KAROLYI (*gaily*)

Well, really, this place bristles so with weapons, one feels as if one had been made prisoner one's self!

BISMARCK

That's what all we politicians really are when the guns begin.

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

KAROLYI

The guns having begun, the difficulty is to come to any kind of understanding with such a frightful noise going on.

BISMARCK

We can manage without words, Count. (*Rather ironically.*) Doesn't your Hapsburg heart beat higher among all these Prussian uniforms?

KAROLYI

Per-fectly delightful! As to the heart and its beating and so forth, that's the sort of thing I never see except in the newspapers.

ROON (*going on with his work*)

Bravo!

KAROLYI

Perhaps, too, it's a little depressed to-day, my heart, because of what I have on it.

BISMARCK (*coming straight to the point*)

Out with it!

KAROLYI

Vienna is bombarding me with despatches about the London Conference.

BISMARCK (*more coolly*)

A little patience, Count.

KAROLYI

You've been saying that for a week past. I'm afraid they're near breaking-point at Vienna.

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT III

BISMARCK (*firmly*)

They *must* hold their hand.

KAROLYI

The intervention of England——

BISMARCK (*brusquely*)

Must hold it's tongue till we've got the Düppel entrenchments in our pocket. Before then I'll sit at no conference.

KAROLYI (*standing up*)

I beg you——

BISMARCK

Not a minute sooner, Count.

KAROLYI (*seriously*)

Then I am charged by Vienna, your Excellency, to protest strongly. To-morrow we shall be compelled to agree to go into the Conference alone.

BISMARCK (*gravely*)

Vienna alone? Without Prussia? You propose to make war together and peace separately? Do you know what we should be compelled to do in that case, your Excellency?

KAROLYI (*excitedly*)

Don't put it into words!

BISMARCK (*resolutely*)

What should I be afraid of? You were joking, just now, about your being a prisoner. We have forty thousand men in Schleswig; and you only twenty thousand. The supreme command is in the

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

hands of the Prussian Field-Marshal. If your Government dared to telegraph its agreement to London, without our consent, I should publish it in a general order to the troops, and I doubt whether they could be kept in hand, if their natural resentment impelled them to turn against their Allies.

KAROLYI (*pale, formally*)

Am I to take your Excellency's statement as official?

BISMARCK

If you do not communicate it to Vienna yourself I shall repeat it to-morrow through our Ambassador at the Ball-Platz.

KAROLYI

Then, alas! I must take my leave of you.

ORDERLY

Her Royal Highness——

[VICTORIA enters quickly.]

VICTORIA (*with animation*)

Now, General, what do you think I bring you?

[*Telegram in her hand.*]

ROON

Victory?

BISMARCK (*rushing forward*)

The Düppel entrenchments?

VICTORIA (*over his head, to KAROLYI*)

Ah, here is our worthy Ally!

BISMARCK (*more urgently*)

Will your Royal Highness not tell us——?

VICTORIA (*superciliously*)

What, your Excellency? Are you managing the war, too?

BISMARCK (*with suppressed spite*)

No, I only endure it.

VICTORIA (*spitefully*)

Millions of men and women have to do that! That is why so many thousand hearts have a grudge against you to-day. Mine among them.

BISMARCK

Although your Royal Spouse is gathering laurels?

VICTORIA

Only military ones. We think more of the laurels of peace.

BISMARCK

The loftiest column I saw in London lifts Nelson, one of your country's war-heroes, to the skies.

VICTORIA

Since then Europe has been filled with new ideas.

BISMARCK

There are some big things which cannot be achieved by words and thoughts alone, but only with the aid of half a million bayonets.

VICTORIA

And what is the great thing that *you* defend at Düppel?

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

BISMARCK

That your Royal Highness will recognize in a few years' time.

VICTORIA

A mere evasion! Or am I still too young to understand it now?

BISMARCK

On the contrary! At this very moment your Royal Highness reminds me, by your keen insight and your cold fire, of the great Elizabeth of England.

VICTORIA

That's a double-edged compliment!

BISMARCK

It would hardly suit me to spin compliments like a courtier.

VICTORIA (*rising*)

Well, now that you have cut this dangerous knot with the sword, I hope at any rate you will now govern through the People whose sons have won for you this victory?

BISMARCK

I? Does your Royal Highness think that *I* have the feelings of a conqueror? I have been passing through the most terrible hours of my life.

VICTORIA (*beaming*)

There now! Do you not see now how wrong your methods were? Your eye is wild, your face is pale. You haven't slept. By violence and against the will of the People you have, *perhaps*, attained what reason and negotiation would certainly have secured.

KING AND PEOPLE

ACT III

These "most terrible hours," must have taught you how it should *not* have been done.

BISMARCK

If your Highness really believes that in Prussia we *seek* war for its own sake—then I am an Englishman.

VICTORIA

A wretched policy it must be, indeed, if you have to be always trembling about the result of a battle!

KAROLYI (*going*)

Your Royal Highness—

VICTORIA

You're in a hurry?

KAROLYI

Important affairs—

VICTORIA (*sarcastically*)

You diplomatists seem to be all nerves nowadays.

BISMARCK (*furious and beside himself*)

Has—Düppel—fallen?

ROON (*who has just received a telegram*)

Read for yourself!

VICTORIA

Now your friend has given it away.

BISMARCK (*reading feverishly*)

"All the Düppel forts have been securely in our hands since two o'clock.—Wrangel." (*Feels round*

SCENE III

KING AND PEOPLE

him, seizes a glass, and smashes it on the tray.) There! Now I feel better! Your glass may be charged to the Foreign Office vote!

ORDERLY

His Majesty!

[*Enter the* KING.]

KING

I come to congratulate everybody.

ROON

The victory has opened our way to the North.

KING

The way to my people! All the way here there was a cheering crowd round my carriage. In 1848 the same crowd hissed me. In these last few weeks the same crowd passed me without saluting. Now the very same mob shouts Hurrah! Read me this riddle?

ROON

Your Majesty has been *victorious*.

BISMARCK (*significantly*)

This time—your Majesty has been victorious!

[*Cries of "Victoria!" from below.*]

ROON

Will your Majesty not show yourself to the people?

KING

Not without you two!

BISMARCK

The mob does not wish to see me! But now, your

Majesty, is the moment for reconciliation with your people!

KING

Victoria! Don't you hear your name! Come with me!

[The KING leads VICTORIA to the balcony. Tumultuous cries of "Victoria!"

BISMARCK (*in front with ROON*)

Do you hear them, Roon? Now they are acclaiming Frau Victoria—no less! Such are the ironies of history!

UNION

1870

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

WILHELM I (*King of Prussia*).

CROWN PRINCE FREDERICK.

COUNT VON BISMARCK (*Chancellor of the North German Confederation*).

MOLTKE (*Commander-in-Chief of the German Armies*).

ROON (*Minister of War*).

KEUDELL.

COUNT BRAY (*Bavarian Minister*).

THREE HIGHNESSES.

NAPOLEON III (*Emperor of the French*).

EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.

DUC DE GRAMONT (*Minister of Foreign Affairs*).

OLLIVIER (*Prime Minister*).

LEBOEUF (*Minister of War*).

WIMPFEN

CASTELNAU

CAUSSADE

TROCHU

THIERS

GAMBETTA

FAVRE

ARAGO

PICARD

ROCHEFORT

} *French Generals.*

} *Democratic Deputies.*

} *Radical Deputies.*

COUNT NIGRA (*Italian Minister at Paris*).

Deputies, Courtiers, Officers.

ACT I. PARIS

A ROOM IN THE TUILERIES.

ACT II. BERLIN

BISMARCK'S RECEPTION ROOM.

ACT III. SEDAN

SCENE I. A ROOM AT DONCHERY.

„ II. A WINTER GARDEN AT CHÂTEAU BELLE-
VUE.

ACT IV. PARIS

„ I. STAIRCASE OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES.

„ II. A ROOM IN THE TUILERIES.

ACT V. VERSAILLES

„ I. BISMARCK'S ROOM.

„ II. ANTE-ROOM OF THE GALERIE DES GLACES.

UNION

1870

ACT I

Paris, 12th July 1870. A room in the Tuileries. Rococo blue and gold, mirrors, chandeliers, a high window R. It is evening; many lights, great ceremonial with servants, formal announcements, etc., in marked contrast to Act II.

First and Second Gentlemen of the Court stand at the window, which is open.

FIRST GENTLEMAN (*excitedly*)

The crowd is growing. Look! They'll soon be shouting!

SECOND GENTLEMAN (*an older man*)

Yet they understand nothing about it.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

In spite of that they must be attended to!

SECOND GENTLEMAN (*leaving the window*)

I can't help despising them. I am too old for your politics. Despotism? All right! But a Dictatorship based on a popular vote—that's too clever for me altogether. M. Ollivier! What is he? Where did he come from?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

The real question is, where is he going?

SECOND GENTLEMAN

To the end! To the end of you and all the rest of you!

FIRST GENTLEMAN

To War and Victory! Listen to the crowd shouting! Look at the papers! (*Reads.*) "Prussia has made the Spanish Succession a challenge. Bismarck wishes to establish a Hohenzollern in Spain as Proconsul!"

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Here come the Marshal and the Duke!

[*Enter* MARSHAL LEBOEUF *and the* DUC DE GRAMONT. LEBOEUF *is a bluff personage in uniform; GRAMONT elegant in Ministerial uniform, nervous, rhetorical, and haughty.*

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Well, your Excellency, do you bring us war at last?

LEBOEUF

Can't you wait till I give you a place right at the front?

FIRST GENTLEMAN (*pompously*)

I shall die with a prayer for France on my lips!

LEBOEUF (*in a low voice*)

How is the Emperor feeling to-day?

FIRST GENTLEMAN (*shrugging his shoulders*)

Much the same.

SECOND GENTLEMAN

Well, Duke, are you pleased with your success?
The papers are full——

GRAMONT (*taking the proffered paper, but without reading it—sententiously*)

I only did my duty. What a drive! We could hardly get through. In the Rue de la Paix the carriage was stopped when they recognized us, and they all shouted: “Mobilize! To Berlin! Down with Prussia!”

LEBOEUF

Wouldn't the Empress have loved it; it would have made her heart leap! Are we announced?

FIRST GENTLEMAN

As soon as you are ready.

[*Exeunt both Gentlemen, ceremoniously.*]

LEBOEUF (*sinking into a chair*)

To tell you the truth I am tired to death. I say, Duke, it's not going to be a promenade!

GRAMONT (*aside, has been looking for the report of his speech in the paper and reads it aloud to himself with pathetic vanity*)

Here it is: “We will not allow Prussia to set one of her Princes on the throne of Charles V and compromise the honour of France! In such a case we would not shrink from doing our duty! (*Loud applause which prevented the Duke from continuing.*)” Ah! It was a great moment! Lace handkerchiefs fluttered from the boxes——

LEBOEUF (*teasingly*)

Especially the handkerchief of a certain Duchess of——

GRAMONT (*posing again*)

Hush, my friend! Not mine was the triumph, but the Nation's! (*Breaks off and walks round the room, visibly preoccupied.*) So the Gardes Mobiles are ready?

LEBOEUF (*sitting*)

Three hundred thousand of them. Only fifty are wanting for the Eastern Army.

GRAMONT (*waving it aside*)

The Marshal of France will call them up with a stamp of his foot. The Reserves?

LEBOEUF

We are short of some field kitchens. Some of our quartermasters happen to be in Algiers.

GRAMONT

Why bother about quartermasters? The nation will be its own quartermaster! If not, what use would field kitchens be?

LEBOEUF

Then—of course you are quite sure of the other countries?

GRAMONT (*reflectively*)

What a question for a soldier! Lord Granville yesterday answered for England; Denmark will help us to land a Corps on the Baltic. As to Italy, the Empress has arranged matters with the military

attaché. And our dear old Austria! The whole nobility are impatiently waiting for their revenge. Do you remember the scene last spring? How the Archduke Albrecht unfolded the plan we had prepared on the long table in the Yellow Salon?

LEBOEUF

A happy hour! The Empress, all in red, stooping over the map. I stood behind her and looked into her lovely bosom——

GRAMONT (*equally carried away*)

It was the bosom of France! (*Both stand quietly smiling together for a moment, then GRAMONT breaks out.*) My God!

LEBOEUF

What's the matter?

GRAMONT

I have been——dreaming at night lately! I sleep badly. Scenes of bloodshed hover before my eyes! And I am suddenly gripped by deadly fear!——

LEBOEUF

Of Prussia?

GRAMONT (*shuddering*)

Of Fate, Marshal. Don't you understand?

LEBOEUF (*soldierly*)

I understand—I often get funk myself.

GRAMONT

Of Fate?

LEBOEUF

No! No! Of the Prussian needle guns.

GRAMONT (*taking him aside*)

I'll tell you a secret, Marshal. In the last forty-eight hours I have sometimes wished that heaven would take this trial off our shoulders, and that this Prince would renounce his candidature.

LEBOEUF

Too late! When you ended your speech in the Chamber with that challenging peroration I went cold all down my back.

GRAMONT (*collecting himself*)

All the more must we hope that our triumph may be bloodless.

LEBOEUF

You may be satisfied with diplomatic victories over Bismarck. I should prefer to beat Herr von Moltke!

GRAMONT

It is natural that you should think only of your laurels.

LEBOEUF

Parbleu! And you?

GRAMONT

As a pious Catholic and Christian I seek to spare human lives.

LEBOEUF (*laughing*)

Doesn't that reflection come rather late? Now you have lightened I have to thunder——

[*Folding doors open behind. Servants. Enter the EMPRESS. She is forty, still very beautiful and youthful in appearance. Later, with her husband, she is more like his daughter than his wife. She is in pale blue, en grande toilette de soirée. In her the fire of Spain is accentuated by a sharply manifested impatience. She thinks quicker but more one-sidedly than the men, and waves arguments aside with her fan. All bow low before her.*

EMPRESS

Well, is everything going satisfactorily?

GRAMONT

When your Majesty's sun shines what could remain clouded?

EMPRESS (*keenly*)

That means that something *is* clouded. What's amiss, Marshal?

LEBOEUF

Had I only the Prussian Army under me I should ask for a short postponement for technical reasons. As, however, I have had the honour to prepare the finest Army in the world——

EMPRESS

Technical! Technical!

SERVANT (*announces*)

His Excellency the President of the Council.

[*OLLIVIER enters L. in Ministerial uniform*

a bourgeois countenance; he is getting slightly grey. Confident.

EMPRESS

You are absolutely beaming! Do you bring the declaration of war?

OLLIVIER

The opposite, your Majesty.

ALL THREE (*much surprised*)

Peace?

OLLIVIER

The latest telegram: the Hohenzollerns renounce the Spanish throne.

EMPRESS

Renounce?

[She stands in the midst of a semicircle formed by the Ministers.]

GRAMONT

Prussia climbs down! We have won the greatest diplomatic triumph of the century!

LEBOEUF

And can improve our preparations against '72.

EMPRESS (*looking from one to another*)

You all seem very happy about it, gentlemen!

ALL THREE (*appealingly*)

Your Majesty!

EMPRESS (*taken aback, gloomily*)

Is the telegram—from Berlin?



[*W. F. Mansell*]

EMPERESS EUGÉNIE

(From a portrait by Winterhaldt in the Louvre)

OLLIVIER

From Madrid, your Majesty.

EMPRESS

And from whom?

OLLIVIER (*as if it was a matter of course*)

From our Minister.

EMPRESS

And who did he get it from?

OLLIVIER

From the Spanish Government, of course.

EMPRESS

So King Wilhelm has spoken only to the Spaniards.

OLLIVIER

"The King? He has spoken to nobody. Prince Anton of Hohenzollern has renounced on behalf of his son "in order to avoid European complications."

EMPRESS (*laughing excitedly*)

Prince Anton? So the obscure Court of Sigmaringen has been graciously pleased to renounce! Not to the Emperor! Not a word from the King! Papa Anton has renounced because he didn't think the throne of Spain was safe enough for his little son! Don't you see? Bismarck has overreached us again—in order that to-morrow he may jeer at our discomfiture! Oh, it is unheard of!

GRAMONT (*compliantly*)

I bow before your Majesty's penetration. I forgot

to ask *who* had renounced and to *whom* the renunciation was addressed.

LEBOEUF

Our prestige is damaged. We must strike.

EMPRESS (*to OLLIVIER*)

But your Excellency is quite satisfied? Is this also one of your liberal doctrines—to take a box on the ear with a smile?

OLLIVIER

Prussia seems to me to be acting quite in good faith. The Prince does not belong to the Royal branch of the family, nor does the Crown in question belong to France. The Spanish people are entitled——

EMPRESS

Be silent about the people from whom I come! Bismarck's agents have been working underground at Madrid. By spying and bribery they have prepared this scheme whereby these Hohenzollerns will be able to crush France from two sides! France needs guarantees for the future—and from King Wilhelm himself!

GRAMONT

The key word! Guarantees! A challenging note to Prussia, gentlemen!

EMPRESS

You're waking up, Duke! You raised the storm and Paris is neither to hold nor to bind. *Now* is the time!

AIDE-DE-CAMP (*announces*)

His Majesty!

EMPRESS

Please wait for us.

*[The Three Gentlemen retire L. and exeunt.]**[Through the centre back enter NAPOLEON with COUNT NIGRA to the EMPRESS. The EMPEROR is in civilian clothes; he is in the early sixties, pale and ill; looks kindly at younger people and with penetrating cunning at his opponents. The customary assurance of his bearing is weakened by illness. NIGRA, the Italian Minister, an elegant person in the prime of life. Throughout this scene all three remain standing.]*

EMPEROR

Count Nigra wishes to take leave.

NIGRA

Your Majesty——

EMPRESS

And what says Metternich?

NIGRA

He holds fast to our—defensive alliance.

EMPRESS

Well! Hasn't Bismarck driven us into a terribly tight corner?

NIGRA (*cautiously*)

I hope this view of the matter will prevail with Prince Metternich——

EMPRESS

You must convince him, Count! Wouldn't Italy be glad to acquit herself of part of her obligation to us?

EMPEROR (*quietly*)

Yes, indeed. I've given her more than one very nice present—Venice, Lombardy——

NIGRA

That is not forgotten, Sire, but——

EMPRESS

But what?

NIGRA

If she is to make war in union with Austria it's only right that Italy should have a wedding present of some kind——

EMPRESS

Italy is always asking!

EMPEROR (*parrying*)

What are we talking about? There's no sort of question of war yet. King Wilhelm—he was staying here a year or two ago—is old and satiated—far too weak to be looking for trouble.

EMPRESS

For that very reason he will be led into follies by that man.

EMPEROR

We want an understanding. Greet the King, my noble friend, from me, and tell him I hope in God that they will give way and that there will be no war.

[*Exit* NIGRA.]



[*W. F. Marshall*]

NAPOLEON III

(From a portrait by Flandren in the Musée de Versailles)

ACT I

UNION

EMPRESS (*walking up and down excitedly*)

I don't like him! He's a fox, just like his noble sovereign!

EMPEROR (*sitting deep in thought*)

Do you trust Austria?

EMPRESS

Their whole nobility is burning to make good for Sadowa.

EMPEROR

You have that from Gramont, and Gramont is an ass. In Franz Joseph's letter he only says he will support us to the limit of possibility. If there only were a renunciation, even yet.

EMPRESS (*with a change of tone*)

From whom? The Prince or the King?

EMPEROR

Why do you ask? (*Getting up eagerly.*) Has he renounced?

EMPRESS

Ollivier has just announced that he has.

EMPEROR (*relieved*)

That means peace!

EMPRESS

Peace? I wish you would come to the curtain here? Do you hear the roar of the Boulevard? That is Paris demanding *war* from you!

EMPEROR

How does the renunciation run?

EMPRESS

Anton renounces "in order to avoid complications."

EMPEROR

Admirable! The reason he gives justifies us before the Chamber.

EMPRESS (*sharply*)

One of Bismarck's traps. He wants to elude us. Gramont called it a box on the ear—Leboeuf is beside himself——

EMPEROR

And Ollivier?

EMPRESS (*contemptuously*)

That bourgeois! You might as well ask Thiers.

EMPEROR

It is my intention to do so. He's coming again to-day.

EMPRESS

Thiers! Your enemy, who dared only yesterday to speak against war in the Chamber? Won't you also invite the Communists to take part in your councils?

EMPEROR

He is the historian of our House.

EMPRESS

Tell him not to come! If anyone were to see him arrive——

EMPEROR

If the Ministers are here we'll soon damp down the flame over Paris.

EMPEROR

It will consume us! Has anyone ever seen Parisians grateful? They cheer you so long as you follow their humours, and so long as they think *they* are the only ones to be deferred to!

EMPEROR (*in a low voice*)

Very true.

EMPEROR (*in fiery tones*)

And do you think it gives me pleasure to see my noble Spanish home tremble before the threats of Prussian Junkers?

EMPEROR (*quietly*)

Your home, I think, is called France, which once upon a time I laid at your feet.

EMPEROR (*proudly*)

And I have, I think, been an ornament to your Throne!

EMPEROR (*looks at her from where he sits at some distance*)

There it is again, that Castilian pride of yours! Since you scented war you look as young as you did twenty years ago!

EMPEROR (*goes up to him, smiling*)

Only eighteen, my dear! And wasn't that just *why* I pleased you? Didn't I seem proud enough then to adorn your House, instead of some boring Princess?

EMPEROR (*giving way*)

Wherein have I fallen short, Eugénie? Have I

not made you the first woman in Europe? I think these eighteen years have been brilliant enough.

EMPRESS (*passionately*)

What is all their brilliancy to me when a discontented army may throw our son on the streets.

EMPEROR (*after a pause*)

You have never seen a battlefield, Eugénie.

EMPRESS

And you have never yet allowed that reflection to keep you from a victory!

EMPEROR

In those days I was strong and well. Now I am old and ill. Perhaps that has made me wiser.

EMPRESS

Wiser! Wiser!

EMPEROR

In my days of health I won the victories which go under my name by fighting, really fighting in person. I can't do that now. You know how ill I am, Eugénie!

EMPRESS (*taken aback*)

Then—you must take the command nominally.

EMPEROR (*breaking out*)

I can't. If I must suffer so horribly that my inside seems to be on fire I will at any rate die *before* this war. For four years this has vitiated all my power and all my happiness; it has laid a burden on me that I have scarcely been able to bear. You don't know what

it is! When you were playing in your father's garden I was already pining in prison—and when you were putting on your first dancing shoes I was in exile staring at the French coast—because I knew it could belong only to the heir of the great Napoleon. I can't do it. It would be too much for me! My body requires nursing. My head—is strong enough to keep France happy from this room!

EMPERESS (*shocked and disquieted*)

What you are saying is terrible! France will not tolerate a sick Master.

EMPEROR (*more softly*)

At least let this year go by. I have long feared it. My predecessor also reigned eighteen years. It is an unlucky number!

EMPERESS (*haughty again*)

Oh! are you already beginning to think of '48? Are you going to imitate the folly of the Citizen King and go on ceding one right after another to the people of Paris until they drive you out of the country? Shall we have to fly some night like Louis Philippe and his stupid little blue-blooded wife? I can see us looking for some mouse hole in this place through which we can disappear—in order to find safety by night in England! Do you mean to go under like the Orleans?

EMPEROR (*stands up and rings the bell*)

I mean to save you from that fate. Messieurs les Ministres! [Exit Servant L.]

[Re-enter OLLIVIER, GRAMONT, and LEBOEUF
L. They take their places round a table

so arranged that the EMPEROR sits a little apart at the head, while EUGÉNIE takes a chair somewhat further off. She follows and influences the speakers with her eyes—at first silently.

EMPEROR (*in low business-like tones*)

The Hohenzollern having resigned, all ground for war has disappeared. But I don't in the least wish to anticipate you. I beg the Minister of Foreign Affairs to tell us what he thinks.

GRAMONT (*sitting*)

If you will allow me to differ, Sire, I think the form in which it has pleased them to make the renunciation is far from satisfactory. We must have guarantees for the future, and we must have them from King Wilhelm himself.

EMPEROR

M. le Maréchal?

LEBOEUF

The army is ready, Sire; it is more than ready! We could make war for a whole year without having to renew a single gaiter-button. If we get a start of a week we may take them by surprise and beat them. We only want a few bottles of ink. The calling-up notices are all ready, only the names and numbers are put in in pencil.

EMPEROR

Are you of the same opinion?

OLLIVIER (*uncertain*)

I'm—looking for a way out.

EMPEROR

What do you think of the prospects?

GRAMONT

Italy will support us with 100,000 men; Austria with twice as many. With our three armies we will cut off South Germany from the North and meet our allies in Bavaria——

LEBOEUF

—at the beginning of September.

EMPEROR

Much might happen before that. Herr von Moltke usually acts quickly.

LEBOEUF

Meanwhile our army will have marched into South Germany and compelled it to join us.

OLLIVIER

In any case the Prussians will be at the frontier over-night.

EMPRESS

M. Ollivier seems to be very much afraid of Prussia!

OLLIVIER

I admire their army, your Majesty.

EMPRESS

That's a matter of taste. I don't.

GRAMONT

In any case French diplomacy is the best in Europe

and usually chooses its own date in a war. The flame of enthusiasm is blazing up to heaven!

OLLIVIER

It's you that have got Paris into this delirium.

GRAMONT (*sharply*)

I am accustomed to calculate the flight of my arrow before I shoot, your Excellency! From the point of view of European opinion it is most important to have the appearance of being the attacked and not the aggressors.

OLLIVIER

The appearance!

GRAMONT (*starts to his feet—rhetorically*)

And *are* we not? In the last few years have not these Prussians overthrown Austria, and conquered Nassau, Hesse, Schleswig, and Holstein—all of them old friends of France? Have they not already established the Northern Confederation and bound the South by treaties? Hasn't Count Bismarck been bragging for four years back that he will soon found a united Germany? We must fetter this man by a word from his King! [*Sits down: a pause.*]

EMPEROR

Do any of you gentlemen know where Count Bismarck is just now?

OLLIVIER

At his estate in Pomerania.

EMPRESS (*jestingly*)

No doubt he's hunting bears there! In these parts,

ACT I

UNION

I believe, there still really are bears as there were a thousand years ago. That would just suit his clumsy German paws!

EMPEROR

A few years ago at St. Cloud you didn't find him so uncouth.

EMPRESS (*gets up suddenly, the Ministers with her*)

And if I tolerated him then, I won't now. We use these people to establish the military reputation of France. The best way now is to challenge the King.

EMPEROR (*who has not risen*)

I have thought of a better. Let us summon a Congress to discuss this question. That will flatter and soothe Paris.

OLLIVIER

That is the solution, Sire!

GRAMONT

I—can't make up my mind, Sire!

LEBOEUF

It wouldn't be possible to damp down the excitement among the officers. If this time we were *again* to refuse them war, they might be swept into opposition to the Dynasty.

EMPRESS (*goes to the table and stands opposite to the*
EMPEROR)

And how could it be otherwise? For four years Herr von Moltke has been making the new provinces into a glacis against our frontiers! Is France really to see her superiority threatened by these thirty

millions? That boorish nation thinks only of producing children, and unless we stop them uniting they'll be sixty millions in the next generation.

EMPEROR

What says the Prime Minister to these arguments?

OLLIVIER

If I were sure the life of the nation was at stake, I should say that even an unjust war must be risked.

EMPRESS

No war is unjust when it is made with the consent of Parliament. Isn't that part of your Liberal philosophy?

GRAMONT (*sententiously*)

May all France hear your gracious voice.

EMPRESS

I will send my only son with you into the field.

LEBOEUF

By God! Give him to the Army of Alsace——

EMPRESS (*interrupting*)

What a name! There should be only one army—the Army of the Rhine! Only one leader—the Emperor! He will drive these Prussians before him with bands playing—as once upon a time at Jena! And he will dictate peace at Tilsit, like his great Ancestor!

LEBOEUF

Your Majesty, may we placard those words to-morrow morning at every street corner?

EMPRESS (*hesitating*)

Only the Emperor has the power to order that.

EMPEROR

To return to the question of a Congress——

GRAMONT (*vehemently*)

If your Majesty says any more about Congresses I must throw down my portfolio at your Majesty's feet.

EMPRESS (*suddenly approaching the sick man's chair, as if to protect him*)

Moderate your language, Duke!

[A long pause. The shouting of the crowd is heard below. The EMPRESS, with shining eyes, makes a sign to the Marshal. LEBOEUF goes to the window. The shouting grows louder. He listens, while the group opposite waits.]

LEBOEUF

A lady is standing on the roof of a carriage. So far as I can make out it is Papillon of the Opera. They are calling—excuse me, Sire—they are begging permission to sing the Marseillaise, which has been so long forbidden.

EMPRESS (*resolutely*)

Come, gentlemen!

[All exeunt centre back. The EMPEROR alone.]

EMPEROR (*staring in front of him*)

The Marseillaise——?

SERVANT (*announces*)

M. le Député Thiers.

[EMPEROR *nods and rises. Enter THIERS. About seventy. Very robust. Small, easy, and unembarrassed, but adroit and rather ironical.*

EMPEROR (*more briskly*)

It is friendly of you, M. Thiers, to come to the Tuileries once in a way. More than anyone you live there in the spirit.

THIERS

My writing days are over, Sire. When one lives in Paris one has no peace to write history.

EMPEROR (*smiling*)

So we had to thank that—estrangement—which you forced upon me in days gone by for your gift of the History of the Great Napoleon?

THIERS

All the more honour for us that you gradually so far approximated to our ideas as to call us back.

EMPEROR (*quietly*)

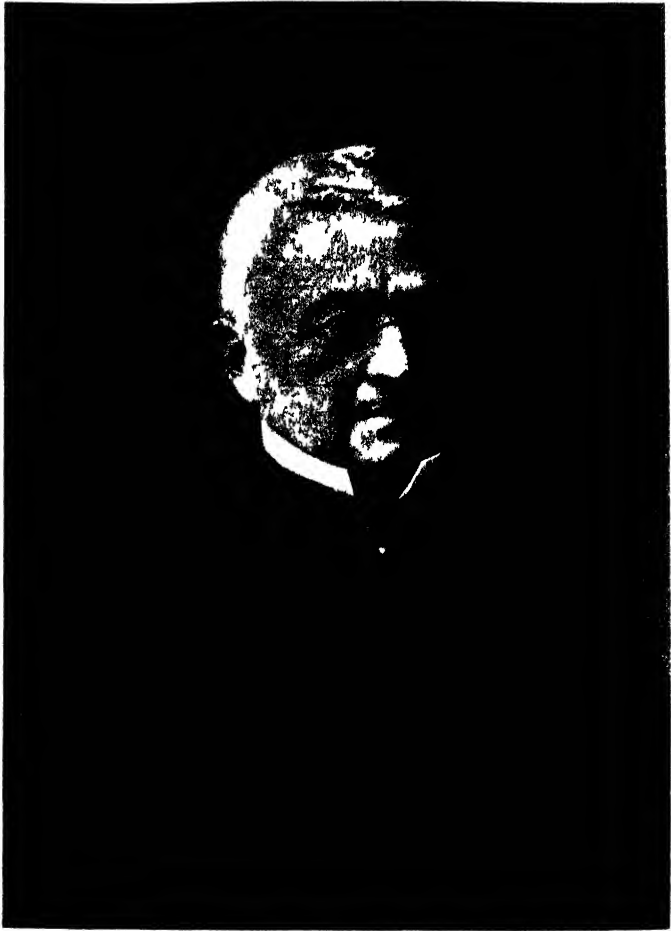
I have had to educate my people gradually in the ways of freedom.

THIERS

It has seemed to us democrats that it has been the people who have gradually had to educate their Emperor in the ways of freedom.

EMPEROR

People and ruler have always got to adjust themselves to each other—just as in marriage.



[Ruchger

THIERS

THIERS

A marriage of old age—after all these quarrels?

EMPEROR

Isn't Parliament for war?

THIERS

Are you, Sire?

EMPEROR

Speak as if I wasn't.

THIERS

It would be too late. To maintain the Dynasty now you really must have a victory. Since Sadowa we have been a second-class power.

EMPEROR (*rising indignantly*)

What are you saying, Monsieur? I made France great again—I alone! You and your people, with your eternal negatives, have brought about this terrible situation. I shouldn't wonder if you wanted a defeat!

THIERS

Your Majesty is pleased to mistake me for a German.

EMPEROR (*impulsively goes to him*)

Forgive me! Let us sit down. Speak freely. What do you think of the position? Do you trust Metternich?

THIERS

I don't trust any Austrian. They are all half Germans.

EMPEROR

But Bavaria! If we once get there!

THIERS

King Ludwig will sooner break his soldiers' heads than lead them against the almighty Wilhelm whose boots he has to lick.

EMPEROR

The Swabian Republicans and the Centre Party at Munich are applauding us in their Press, since we have again come to grips with their enemy the Prussian Bismarck.

THIERS (*unshakable*)

I know Germany better, Sire. As a young man I fought there under your august Uncle. I don't like the Germans. I have a foreboding that they will one day inherit our glory. But believe me—there is something to reckon with there.

EMPEROR

What?

THIERS

It may boil over in a moment. And when nations are on the eve of being united they are at boiling-point.

EMPEROR (*after a pause*)

You speak as a historian——

THIERS

If you wish to hear the politician, he must request permission to speak very freely indeed.

EMPEROR

I didn't ask you to come here to exchange civilities.

THIERS

Then you have made up your mind, Sire?

EMPEROR

I have not said so.

THIERS

If I spoke against war yesterday in the Chamber, it was not for the same reasons as Favre and Gambetta, who love freedom more than they hate the Prussians. I am too old to be dogmatic about freedom. But anything more inopportune, or more frivolously entered into, than this war, I have not seen or heard tell of in the whole course of my seventy years. All alliances depend on the feeling of Europe; it is a question of victory or disaster. And to-morrow all Europe will surely turn away from France if we take the last and maddest step of provoking Prussia!

EMPEROR (*dissenting*)

What—war guilt——

THIERS

It is most important to make it appear that the other is the guilty party. But the Duke has managed things as clumsily as a German, while the Prussians now have a man who is as adroit as a Frenchman!— But I hear voices outside and the crowd wishes to see you.

[*The shouting increases outside.*]

EMPEROR

I don't want to be seen by them. I want to hear what you have to say. Tell me everything.

THIERS (*coldly enumerating*)

I am on the Committee, so I know the papers. There is no money in the military chests. The fortress of Metz has neither sugar nor rice nor bacon. The General Staff has maps of the Rhine provinces but none of our own frontier country. We have neither stretcher bearers nor mechanics; neither field kitchens nor baggage train for the third and fourth divisions. We haven't enough ammunition. We have a plan of campaign—on the chessboard. Over there, on the contrary, they have worked out everything year after year in manœuvres lasting for weeks at a time. At best we could only have countered that by a super-diplomacy which would have brought us the alliance of half Europe!

EMPEROR (*after a pause—staggered*)

Terrible things—why has Leboeuf kept them from me?

THIERS

Because he fears for his place. Because, if he didn't, he wouldn't feel safe at Court. Because, Sire, even those nearest to you——

[The folding doors open. The EMPRESS appears with the PRINCE IMPERIAL, a boy of thirteen. She ignores THIERS, who bows to her, retires, and remains in the background till the end of the scene.]

EMPRESS

The crowd wish to see you, Sire!

EMPEROR (*leaning back*)

But I don't wish to see the crowd.

EMPRESS

Here is the order to Benedetti, which I have just drafted with the Duke. To-morrow at Ems he is to demand guarantees from King Wilhelm for all future time! *[Holds out the paper to him.*

EMPEROR

It is so dark here——

EMPRESS (*calls*)

Light! More light in the Salon, so that the crowd may recognize us.

[She steps out on to the balcony with the boy. Loud cheering. Then the Marseillaise strikes up, though it is not clear what words the crowd are singing. The room becomes very bright. The EMPRESS and the PRINCE IMPERIAL wave to those below.

EMPEROR (*sitting apart, his hand over his dazzled eyes*)

What is that? It is—yes, it is the Marseillaise! Eugénie, Eugénie! This is Revolution——

ACT II

Berlin, the following afternoon. BISMARCK'S reception room. Wood panelled and comfortable in a solid, upper middle-class style. KEUDELL, acting councillor, about forty — a fine head and the eye of an artist. Standing before him THIELE, an elderly secretary. He is a spectacled bureaucrat, an office factotum, and a typical Berliner. They are surrounded by official papers and telegrams.

KEUDELL

And that's all?

SECRETARY

Well, Sir, I think it's quite enough to be going on with!

KEUDELL

There will be a row! But from Ems? Is there nothing yet from Ems to-day?

SECRETARY

Nothing whatever! The calm before the storm.

KEUDELL

Send every ten minutes to the Telegraph Office. The Chief will be furious if he doesn't get to know instantly what has been happening at Ems to-day.

SECRETARY

What have these Spaniards to do with us? I should have been taking my hot baths long ago, but my leave is all going to pieces just because of Madrid! And if the Chief doesn't get his six weeks of the

waters at Carlsbad he will be quite unendurable again.

KEUDELL

Thiele, that's just another legend. When he is at Varzin his servant brings him his Carlsbad Sprudel salts in bed, at eight. The Chief, who never gets to sleep before two, storms violently at him. However, having swallowed an enormous glassful, he goes to sleep again till ten, when he devours eight hard-boiled eggs. And then he wonders why the Carlsbad salts don't work!

SECRETARY

Well, he's very different in the office! What a circular!—everything in it as fine as the works of a watch. You have to take a magnifying glass before you can understand it all.

KEUDELL (*nodding*)

Don't I know it!

SECRETARY

No, Sir, you don't quite. You make twelve copies of a note like that and then you will feel in your finger-tips how subtle it is.

KEUDELL

Anything else?

SECRETARY

General von Moltke arrived this morning. I hope there won't be a deluge of conferences. But in any case I hope the Chief won't—stay!

KEUDELL

He'll be going on to Ems at three.

SECRETARY

Wheels in the Court. (*At the window.*) The carriage has turned in. It's him! (*Exit KEUDELL hurriedly.*) Thiele, make yourself scarce! That fellow digests men like hard-boiled eggs. [*Exit R.*

[*Voices outside, orders, and greetings. Enter JOHANNA VON BISMARCK. She is about forty, small, dark-eyed, neat; thinks of nothing but her husband. Behind her BISMARCK, fifty-five, in a light summer suit, healthy, in high spirits. Then KEUDELL and a Servant. Hats and sticks are put down and taken away by the Servant.*

BISMARCK

Thank you, Keudell! It was frightfully stuffy in the train. There's a cowardly thunderstorm about somewhere, which won't venture out of the clouds. Iced Seltzer with a dash of cognac would be nice. But it must be at freezing-point. Rather like our Paris policy.

JOHANNA

Wait five minutes, Otto. You've been perspiring.

BISMARCK

My dear! We must all die. Well, let's die a week sooner and enjoy what we like (*laughing*) or do you prescribe *tisane de tilleul* ?

JOHANNA

Always headstrong! You'll never be different. If the gentlemen in your office behaved like that—

well, what would he say to you about it, Herr von Keudell?

BISMARCK (*to KEUDELL*)

Well, are you pleased? You're a Reservist yourself, aren't you?—on guard!

[*He makes several lunges in carte and tierce with his stick.*]

KEUDELL (*embarrassed*)

Well—I hope so, your Excellency. Some new telegrams have come in——

BISMARCK (*all attention*)

Telegrams! Why weren't they handed to me in the carriage? (*Hastening to the writing-table.*) The Prince—between yesterday and to-day—has not—renounced?

KEUDELL

It was sent in cipher to Varzin last night, but probably arrived after you had gone.

BISMARCK (*runs over two telegrams, half aloud, jerkily, with suppressed rage*)

Prince Anton renounces the Spanish throne for his son—In order to avoid European complications—In further conversation with Benedetti His Majesty declared he would—*welcome* a renunciation! (*Throws the telegram on the table—his anger breaks loose.*) What on earth is the King thinking of? Behind my back he goes to his cousin and makes him resign! Deals with this Paris agent as if they were on an equal footing! When I advised him not to say a single word until Gramont withdraws his insolent words! (*Bangs the table.*) Upon my word, what does he keep Ministers for?

JOHANNA (*goes up to him*)

Ottochen, calm yourself!

BISMARCK

Calm myself—when I've just had a thing like this! Good God, Johanna, just see what's happening! This is open retreat before Paris! A cowardly peace, a consumptive renunciation! Now I understand why Keudell looks so green. Ask him yourself; he's meek enough for you!

KEUDELL

I must say it flattened me out.

BISMARCK (*turning round his huge bulk*)

Do you know what they're doing there, Keudell? (*Bursts open the door and calls.*) Engel! Don't unload anything! Leave the heavy luggage on the carriage; we are going back to Varzin.

SERVANT (*at the door, startled*)

Very good, Count!

JOHANNA (*relieved*)

That's sense! I quite agree!

[*Goes to him.*

BISMARCK (*sitting on a chair near the door. Stares before him, takes her hand and holds it. There is a long pause, then he says in a low voice*)

Yes. There's no one like you! You always quite agree. This time I can fulfil your heart's desire. *This time the King won't get me to stay. (With a growl.)* I am sick of having to answer before Europe for these constant fiascos.

JOHANNA (*delighted*)

You will resign? That's right. Let the whole thing slide. The weariness of all these years— attempts at murder from below and vexatious meddling from above. We had a very different life at home by our fireside in our first years, and you've always looked back to it with longing.

BISMARCK (*outwardly composed*)

That I have: and now comes peace and quietness; shooting, looking after the property; perhaps some brickmaking. And we'll start out the youngsters in something more sensible than this wretched trade of mine. So it shall be. (*Gets up.*) Keudell! Have a telegram sent to Ems to say that I am tired with the long journey and will send Eulenburg instead.

KEUDELL

I will have it ciphered at once.

BISMARCK (*growls*)

No *en clair*. I want the operator to tell it to the whole place! (*Exit KEUDELL. BISMARCK stretching himself.*) Thank heaven the bomb has burst at last! This time it's serious. To-morrow to Varzin. From that vantage-point my resignation. Thereupon I shall be implored to remain. To that an irrevocable No! Then a charming autograph letter and something round my neck for the children to play with. (*A pause, then wrathfully.*) I wish I hadn't so many enemies who'll be delighted. (*Walks up and down.*) After that the wilds of Pomerania. The Inspector has long been wanting new outbuildings. At breakfast the newspapers in comfort. Lots of newspapers, Johanna!

JOHANNA

Lots? You used never to have few enough when you were on leave.

BISMARCK (*with malicious enjoyment*)

Leave, my dear! That's a thing of the past. From henceforth every morning I shall read all the filth of all parties! While I'm having my coffee it will console me to know how Herr Manteuffel or Herr Schleinitz is getting on, or whoever the last person is with whom His Majesty is making muddles. (*With growing bitterness.*) They'll crawl in the dust before France and apologize for being alive! They'll allow the North German Confederation to rot, and gracefully push the South into Napoleon's arms! (*With rising anger.*) Every morning we shall read how methodically Prussia is going to the dogs! How bit by bit everything that one has patched together during the last eight years is coming unstuck.

JOHANNA

Oh, if you're going to think of nothing else all day——!

BISMARCK

Only in the morning, at breakfast, my love! When I know all that's happening—on with my boots and away with the forester! And if I have no more deputies who stand in my light to shoot at I can make a mental picture of them when I'm disemboweling a boar with my old hunting knife—and that'll help to pass a pleasant hour. (*Grumpily.*) May the devil fly away with a post in which one can never do what one wants! In which one must always be begging one's superior to be graciously pleased to

accept the power which one has slaved to win for him ! !

[Sinks into a chair.]

SERVANT

His Excellency Herr von Moltke. His Excellency Herr von Roon——

[There come down centre MOLTKE, seventy, for the most part very silent, but very pointed when he does speak, and astonishingly observant. ROON, sixty, more cordial to BISMARCK. Both are in general's uniform, without decorations. They salute first the COUNTESS, then BISMARCK.]

JOHANNA (*half aloud*)

Well, you've found him in a fine humour!

ROON

If it could only start, Countess!

BISMARCK

Start! Her locomotive is starting back to the country. I regret I disturbed you, gentlemen. It was a false alarm of fire.

JOHANNA

You'll all be thirsty.

[Exit R.]

BISMARCK

You've known since last night of the fiasco; the news reached me on my arrival here just now. My cheek is still burning with the blow!

[ROON sits down; MOLTKE stands looking out of the window. BISMARCK walks up and down.]

ROON

Definitely—peace?

BISMARCK

I would have nothing to say against peace. I've kept the peace long enough—three years ago even against you! But *this* peace, gentlemen—*this* peace is enough to make you vomit!

ROON (*sulkily*)

If it were to be left at that it would be a bitter pill.

BISMARCK

Bitter indeed, Roon! Acids like this will corrode the nation's honour so thoroughly that one day you'll be able to look at the moon or the rings of Saturn through the holes!

ROON

I hate your astronomy!

BISMARCK

I can see from here what they are reading on the boulevards. *La Prusse cane!* We can threaten and insult as much as we like! Prussia climbs down! Large headlines—price 5 centimes. (*Lower.*) But, at any rate, henceforth the honour of *my* name will not be abused.

ROON (*alert*)

What does that mean?

BISMARCK (*quietly*)

That I'm going.



[*Scherl's Bilder dienst*

ROON

MOLTKE (*walks straight up to him*)

No!

BISMARCK (*looks threateningly at him*)

Yes, General! Not *no*!

ROON (*intervening*)

I—suppose you're going to Ems to-day?

BISMARCK

In order to give covering sanction to the King's weakness?

ROON

To make him change his mind.

BISMARCK

So that the cry may be once more "Bismarck the war fanatic"? (*Pause.*) Or so that for the third time the King may persuade me to remain in office?

MOLTKE (*again stepping in front of him*)

Deserting the colours?

BISMARCK (*very sharply*)

Would you sacrifice your honour to a King who won't hit back?

MOLTKE

My life as a soldier.

BISMARCK

Your life? That's easy! Would you sign the capitulation of your fortress merely because the King ordered you to?

MOLTKE (*turning away*)

He's not doing that.

BISMARCK

Unfortunately he is so entirely an officer. In that capacity he always stands fast. In politics, on the other hand——

SECRETARY (*enters with a telegram*)

From Bad Ems, your Excellency.

BISMARCK (*reads*)

His Majesty left early for Berlin. (*Growling.*) That means he'll be here directly. What more? (*Looks at him for the first time.*) Thiele, you're not looking at all well. Off you go on leave!

SECRETARY

Your Excellency is most kind. But there's another long cipher telegram in from Ems—220 groups.

[BISMARCK and the two Generals exchange glances.]

BISMARCK

Who is deciphering?

SECRETARY

Nowak and I.

BISMARCK

Here's a dashing Ministry! You've been working together for about a century and a half, haven't you? Ask Nowak to be so good as to get a move on for the first time since '66. It is world history, tell him, and perhaps that'll make him get on quicker.

[*Exit Secretary. Enter simultaneously Servant with wine, lemonade, fruit, etc. Exit Servant.*]

ROON

What does this hurried return mean?

BISMARCK (*sardonically*)

Thanksgiving service for the preservation of peace.

ROON

I don't understand it. The King takes no decision without asking you.

BISMARCK (*vehemently*)

But he parleys! And then expects me to defend him afterwards! That idiot, Gramont, who is running amuck like a mad Malay through the streets of Paris, stabbing everyone he meets, has the audacity to disturb my King while he is having his cure, through the equally idiotic Benedetti, with whom I'm fed to the teeth! And the King, instead of telling me about it, appears naked and unashamed, without Ministerial bathing drawers, gives information, makes apologies—though in all this he should be accompanied by the wretched man who is responsible, who had thought it all out and thought it all out quite differently!

ROON

And so there's a pretty kettle of fish again!

BISMARCK (*composing himself with an effort*)

For the last eight years I have been steering before the wind, but we shall never make harbour with France's blessing. They would be fools if they

allowed us to. If there were a dozen different tribes in *their* country—wouldn't *I* move heaven and earth to prevent them from achieving unity. Very well! It's not my game to provoke them. But at last we get the Gascon you know of at the Quai d'Orsay. The Emperor is ill, the Lady wants to secure her boy's succession; so now *they are provoking us*, these people. For weeks I've been keeping a tight rein—and hardly do I turn my back when the King gets himself into this mess!

ROON

How do you explain this in view of his undeniable sense of dignity?

BISMARCK

Do you know the map of Germany, Roon?

ROON (*laughing*)

Fairly well, I think.

BISMARCK (*draws on the tablecloth with his finger*)

Look here. There's Bad Ems, on the beautiful green Lahn. And here, hardly a pencil length away, is Coblenz, on the beautiful green Rhine—where the Queen is. So there he is, at seventy-three, walking up and down Ems; he loves peace; he doesn't want to risk the laurels which you two have twined for him—(*lower*)—as if laurels mattered! (*Again to ROON.*) And then little notes and telegrams keep coming from his wife with her eternal fears and her utter lack of national feeling! Then one is chivalrous, she is a Queen after all thinks he to himself—and *my* Queen, moreover, he adds.

ROON

Do you get as exact reports as that even when you are on leave?

BISMARCK (*mysteriously*)

At Varzin when I put my ear to the ground I hear noises all over Germany. (*Pause.*) She reminded him of Jena and Tilsit! That's enough to terrify an old man!

MOLTKE (*who has been listening as he stands in the corner*)

The King is afraid of everything except danger.
[Secretary hands a telegram and exit.]

BISMARCK

From the King. Would you be interested to hear it? "Count Benedetti accosted me this morning on the promenade, in order to request me, in a tone which finally became very importunate, to bind myself for all future time to allow no Hohenzollern to become a candidate for the Spanish throne. I ended by repulsing him rather sharply."

MOLTKE (*coming up*)

This is terrible.

BISMARCK (*continuing*)

"As the news about Prince Anton came in just then, I decided not to receive Benedetti again, but arranged that he should be told that I had received the news already known to him and had nothing more to say to him."

ROON

Spa water with Eau de Cologne!

BISMARCK (*reads to the end of the telegram with quickened attention—then, in a lower tone, visibly thinking, repeats it aloud*)

“I leave it to you to communicate Benedetti’s new demands and their rejection to our representatives abroad *and to the Press.*”

[*The Generals walk restlessly up and down, much moved. BISMARCK re-reads the whole telegram silently to himself, following the words with his finger.*]

ROON (*after an agitated pause, bursts out*)
Now I’m going to resign too!

BISMARCK (*crossing over*)

Stop! (*He comes forward weighing the paper in his hand, biting his lip, and, in great excitement, stands gripping a chair.*) Don’t you find it desperately hot in here? My back’s running with perspiration. (*Swallows a glass of wine.*) That cools the eternal flame—if only for a minute. Resign, Roon? Don’t speak of such a thing!

ROON

What about you?

BISMARCK (*after a pause during which he looks from one to another, turns to MOLTKE, who has been watching him, with forced composure, and in a changed, coldly business-like tone*)

Are you ready, General?

MOLTKE (*slowly*)

One is never ready.



[Schol's Bilder herst

MOLIKÉ

BISMARCK

Are you fully confident of victory?

MOLTKE (*nods*)

Fortune of war excepted.

BISMARCK

Would a speedy outbreak be to our disadvantage?

MOLTKE

On the contrary.

BISMARCK

How long do you require to get to the fortresses?

MOLTKE

Four weeks.

ROON

You told me three.

MOLTKE

Best to promise the politicians too little.

ROON

What news makes you ask these questions?

BISMARCK (*composedly*)

This telegram.

ROON

The Ems telegram?

BISMARCK (*bursting out*)

A colossal piece of folly has come from Paris! We have the gods to thank for Gramont's little-minded conceit! (*Rings. Enter Secretary. Very*

rapidly.) Send at once to the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine*. They are to reserve paper for a special supplement. Edition, half a million. Distribution gratis at our expense. Come back in three minutes and take down the text. *[Exit Secretary in wild excitement.*

ROON (*excitedly*)

What are you about?

BISMARCK

The King has directed me to publish. A few words will do—(*Sitting on the corner of the table he takes a large pencil, makes a few bold strokes, and slowly reads out*)—"After the renunciation of the Prince the French Ambassador demanded of the King that he should bind himself for all future time never again to allow a Hohenzollern to be a candidate. On this the King declined to receive him again and directed that he should be informed that His Majesty had nothing more to say to him."

MOLTKE

A call to arms!

BISMARCK

If Paris—swallows—that, I'll turn Turk! (*Walks up and down working out his plan.*) At five Berlin will know. (*To the Secretary, who re-enters.*) Here, this is for the *Norddeutsche*. A message in the same terms is to be sent at once in cipher to all our representatives abroad.

SECRETARY (*embarrassed*)

But, your Excellency—we two alone—it'll be a long job——

BISMARCK

But where's Fly? What's his name—? Your star cipherer?

SECRETARY

Flick? He's on leave.

BISMARCK (*can't make it out*)

On leave? Why? Where is he?

SECRETARY (*anxiously*)

At his cousin's in the Schönhauser Allée.

BISMARCK

Send a carriage: fetch him back. Everything must be despatched to the eighteen capitals within an hour. (*Exit Secretary.*) Everything depends on this hour. My peaceful Master would recall everything in a twinkling—so it must be already on the wires! Everything depends on the feeling in Europe. As things are now, *we* are the provoked parties! Thank God for *your* folly, Duke—for ever and ever. Amen!

ROON (*laughing excitedly*)

Ha! Ha! You and I—you and I will *both* remain in office for some little while yet!

BISMARCK (*still planning*)

At eleven Gramont will get it from his Minister. If we only had television! Gramont's face—I'd give a thaler to see it! At eleven the telegram will reach him from Berne, at eleven-ten from Florence, at eleven-twenty from Vienna. Then will come London, Petersburg—always the same, always the same ghastly words grinning at him—"refused to receive!"

Every ten minutes he'll have to beat his forehead and cry, "What a fool I have been!"—Ah, the fire of revenge burns brighter than the fire of love! Eh, General?

MOLTKE

I don't know.

[Walks up and down, deep in thought.]

BISMARCK

Are you already counting the cannon, General? What'll be your Christmas present to Gramont, when they go off?

MOLTKE (*standing still, breaking out suddenly just once*)
The old God is not dead!

BISMARCK

Unfortunately He usually remains neutral.—You're raising your glass against the sun, Roon?

ROON

I was thinking of Napoleon's fate.

MOLTKE (*questioning BISMARCK as BISMARCK formerly questioned him*)

Who is likely to take sides with France?

BISMARCK

That will be decided by your first victories. Vienna and Florence will behave themselves and wait. The Czar is sure, and will keep the Danes quiet. England——

[Enter JOHANNA.]

JOHANNA (*all excitement*)

The King has unexpectedly arrived! His carriage is at the door!

[*The Generals straighten their uniforms. Servant removes the refreshments.*]

BISMARCK (*calls*)

Engel! Get the trunks off the carriage!

JOHANNA

You're staying? We're staying? How long?

BISMARCK (*laughing slyly*)

That depends on whether these two gentlemen will take a civilian like me with them to France!

JOHANNA

God in heaven! The boys!

BISMARCK

They'll both be in it! [*Exit centre.*]

JOHANNA (*sinks into a chair—in a low tone*)

O God, my Saviour—My two boys—! Could— it not—have been avoided?

MOLTKE

The destiny of a people.

AIDE-DE-CAMP (*entering, announces*)

His Majesty!

[*Enter the KING, after him BISMARCK. Then exit Aide-de-camp. The KING, about seventy, chivalrous in manner, aged but still erect as in the First Part.*]

KING

Good morning, my dear Countess. 'Morning, gentlemen. (*To JOHANNA.*) I hope you profited by your holiday? The Queen sends you her greetings. Excuse me for breaking in so suddenly and disturbing you all.

JOHANNA

Your Majesty. [*Curtseys and exit.*]

KING (*sits down, while the three stand before him. After a pause, almost gently*)

And what now?

BISMARCK (*firmly*)

Your order has been carried out, your Majesty.

KING

What order?

BISMARCK

Benedetti's insolence will be known this evening in all the capitals of Europe.

KING (*gets up startled*)

You have already—? So hastily! I came to speak to you about it before anything was done! Couldn't you have—? What do you mean? (*All three wrap themselves in obstinate silence.*) You are silent! You look as if everything was settled! (*A further silence.*) That's what you have to tell me. I feel quite cold! What will happen?

BISMARCK (*meaningly*)

It has happened, your Majesty.

[*A long pause. The KING goes to the window.*]

KING (*aside in a low voice*)

God is my witness—it was not my wish.

BISMARCK (*coming forward: vigorously*)

You have a better witness, your Majesty. Europe has seen what we have seen! You have done more for peace than—I could answer for.

KING (*turning again to the three*)

But if Napoleon sits down under our counter-stroke?

BISMARCK

Then he's lost in Paris.

KING

And if he strikes?

MOLTKE

Then he's lost in the field.

KING

You're not afraid of France's striking power?

MOLTKE

If an army breaks into Bavaria not a man of them will get out again.

KING

I hope the Bavarians will be willing to fight.

BISMARCK

They are only asking themselves on whose side, your Majesty. On ours or on the other.

KING (*startled again*)

You don't feel sure of the South?

BISMARCK

Certainly not!

KING

You think it possible—? Yet you would risk——?

BISMARCK

It is *because* I don't feel sure of Bavaria that we *must* risk it.

KING (*vehemently*)

But that was the very reason why I always had to give way. Have you read the Munich papers? "What have we to do with King Wilhelm—*he's* not a German question?" Do you know what's behind this insolent tone?

BISMARCK

Napoleon has promised Bavaria the Palatinate— if they keep quiet.

KING

You believe that and yet you break off? Then I fail to understand your rashness! So you're going mad again, Count Bismarck!

BISMARCK

I have always seemed to be going mad at the decisive moment during these last eight years! Yet I have always tried to make it clear that we are not making war with the support of Unity, but that Unity can be attained only through war. Four years ago we achieved the Northern Confederation. Now we must try to achieve the same for all Germany.

KING (*after a pause*)

What do my Generals think?

MOLTKE

Ready.

KING

You realize how high the stakes are?

BISMARCK

The game is worth the candle!

ACT III

Before Sedan, 1st and 2nd September

SCENE I—*A room at Donchery*

A low room, everything improvised, the occupants being in the field. At the back a sort of office with a confusion of maps, papers, pieces of equipment, brushes, and bottles. R. a large table. It is late evening. Letters are being sealed at candles set in bottles. Until the beginning of the conference orderlies come and go. From outside frequent sounds of passing drums, waggons, and marching troops. This atmosphere must be maintained throughout the whole scene. In this Act everyone is in uniform. In front L. Three Highnesses, one elderly and two young Princes. All these are in strikingly elegant uniforms.

FIRST HIGHNESS (*coming in, to the others*)

Ninety thousand prisoners! Actually *ninety* thousand!

SECOND HIGHNESS

Since Cannae there has never been such a victory! Since Cannae! You know Edward—the last Punic War!

FIRST HIGHNESS

I'm tremendously proud of having contributed our share of it. The figures are stupendous!

THIRD HIGHNESS (*the old gentleman*)

Don't be carried away by the mere thousands, my friends. Moltke says sixty generals have been

captured. Sixty generals! They're the truffles in our *Soupe à la Napoleon*!

FIRST HIGHNESS

Really one feels quite sorry for the man.

SECOND HIGHNESS (*sharply*)

Sorry? Since when is one sorry for the enemy? Have you become a pacifist?

FIRST HIGHNESS

Pshaw! Well, I passed his carriage a little while ago—with the servants powdered *à la Long jumeau*—very smart. We should really introduce it, don't you think?

SECOND HIGHNESS

You didn't salute him, I hope?

FIRST HIGHNESS

Of course I did. The Emperor!

SECOND HIGHNESS

Well now, if any journalist happened to see it and reports it in the papers——

FIRST HIGHNESS (*cunningly*)

That's just what I should like. One is mentioned far too seldom! In our little hole they'd like very much to read: "His Highness the Hereditary Prince, in accordance with the chivalrous tradition of his august House, raised his hand to his cap—in spite of everything!"

THIRD HIGHNESS

Ah! I can tell you all about that! My father went through it all with the first Napoleon.

SECOND HIGHNESS

Of course, *my* father did too, your Royal Highness. Unfortunately we were then——

THIRD HIGHNESS

On the other side. I know, my dear Prince.

SECOND HIGHNESS

I beg your pardon! Only at first. Just before the happy end of the War our Dynasty went over with flying colours to the German cause.

THIRD HIGHNESS

I was going to say that the great scene on the hill this afternoon was simply—bourgeois. If you had lived in France as much as I have, you would know how such an historic drama should be staged.

FIRST HIGHNESS

That's just what I was saying, wasn't it, Heinrich?

THIRD HIGHNESS

The French General rides up, takes off his cap, and hands over Napoleon's letter with the red seal. Then, gentlemen, a half circle should have been formed—historic attitudes—a silence that could be felt! What happened? Two chairs were propped on one another, if you please, for King Wilhelm to write his reply on! That's Prussian management for you!

SECOND HIGHNESS

Very true! If I hadn't had my notepaper with the eagle, which I keep in my holster for all historic emergencies, I don't see how any reply could have been sent at all.

THIRD HIGHNESS

Did you watch Bismarck's face while he was drafting his King's reply?

FIRST HIGHNESS

No. Was there anything to see?

THIRD HIGHNESS

Just nothing! Not a trace of historic perception of the great hour!

FIRST HIGHNESS

No, really—Bismarck!

THIRD HIGHNESS

Yesterday I told Prussia my opinion—how dangerous it is to tell the Federal Chancellor of the decisions of the General Staff—even after they have been taken. It might put it in the power of this Colonel—or what is he now?—to stop our march to Paris—as he stopped our going to Vienna in '66.

SECOND HIGHNESS

No doubt. Our whole policy might have taken a different turn had we marched into Vienna then.

FIRST HIGHNESS

I hear on good authority that Fritz is against him. If so we may perhaps presently see—a change?

SECOND HIGHNESS

By the way, your Royal Highness, how do you find “our Fritz”?

THIRD HIGHNESS

Mon Dieu! These people carry their heads high. They see the first streaks of an Imperial dawn——

FIRST AND SECOND HIGHNESSES (*simultaneously*)

Oh I say!—come now! We haven't got as far as that yet!

THIRD HIGHNESS

Why not? The shark is opening his jaws to swallow us.

FIRST HIGHNESS

It's clear that the Saxons are now quite ready for it.

SECOND HIGHNESS

True, but what about Hanover?

THIRD HIGHNESS

I agree, but what of Württemberg? (*A painful pause.*) Do you think it'll soon be a case of home? After six weeks I've had enough of draughts.

SECOND HIGHNESS

Well, I should hope so! The Emperor captured, the war over. What more is there?

FIRST HIGHNESS

I'm not sure I want it to end just yet. I should be quite pleased to have another half dozen or so to take back.

SECOND HIGHNESS

What—enemies?

FIRST HIGHNESS

No—decorations.

THIRD HIGHNESS

Here comes the Federal Chancellor.

[BISMARCK *has come in behind in a rather untidy Halberstadt uniform. He looks tired and careworn. The Princes surround him.*

THIRD HIGHNESS

What's the latest, Count?

FIRST HIGHNESS

When are you going to make peace?

SECOND HIGHNESS

Preliminaries to-day! What?

BISMARCK (*muttering and grumbling in a low tone*)

I'm starting in five minutes. So I must ask your Highnesses—and your Serene Highness—to make room for the Council of War.

FIRST HIGHNESS

And when are we for home?

BISMARCK (*looking daggers*)

Your Serene Highness can get leave at any time.

[*Busies himself with the papers on the big table. Keeps standing, and speaks mostly over his shoulder.*

THIRD HIGHNESS

Do you intend to settle to-day?

BISMARCK

With whom, your Royal Highness?

THIRD HIGHNESS

With Napoleon, of course.

BISMARCK

He is a sovereign no longer.

FIRST HIGHNESS

Oh! Well, what shall we see in Paris to-morrow?

BISMARCK

A revolution perhaps.

SECOND HIGHNESS

No! You don't say so! How tremendously interesting. Then we'll—simply—take over Paris!

BISMARCK (*looking up, after a pause*)

Yes, we'll march in.

FIRST HIGHNESS

May we ask? What will the ceremony be?

BISMARCK

Ceremony?

SECOND HIGHNESS

Why—to-night—the Capitulation.

BISMARCK

Here's the table. Look; it has four legs. It's pine, I think. Anyhow, it's solid. And where I sit is the head.

SECOND HIGHNESS (*offended*)

Your Excellency's nerves seem to be rather affected these days.

BISMARCK

Necessary business never tires me. (*Turns in a friendly way to an Orderly.*) Hallo! Have you been

stationed here? I seem to know you but your name escapes me——

ORDERLY

Radwitz, Sir; son of the road inspector at Varzin.

BISMARCK

Of course! No complaints? Not been hit yet? Do they give you enough to eat? Good!

[Turns again to his papers.

THE HIGHNESSES (*formally*)

'Evening, your Excellency.

BISMARCK (*relieved and very polite*)

Good evening, your Highnesses.

[Exit the Highnesses with a clink of spurs.

At the door they greet the CROWN PRINCE, who is seen dismounting outside.

ORDERLY (*announces*)

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Prussia.

BISMARCK (*under his breath*)

The devil! It's impossible to get anything done.

[Goes to meet him.

CROWN PRINCE (*about forty, robust and elegant. His excellent manners conceal his distrust of BISMARCK. Comes forward. The conversation takes place in a subdued tone*)

Only two seconds. I wanted to ask you personally what you think should be done about the meeting.

BISMARCK

I said to Napoleon; first capitulate, then see the

King. Otherwise His Majesty will be weak and allow himself to be wheedled into heaven knows what concessions. All this is, of course, assuming that we get a settlement to-night.

CROWN PRINCE (*coming rather nearer and more familiarly*)
And when—might we expect peace?

BISMARCK

If we had not had the bad luck to capture the Emperor we might perhaps have had peace to-morrow. As things are—it's a long way off!

CROWN PRINCE

Yet——

BISMARCK

What are your Royal Highness's commands?

CROWN PRINCE

It's a question of life and death. I know we are in the field, but time presses, I am Heir Apparent——

BISMARCK (*attentively*)

Why do you hesitate, your Royal Highness?

CROWN PRINCE

In order—not to defer a great event—(*A pause, then stammers.*) After this tremendous victory would it not be the moment to proclaim the Empire—and the Kaiser in the field?

BISMARCK (*looks intently at him*)

The Empire? And a Kaiser—? I fear that's some considerable way ahead yet. [Pause.

CROWN PRINCE

You are in a more melancholy humour than one would expect on a great day like this.

BISMARCK (*darkly*)

What a reputation one has in the world! The old women, when they see my face, fall on their knees before *the* Bloodhound, and think I'm a regular Attila. Blood! If I only knew whether or not my son is bleeding now.

CROWN PRINCE (*goes to him cordially*)

But I saw Count Bill only two hours ago.

BISMARCK

No, I mean Herbert.

CROWN PRINCE (*briskly*)

First Dragoons, isn't it? They've been at the Western escarpment all day.

BISMARCK

The heaviest losses were there. It's not evacuated yet.

CROWN PRINCE

I'll send two orderlies there at once. You'll hear in an hour. Courage, your Excellency! Good evening. [*Exit.*]

BISMARCK (*while the office works on behind him, sits alone at the table in front, very grave, low*)

What does Napoleon's phrase mean? "I surrender my sword!" What sort of a sword is that? I don't trust him. (*Calls.*) Radwitz!

ORDERLY

Sir?

BISMARCK

Bring me something hot. For ten hours I've swallowed nothing but rainwater. (*Exit Orderly.*) If only I knew that Herbert is not lying thirsty somewhere——

[*Enter MOLTKE and ROON behind. They sign to the soldiers, who have sprung to attention, to go on working, and come forward. The Orderly brings food to BISMARCK, which he swallows standing at a corner of the table.*]

BISMARCK

Have the Frenchmen come?

ROON

Rendezvous at 11. Still three minutes.

BISMARCK

How is your son to-night?

ROON

The left lung is still bleeding. We must wait.

BISMARCK

Severe losses. A Bülow has fallen. Young Itzenplitz killed.

ROON

Two Count Yorcks ditto. Moltke, thank God you have no son.

MOLTKE (*aside as usual*)

I thank God for the victory.

BISMARCK

I hope your boy has at any rate got the Cross.

ROON

Nothing. Crosses sprout only in Court circles.

BISMARCK (*aloud, so that the clerks can hear*)

And all these demi-gods are hoping to sleep in the State beds of the *Roi Soleil*! I didn't get any bed at all till yesterday, and then it was only a child's bed.

ROON

I am separated from my staff, too.

BISMARCK

There's no sort of privacy; everything has to be done in public. Roon, couldn't you issue an Army order forbidding the sentries always to stand to attention when one——

MOLTKE

Gentlemen—the enemy.

ORDERLY (*announcing*)

The French Generals.

[*At* MOLTKE'S *nod* the Clerks disappear. An Aide-de-camp steps to his side and afterwards takes notes. Then enter GENERAL WIMPFEN, a smart, attractive, elderly officer. With him two other Generals. No greetings.

MOLTKE (*who takes the middle place on the German side*)

With whom are we speaking?

WIMPFEN

Wimpffen, General in Command of the Fortress of Sedan. (*Presents.*) General Faure, General Castelnau. [*Stiff salutes.*]

MOLTKE

Your full powers?

[*He takes a paper handed to him ; on this follows another, almost marionette-like, exchange of salutes. MOLTKE invites them to sit down. He takes the head on the right-hand side ; on his right, facing the audience, is ROON ; BISMARCK is on the left, with his back to the audience. On the left-hand side WIMPFEN is at the head with the two other Generals on his left. On the table are three bottles with candles and a few papers. There is a long pause. The French obviously expect to be addressed ; equally obvious is MOLTKE'S ostentatiously obstinate silence. Meanwhile drums are heard outside. Finally:*]

WIMPFEN

I should like—we should like—to know the conditions on which we are to surrender the fortress.

MOLTKE (*icy, immovable, without raising his voice*)

The Army to be prisoners of war, with colours, arms, and baggage. The officers likewise, but to retain their arms.

[*A pause. The Frenchmen look at one another.*]

WIMPFEN

Too hard, General! Take the fortress and the artillery, but let the Army with arms, colours, and baggage withdraw into internment in Algeria, on an undertaking not to fight again in this war.

MOLTKE

Our demands are irreducible.

WIMPFEN (*gets up, gathers himself together—heatedly*)

General! Do you really ask an honourable soldier to soil his unblemished name by signing such a thing? Allow me to appeal to your feelings as an officer!

MOLTKE (*icy*)

You lost the battle.

WIMPFEN (*con brio*)

I did not. Listen and you shall hear how it is that I have the misfortune to be in charge here. MacMahon was wounded this morning. He named Ducrot as his successor. He ordered a retreat. I had returned direct from Algiers only two days before and was furious at this order. On Sunday in Paris the Minister of War had given me a decree empowering me to take command if MacMahon fell out. I demanded the command, because I believed I could win. Ducrot shrugged his shoulders and handed over to me. I gave the order to advance. He rushed up the hill and two of our divisions had to withdraw to Garenne. I meant to throw the Bavarians into the Meuse, meant to break through—then comes Lebrun, with an orderly, showing a white cloth on his lance. The troops threw themselves on it and tore it down. I refused to acknowledge it.

With three thousand men we stormed on towards Bazeilles right into the thick of your fire. I was hoping for a bullet. When I turned at last at the water-tower I found myself alone. I could still see my orderly behind me, but he soon fell. (*Slowly, after a pause.*) I turned then and rode slowly back. At Sedan I wanted to resign the command, but then everyone cried out: "This very morning you insisted on having it." Ducrot jeered at me—I saw the Emperor——

[*His emotion masters him and he breaks off—sitting down heavily. A pause. At this moment an Orderly goes up to BISMARCK, who rises, leaves the table, and comes forward R. In a low voice.*]

BISMARCK (*much moved*)

My son? Wounded? Where? At—at Varzin?

ORDERLY

Two hours from here, your Excellency.

BISMARCK (*glancing at the table*)

Lower your voice, man! Where does this come from?

ORDERLY

From the General commanding the Tenth Corps.

BISMARCK (*crumpling a paper in his hand*)

In the lungs?

ORDERLY

Gunshot wound—thigh.

BISMARCK (*touching his hip*)

Through—here?

ORDERLY

The Crown Prince sent me to take you there.

BISMARCK

Just now it is impossible. After the conference. Wait for me outside.

[Goes slowly and heavily back to his place.]

MOLTKE (*who has been waiting for him—tonelessly and coldly*)

I regret your misfortune, General. Your troops fought brilliantly, but your only course is to sign.

WIMPFEN (*fiercely*)

If you will concede me nothing, General, as a soldier, do it as a German! You too need peace—and soon. My country is prouder than any other, chivalrous and susceptible to magnanimity. Do in policy what you refuse in compassion! Give us conditions which will spare the self-respect of the *Grande Armée*, and you will gain the friendship of the whole nation. The pain will be alleviated, the peace more lasting. If you remain cold and ruthless, if you stir to fury the sense of honour of my people, you will sow a crop of wrath and revenge. It will come to war again and again and there will be no end!

BISMARCK (*gets up and speaks, at first with marked politeness*)

Your arguments are enticing, General, but they are unsound. It is never wise to reckon on the thanks of individuals, and it is always dangerous to build on the gratitude of a people. If your country were like others, with well established institutions and a Prince firmly seated on his Throne, we might perhaps count

on that gratitude. But with you, for the last eighty years, the tide has ebbed and flowed and nothing firm has survived. France has declared war on us a dozen times out of jealousy—as on this occasion. You regard glory as your monopoly—your exclusive heritage. I am not one of those who are in the habit of extolling their own country as the citadel of virtue. But why should I admit that you are prouder than we? On the contrary! You, yes, *you*, cannot endure that another people should grow up by your side as great as yourselves. And, as you haven't been able to forgive us for Sadowa, where after all it was not *you* who were defeated, how could you ever forgive us for this catastrophe at Sedan? Whatever concessions we make you, you will from this day forth brood over your revenge. That I foresee with certainty from this moment. It is this eternally unresting spirit of provocation that we must break to-day, in order to secure the safety of our children, to whom we are responsible.

WIMPFEN (*heatedly*)

You are mistaken, your Excellency. We are not the same people as fifty years ago. You cannot judge us by the verses of a few poets or the articles of a few journalists. The new Empire has created riches. All our people have their heads full of nothing but trade and business. Everyone wants to be comfortable, thinks of his own interests, and all too little of national glory. To-day, on the ruins of the *Grande Armée*, let us proclaim the brotherhood of our peoples and banish the old vendetta! The hereditary hatred between France and England is already at an end.

BISMARCK

Indeed I wish that were all true, and that you were

all of the same mind as the sensible part of your nation, who didn't want this war. But I know your instincts better. Nothing has changed in France! The Emperor challenged us in order to strengthen his House by new triumphs. Then, alas, there is that bellicose section of Frenchmen which makes and unmakes Governments in your country. We want to come to grips with that section and that's why we must go to Paris! Can you give me any assurance, General, that to-morrow there will not arise a new Government which will care nothing for the present social system, and which, in its anarchic way, will tear up the treaty you wish to extract from us to-night? How could we allow your best troops, who have been delivered into our hands by the fortune of war, to go free, and have them shooting at us again to-morrow! (*A pause, then warmly.*) I am sorry for your fate. But—you are lost.

WIMPFEN (*after a pause, solemn and sullen*)

As we *cannot* sign this we must begin the battle again to-morrow.

CASTELNAU

First I have a message from His Majesty to deliver. (*MOLTKE nods.*) The Emperor wishes the King of Prussia to be informed that he surrendered his sword unconditionally to His Majesty with the definite hope that the King, in recognition of the sacrifice, would grant an honourable capitulation to the Army—
[*Pause.*]

BISMARCK

Is that all? (*A pause, then very emphatically.*) Now General: whose sword precisely is it that the Emperor Napoleon III surrendered to-day? Is it

the sword of France? In that case the conditions could be made very much milder. If, on the contrary, it is only——

CASTELNAU

It is only the Emperor's sword.

BISMARCK

Then there can only be remission for the Emperor.

MOLTKE (*rises*)

It is nearly midnight.

WIMPFEN (*terribly agitated*)

I appeal to my Army! To its honour! We may yet break through to-morrow! You will lose thousands of brave soldiers; we, perhaps, will lose more; all of whom you could now save by a stroke of the pen!

ROON

MacMahon's Army only the day before yesterday mustered 120,000 men. Now there's nothing left.

MOLTKE

By midday I shall have shot Sedan to ashes.

WIMPFEN (*passionately*)

I will anticipate you. I'll blow up the fortress in the morning.

MOLTKE (*adamant*)

Do so by all means.

WIMPFEN (*to whom his comrades have been making signs*)

One moment. (*He goes aside with them, talking in a low voice. At the same time the Germans have risen.*)

BISMARCK *is speaking to MOLTKE, likewise in low tones. In a minute or two the parties return to the table. All remain standing. With dignity, mastering his anger.*)
 In this terrible position—in order to save men's lives—as you are inexorable; one single condition which I guarantee on the honour of France and will unflinchingly keep! (MOLTKE *looks inquiringly at him.*)
 Leave for all officers to depart with arms and baggage on parole not to fight again.

MOLTKE

Granted. [He pushes a paper towards him.]

WIMPFEN (*after reading it through silently*)

Here I should like to insert not to fight against Germany again "*in this war.*"

BISMARCK (*smiling broadly but significantly*)

Very well, General; "*in THIS war.*"

[WIMPFEN *signs.*]

SCENE II—*A Winter Garden in Château Bellevue, near Sedan.*

The following afternoon. Brilliant sunshine. View of an old park through windows and double glass doors which are open. A short flight of steps leads down into the garden. GENERALS CASTELNAU and WIMPFEN enter from opposite sides.

WIMPFEN (*briskly*)

Well! How did you sleep?

CASTELNAU (*troubled*)

Not a wink. And you?

WIMPFEN

Very well indeed.

CASTELNAU

I'm surprised at you.

WIMPFEN

A bullet in the head or go on living. Any third course is merely sentimental.

CASTELNAU

Go on living? What for?

WIMPFEN

For the *Revanche*, of course. What a question!

CASTELNAU

Then Bismarck—wasn't far wrong last night?

WIMPFEN

If he was wrong I have lost my honour.

CASTELNAU

Do you think (*motioning towards the garden*) that *He* is also of that opinion?

WIMPFEN

He? He's a dead man.

[*NAPOLEON comes through the garden. In the clear sunlight he looks grey and ill in his fine uniform. Smokes a cigarette. He comes slowly up the steps in a state of*

nervous tension in which his mood changes every minute. The Generals stand in silence.

EMPEROR (*chiefly to himself*)

“I’m familiar with this neighbourhood,” the Chasseur said. “Believe me, Sire, if the Germans get round by Illy we are lost—” Is it time yet for the visit, gentlemen?

CASTELNAU

Not for a minute or two, Sire.

EMPEROR

Yes, well. I can offer him nothing: I have nothing now which is mine to offer.

WIMPFEN

You’ll get it over in ten minutes, Sire.

EMPEROR

Get it over? I have material for hours of conversation with Bismarck. Did you find him very unpleasant?

WIMPFEN

These people are always so self-righteous.

EMPEROR (*lightly*)

And we? (*Pause.*) That was a nice Chasseur yesterday morning. I cannot forget the honest, simple way the boy spoke to me in his anxiety—“I am familiar with this neighbourhood, Sire; believe me, if the Germans get round us—” (*He breaks off, walks up and down.*) How is it, General, that I have never spent a day or two here? The situation is charming.

CASTELNAU

But you have, Sire. Six or eight years ago we were here in the autumn with Her Majesty——

EMPEROR (*with sudden vehemence*)

Still nothing from the Empress? From Paris?

WIMPFEN

We are cut off, Sire.

EMPEROR

I keep forgetting. Do you think the Regency in Paris is strong? (*Both silent.*) You think they'll turn us out to-day or to-morrow? Of course you think so. (*Walks up and down.*) Certainly we have stayed here; but it was later in the year. The leaves had fallen. The Empress's room was up there. There was, I remember, a pretty chimney-piece in her—boudoir. There was some sort of a cherub coming down from heaven—on the chimney-piece——

CASTELNAU

It is the room I slept in last night. It's a Cupid afraid of the fire and always smiling. He nearly got on my nerves——

EMPEROR

How long did I hesitate yesterday forenoon when Ducrot advised the flag of truce?

CASTELNAU

Three minutes, Sire.

EMPEROR

They will say, "He wanted to save his life." (*Smiling.*) And *what* a life!

FOOTMAN (*announcing*)

Count Bismarck.

[*Enter BISMARCK, salutes the Generals, who withdraw into the garden—bows low to the EMPEROR, then stands, looking gigantic beside him.*

BISMARCK

I have the honour, your Majesty, to announce the visit of my most gracious Master. (*Pause.*) What are your commands, Sire?

EMPEROR (*invites him to sit down*)

We're no longer at St. Cloud, Count.

BISMARCK (*coldly*)

Personally I regret most deeply—

EMPEROR (*nervously interrupting*)

Do you remember your last visit? Wasn't it in '67?

BISMARCK

That was at Biarritz.

EMPEROR

Quite right. Prince Metternich was there too. We talked—half a morning—about Europe. When you were gone the Prince told me a whole pack of stories about you. A lot of nonsense. I remember I said—

BISMARCK (*slightly emphatic but still very civil*)

No doubt your Majesty then said about me: "Interesting but not to be taken seriously."

EMPEROR (*adroitley*)

You think so? That's not the way I put it. All the same you had some fantastic schemes.

BISMARCK

I only suggested you shouldn't oppose German Unity unless you wished to have grave complications.

EMPEROR (*looks long and seriously at him*)

You did. I took all that in. I should have listened only to my own counsel.

BISMARCK (*cautiously*)

And why, Sire—did you so suddenly give up a prescription which guaranteed you all your great achievements?

EMPEROR

Because I have become a sick man who has lost confidence in himself.

BISMARCK (*looks at him with sympathy*)

I am all the more pained by the change, as you are not responsible for it.

EMPEROR

You're wrong. I feel relieved. It was only that last fortnight after I left Châlons, when I had really ceased to be either a General or a Sovereign, that was unbearable. Only now that I'm responsible again do I feel alive. (*Stands up suddenly, sharp and aggressive.*) I deliberately made myself a prisoner, Count Bismarck! I hoped we should be rewarded for that decision by your magnanimity. If your King had presided at the Council of War he would have dealt more chivalrously with us!

BISMARCK (*quietly*)

In Prussia, Sire, the Crown is not absolute. But, so far as I am concerned, my memory retains instances not only of French chivalry, but of French duplicity!

[*NAPOLEON strides towards him. Movement in the garden. Footmen. Officers at the door. Enter the KING. Salutes outside. BISMARCK bows and exit. The glass doors are now shut. Both hesitate a few seconds about shaking hands, but finally do so with a simultaneous movement.*]

EMPEROR

I am deeply obliged to you, Sire, for your kindness in coming to see me.

KING (*sympathetic but reserved throughout*)

I have come to express to you my admiration for the bravery of your army.

EMPEROR

I don't know whether I have still the right to thank you in the name of France.

[*A pause. They sit down.*]

KING

I beg you to express to me your wishes for the future.

EMPEROR (*defensively*)

I have none to express, Sire. Your artillery won the battle. It is the best in the world.

KING

We have taken pains to learn from the experience of other countries.

EMPEROR

General von Moltke operated brilliantly. But you had a most enviable position!

KING

We won it for ourselves, Sire.

EMPEROR (*with sudden liveliness*)

Do you see the chain of hills there?

KING

You mean La Moncelle?

EMPEROR (*nodding*)

I was often there as a young man. The shooting is delightful. Yesterday morning I wandered about here—in order to find—one of your bullets. I had suddenly realized clearly how we stood. Wimpffen advised me to make a last sortie at the head of my troops. But I—when I got back to the Prefecture—everybody had crowded back into the town and there were only provisions for one day more—Lebrun didn't come back—I suddenly felt the hearts of 80,000 men beating in this old ailing breast of mine! They could be saved! To-morrow they would be lost! It was at that moment that I first learned that the whole German Army, that you yourself, were before the town. Could I really surrender the Army of Solferino to the King of Prussia? I heard the cry which would go up from Paris—! (*A pause, then*

more quietly.) And so I handed over my sword to you to sacrifice myself for France.

KING

By that resolve you saved many thousand lives. Is that not enough for you?

EMPEROR (*rising*)

If I had had my way not a single life would have been lost.

KING

I know you were against the war.

EMPEROR (*vehemently, standing before the KING, who remains seated*)

Since my youth, in my manifestos and in my speeches, I have always said that France and Prussia are natural allies. It was because the great Napoleon did not grasp this that he came to ruin.

KING

I was among those who fought against him. His downfall seemed to me to be inevitable because he had begun to deify himself.

EMPEROR (*who had walked away, suddenly comes up to him*)

No more, Sire! (*Pause.*) You asked about my wishes. Do with me as you will. But I will not tolerate a word against my Ancestor!

KING (*politely*)

I shouldn't have said it, Sire, if on former occasions you had not impressed upon me that you won your Throne for yourself.

EMPEROR

And did I not? Insurrection, Prison, Escape! Renewed insurrection—a fortress, and again escape—all to gain a Throne which was mine by right, for I, after my Brother's death, was Bonaparte's next heir.

KING

I am glad to see you so earnest in favour of legitimate succession, as at first you seemed to be rather inclined to a Republic.

EMPEROR (*smiling*)

The Republic with us is never more than an ebb between two floods which wash crowns up on to our shores.

KING (*impressed*)

With us it is made impossible by an iron chain of succession of which each link is forged by the grace of God.

EMPEROR

For that, Sire—one must have faith. We others have attained power by our own efforts.

KING (*emphatically*)

We need efforts no less than you! We have had to build the road which God has shown us—with much labour and often in great discouragement.

EMPEROR

But, Sire, in Germany your sublime faith in the grace of God seems a kind of guarantee for your Crowns.

KING

Guarantee? I've been banished myself!

EMPEROR

Only for a short time. And, if fortune had favoured me to-day, no one would have touched your Crown in Berlin to-morrow.

KING

No, thank God, that wouldn't be the Prussian way. Even while in exile at Tilsit my Father remained the beloved leader of his people.

EMPEROR

I, on the other hand—will be swept away to-morrow by the waves of Paris! So I think monarchy by the grace of God is a better instrument even than my plebiscite.

KING (*seriously*)

It is no political instrument! It is but the sign that for centuries the same Families (*emphasizing*) have ruled over the same subjects.

EMPEROR (*reflectively*)

We, however, Sire, consider ourselves a step in advance, since we began to treat our People not as chattels, but as free citizens for whom we gather laurels.

KING (*bitterly*)

It is a pity, Sire, that in France you are always in pursuit of glory.

EMPEROR

Is it contemptible? Can there be a nobler impulse in the life of a nation?

KING (*with rising emotion, almost accusingly*)

A dangerous impulse! Such a State, lacking the

deep roots of a well established ruler, is always demanding new holocausts!

EMPEROR (*clearly and confidently*)

And yet France has never lacked sons who have been willing and eager to cast themselves into the fire—only for the glory of it! Even yesterday—you said it yourself—my section of the Army fought heroically against the whole might of Germany!

KING (*roused*)

You are wrong, Sire!

EMPEROR (*taken aback*)

What then——?

KING (*forcibly*)

You were only fighting against my son's Army.

EMPEROR (*taken aback*)

And Friedrich Karl? Where then was Friedrich Karl?

KING (*rises*)

With seven Army Corps before Metz, your Majesty!

EMPEROR (*sinks into a chair*)

Terrible! Now—at last—I am stricken! (KING *beckons towards the garden*; the Generals hasten to the EMPEROR's assistance. They support him while he half raises himself as the KING holds out his hand.) I—thank you for your visit, Sire! [KING *bows and exit*.

WIMPFEN

What gave you such a shock, Sire?

EMPEROR (*in a heart seizure, spasmodically*)

Bazaine—is surrounded in Metz by seven Army Corps! I have lost the battle—and the Throne against—a handful of troops! Ask—the King to allow me to send a cipher telegram—home. I want—to cry out—one word to Paris—Revenge!

ACT IV

Paris: 4th September

SCENE I—*Staircase in the Palais Bourbon.*

A great staircase lighted by a glass roof fills the whole centre of the stage. Above is a pillared gallery. In front below R. and L. doors leading outside. Above, L. and centre, doors into the Chamber. During the whole scene people come and go. At the doors are soldiers with fixed bayonets. At a window above R. an old General stands staring immovably into the street.

FIRST SOLDIER (*below, meets the second on sentry go and whispers, motioning towards the General*)

He keeps on standing there—staring into the street instead of giving orders.

SECOND SOLDIER

Oh! He'll soon be finished—he and his orders too!

FIRST SOLDIER

You'd better take care how you speak like that. We have to obey orders. What about your Oath of Allegiance and all that? Shut up!

SECOND SOLDIER (*aloud*)

You should get into a balloon and sail away to your Imperial Master in the Prussian fortress, so that he may have someone else to play at soldiers with!

FIRST SOLDIER

Don't squeal so loud, you idiot! If they put you up against the wall for mutiny and I am in the firing party, you won't like it if I have to shoot a hole in you!

SECOND SOLDIER (*barring the door R. with his rifle*)

Halt! Who goes there?

[*In the doorway is PICARD, and behind him some ill-clad persons who try to push their way in.*]

PICARD

Picard, deputy. My pass. Who's speaking in there?

SECOND SOLDIER

M. Favre, I think.

PICARD

My friends will wish to hear that. Come in!

SECOND SOLDIER

Halt! What do you want?

PICARD

They want to go into the public gallery. My cousin, my uncle, my partner, my——

SECOND SOLDIER

That won't do. You can only admit *one* person.

PICARD

Ah! but one's family is different.

SECOND SOLDIER

Where is that stated?

PICARD (*standing his ground*)

Man! Don't you know your Regulations?

SECOND SOLDIER

Don't be so familiar, Monsieur!

PICARD (*laughs and embraces him*)

Pax, old friend! You are right and I am right. So it is in these times. Everybody is right! Therefore let these worthy citizens attend in all decency and order a sitting which is of such importance. (*The Soldier shrugs his shoulders and leaves the door free.*) All right! Come on then, my friends.

[*He leads them upstairs—the people finger the fine railings inquisitively and disappear above into the Chamber with him.*]

FIRST SOLDIER (*below, while this is going on*)

You're mad. They are Communists, these people, and who knows what they are plotting to-day?

SECOND SOLDIER

A few poor wretches! How miserably thin they are. *They'll* not make a revolution.

FIRST SOLDIER (*at the door L.*)

Halt! Who goes there?

ARAGO (*old, jovial, and rather theatrical*)

Don't you know me, sonny? I am the Nestor of this House?

FIRST SOLDIER

Of course I know you, M. Arago. But you are not the Quaestor of the House.

ARAGO (*laughing*)

God forbid I should hold such an office! (*Aside.*) Particularly to-day! I am the oldest member and am bringing a few friends into the gallery.

FIRST SOLDIER

No one can pass here.

ARAGO (*suddenly angry*)

What are you thinking about? You saucebox, will you prevent old Arago bringing his guests in?

FIRST SOLDIER

That I will. Get back!

ARAGO (*very loudly*)

Provocation! You see! The military are at it again! As always! (*The middle doors above open, and from the Chamber, of which one gets a glimpse, a number of Deputies enter the Hall above. Calls up.*) Messieurs, look here! The armed power is provoking the people! I protest!

[*Calls from above: "Let them in!"*]

FIRST SOLDIER

The sitting is over. Do what you will.

[*ARAGO takes his friends into the House.*

FAVRE and GAMBETTA, with several other Deputies, come down the stairs disputing vigorously. They stand against the railings and a semicircle forms round them. FAVRE, an oldish, thin, rather pedantic person; GAMBETTA, still young, meridional, volatile, and very rhetorical.

GAMBETTA

I tell you again, Jules Favre, there is no *de facto* authority!

FAVRE

What are you saying, M. Gambetta! Merely because the Emperor is—absent! Are *we* not here? Is Parliament not assembled? Has the Senate ceased to exist in France?

GAMBETTA

Where is it, then? These gentlemen know very well why they're keeping out of sight just now! And only our Left is assembled here.

FAVRE

For that very reason we must constitute ourselves legally. That can't be done in an hour. Time presses, and Paris may get out of hand. So we must at once make sure of the troops. We must have a General!

FIRST DEPUTY

There's Caussade, who is in command here!

SECOND DEPUTY

Where is the Minister of War?

FIRST DEPUTY

Invisible. His only son has been killed before Metz.

SECOND DEPUTY

A good excuse!

FIRST DEPUTY

What a brute you are!

SECOND DEPUTY

Where is Thiers? Thiers must be fetched!

VOICES

Yes! Yes! Thiers is the man of the hour!

FAVRE (*disquieted*)

Why Thiers? What we want is a General.

GAMBETTA

For ten years you have been fighting the Dictatorship and insisting on the supremacy of the Civil over the Military power—and now in the first moment of freedom you're all screaming for a General!

FAVRE

He will obey us, not we him!

GAMBETTA

Well, it would be the first time *that's* ever happened! Besides Caussade has been off his head since yesterday!

FAVRE

That's why I have asked Trochu to come here!

FIRST DEPUTY

Trochu?

SECOND DEPUTY

He's much too Imperialist to accept the Republic!

FAVRE (*vehemently*)

Hush! (*A silence.*) We still have, for the moment, an Empress who is legally Regent. So far *we have no Republic here!* Trochu is the only man we can trust to-day. The Court has kept him down.

SECOND DEPUTY

But Trochu is with the Empress.

FIRST DEPUTY

That doesn't matter; they hate each other!

GAMBETTA (*taking FAVRE aside, in a lower tone*)

I don't understand you at all, *cher maître*. Surely you see how everything is collapsing here!

FAVRE

Be careful that our political friends don't hear us. We must take care not to overreach ourselves.

GAMBETTA

But if we don't hurry the Radicals will get ahead of us! Didn't you hear Arago ranting about "provocation"? Is it for this that you fought the Empire and let them banish you? The rabble have overrun the Chamber. Picard knows very well why he wasn't at the sitting.

FAVRE

Don't go too fast.

GAMBETTA (*decisively*)

I know what to do.

[Hurries out below R. The group of Deputies below has moved to the big window. The scene becomes more lively.]

FIRST DEPUTY

Look! The National Guard is pressing against the pillars of the bridge.

SECOND DEPUTY

That comes of arming the people.

THIRD DEPUTY

Who armed them? Favre!

FAVRE (*coming up*)

I brought in that measure when the first bad news came. I beg to remind you it was directed against the Prussians!

FIRST DEPUTY

I warned you in Committee! Class hatred is always stronger than patriotism!

FAVRE

That's not true! If they had armed the people in
'15——

FIRST DEPUTY

Nonsense! Look out of the window and you'll see the consequences!

FAVRE (*more and more nervously*)

Gently, gently, messieurs! For the moment I see nothing.

SECOND DEPUTY

You wait, and in ten minutes you'll *hear* something. They are still behind the Guards in the Place Vendôme.

THIRD DEPUTY

All this comes of your free election of officers! The old ones resigned, and now the battalions of citizens who have any property to lose are leaderless.

SEVERAL VOICES

Look! look! they are already making signs to us!

FAVRE (*disquieted*)

No panic, Messieurs! How many do you suppose they are?

FIRST DEPUTY (*enjoying his discomfiture*)

A hundred thousand bayonets, M. Favre! All proletarians! One of them'll run you through; depend upon it! (*They remain at the window gesticulating and disputing. An Officer hastens in below much excited and goes upstairs to the old General standing at the window R.*) You see. We're already betrayed!

SECOND DEPUTY

Hush! We're being protected!

OFFICER (*above*)

May I have your orders, General, please.

GENERAL (*dully*)

What orders?

OFFICER

The mob are crowding on to the Quai d'Orsay. The people are coming in from the faubourgs. They're all laughing and rejoicing, shouting the War is over! King Wilhelm only wanted the Emperor——

GENERAL

The Emperor is captured. All is over. Make your shameful peace by yourselves!

OFFICER

It's urgent, General! If we don't shoot and the crowd presses we must retreat!

GENERAL

Weren't you on the General Staff?

OFFICER

I was, sir.

GENERAL

Then tell me, how could Ducrot at Sedan abandon the sortie against Illy?

OFFICER

I—don't know the map well enough to say. Do you order us to shoot, General?

GENERAL

The Empress has forbidden all bloodshed.

OFFICER

Then the troops must at once allow the National Guard across the Pont Royal.

GENERAL

Do what you think best. I have nothing more to do with this world. My world came to an end yesterday.

OFFICER

Very good, General.

[Hastens out again. The General follows him slowly downstairs.]

FIRST DEPUTY

What's going to happen, General?

GENERAL

Let me pass. I have nothing more to do here.

[Exit below L.]

GAMBETTA (*has again entered below R., breathlessly, but rhetorically, to the group*)

Fellow citizens! The faubourgs are depopulated! The crowd is surging along the Rue de Rivoli to the Place de la Concorde! Impossible to resist them! There is only one thing to do. Get the National Guard across the bridge to protect Parliament!

VOICES

Our lives would be in danger! They are armed!

OTHERS

On the contrary, they will save us.

FIRST DEPUTY (*points outside*)

Look, they've all got képis!

SECOND DEPUTY

Képis are not arms, Monsieur!

FIRST DEPUTY

No doubt they have them concealed about them somewhere.

GAMBETTA (*on the second step of the stairs*)

Fellow citizens! Here you can see it in quite small print in this morning's *Siècle*: "Rendezvous of the National Guard at 2 o'clock Palais Bourbon!"

FIRST DEPUTY

There's nothing in that!

GAMBETTA

It's a quarter to! Shall we now proclaim the Republic or——

ALL

No! No! Don't be precipitate! We are proceeding constitutionally!

GAMBETTA (*looking round*)

As you will, Messieurs! (*Takes a young man aside to a corner of the staircase in front L., where they remain isolated. Half aloud, very quickly.*) My young friend, would you like to earn a principal clerkship? It is quite easy. Only write what I'm dictating and make as many copies as you can in the next ten minutes. The copying press is upstairs in the writing-room. Here is paper. (*With deep feeling, but in restrained, hurried tones, while the writer, looking up every now and then, at first hesitatingly, but afterwards mechanically, takes it down.*) Heading—*République Française*, Ministry of the Interior. To all Prefects, Generals, and Telegraph officials in France. The Corps Législatif has declared the Dynasty deposed. The Republic—Have you got that?—the Republic has been proclaimed. The list of the new Ministry follows in the afternoon. Signature: The Minister of the Interior, Léon Gambetta. Paris, September 4, 1.50 p.m. No questions, Monsieur. Say nothing to anyone. Copy it quickly! Then telegraph it to all the capitals. To-morrow you'll get your place.

[*He hurries off again while the young man runs upstairs; drums are heard outside.*]

FIRST DEPUTY

Well, M. Favre. Do you hear it now?

FAVRE

Trochu! Where is Trochu?

FIRST DEPUTY

Where is Thiers?

SECOND DEPUTY

He's bolted!

THIRD DEPUTY

No. He can't get through. [*More movement.*]

VOICES

Look! Listen! The soldiers are withdrawing.
The mob is overjoyed. Look how they're laughing!

FAVRE

Incredible! Only yesterday evening the Minister
of War told me he had 40,000 men to suppress any
revolt.

FIRST DEPUTY (*cuttingly*)

Where are they then?

SECOND DEPUTY

Probably in Strasbourg, eating horseflesh.

THIRD DEPUTY

Look! That's old Arago standing on the carriage.
He's addressing the crowd!

FAVRE

He always does that! He's been in three Revolu-
tions already! [*THIERS has entered L.*]

VOICES

Here's Thiers! Where have you been? Thiers
was against the war! Speech, Thiers!

THIERS (*confident, thoughtful, but smiling*)

With pleasure, Messieurs! But, not here I think!

FIRST DEPUTY

The sitting is interrupted.

THIERS

Then we must resume at once. We mustn't lose this precious hour. In fact, we haven't got *one* hour to spare before we shall be stopped.

FAVRE (*pointedly*)

Can't you offer *any* new ideas, my dear colleague? I'm always saying this.

THIERS

I come from the Empress. (*Sensation.*) As the Throne is deserted and the Prince Imperial is abroad, her only course is to surrender the Regency to the Corps Législatif.

SEVERAL VOICES

Quite right!

FAVRE

That would be deposition pure and simple.

VOICES

Hush. Let Thiers speak!

THIERS

A Committee must at once be appointed to form a Government of National Defence.

FAVRE

We're a long way from the question of defence. The question is, what is the best form of Democracy? Confronted with the desertion of the Throne——

FIRST DEPUTY

You said all that at the sitting!

SECOND DEPUTY

Let Thiers speak!

THIERS

This is no time to dispute about forms! (*Raising his voice.*) Messieurs! The enemy is only six days' march from Paris. (*Great sensation.*) What we've got to do is to provision the city and surround Paris with fortifications.

VOICES

Thiers has been vainly recommending that for years.

THIERS

Will anyone volunteer for work on the forts? (*A painful silence.*) Then I have nothing more to do here. I'm—going to volunteer. [*Exit.*]

FAVRE (*rushing up the steps*)

That doesn't frighten us! We will work with our heads! We will stamp our foot and a new Army will spring up from the pavements of Paris!

VOICES

Good! We'll make a new Army!

FAVRE

Let us set up a Committee! The sitting is resumed!
[*All are hastening upstairs to the Chamber when heavy sticks are heard beating on the doors below. All stand shocked on the steps, and at the same time are heard*

shouts from without : " Open! Turn out the Emperor! Republic ! "

DEPUTIES (*to the Soldiers*)

Why did you let them in? Who opened the doors?

FIRST SOLDIER

The railings are giving way, and the doors were opened from inside.

DEPUTIES

There you are! That was the radicals! Now it is too late.

[They hasten upstairs, take up their position by the pillars, and look down. Led by ARAGO and PICARD a mob of people with and without képis, force their way in through both doors below simultaneously. At the same time those already let in appear above.]

ARAGO (*with a képi, makes his way to the stairs*)

Frenchmen! The People have anticipated the hesitating Chamber! In order to save our country which is in danger they have proclaimed the Republic. The Emperor has run away, so we'll have no more of him and his clan! (*Stormy cries inside and from the street.*) The Republic is proclaimed! The Revolution has passed off without a blow! Fellow citizens, no violence! Let us show that we are Frenchmen.

[More shouting.]

GAMBETTA (*has pressed through the crowd and stands near ARAGO on the steps*)

Fellow citizens!

VOICES (*from below*)

Down with that Democrat! We will not hear him!
Traitor!

GAMBETTA (*with the voice of a lion*)

Fellow citizens! Do you think you are the only Republicans in France? Did not our fathers storm the Bastille? We were before you! The Republic was proclaimed to the whole country an hour ago! (*Sensation. He scatters a sheaf of papers among the crowd, who eagerly snatch at them.*) While I am speaking here, this proclamation is being read at Marseilles, at Toul, at Bordeaux. Louis Bonaparte and his house have for ever ceased to rule in France! (*A storm of applause.*) We are setting up a Cabinet of National Defence. (*Applause.*) They have offered me the Ministry of the Interior! (*Laughter.*) In view of your applause I have decided to take it! (*Laughter.*) The Dictatorship of the Empire is over! *Vive la Liberté!*

[*A storm of shouting. The Marseillaise is struck up again below. At the same time there is a movement at the door. L. Amid tumultuous greetings enter ROCHEFORT. He has a fantastic beard, a fiery countenance, and a red sash.*]

VOICES

Rocheport! Rocheport is out of prison. Speech!
Rocheport!

ROCHEFORT (*below, in a loud, petulant voice*)
I see this stage is occupied by a Democrat!

GAMBETTA (*hastens nimbly to his side*)

No more disputes! Let us all hold together!
Come! [*Makes as if to lead him upstairs.*]

ROCHEFORT

Get out, M. Gambetta! You have been insulting and betraying us for the last ten years! We won't have anything to do with *you*! Your M. Thiers is the panegyrist of the first Napoleon and made his bow to the third on the very day before the war, while we were rotting in jail! (*On the steps, between the outbursts of shouting.*) The Emperor has accepted the hospitality of the King of Prussia! Now the people whose blood had to be shed for him are taking things in hand. *Vive la Commune!* [*Storms of shouting.*]

FAVRE (*from above*)

You by yourselves are not the People! You are only one class! You wish to abolish property! You have turned against us the weapons we gave you to fight the Germans! You wish to use the national misfortune for your own class interests. But we mean to summon a Constituent Assembly!

ROCHEFORT (*places himself opposite FAVRE in a threatening attitude on the stairs, calling upwards*)

To the devil with your Constituent Assembly! That wretched old bag of tricks! The Chamber is at an end! (*To the crowd.*) Yesterday in this honourable House they were discussing a plan for establishing a Bank in China! (*Shouts of laughter.*) We want liberty and peace!

GAMBETTA

So do we! But we must fight for it! The

UNION

ACT IV

Prussians are forty miles from Paris. Will you surrender Paris?

SHOUTS

Never!

GAMBETTA

We didn't want war! We voted against war! The Emperor wanted it, so we have deposed him!

ROCHEFORT

Where, then, are the Emperor's advisers? (*Shouts.*) Where is the noble Duc de Gramont, that pretentious popinjay! Where is Leboeuf, whose very name betrays his descent from the cow-house? We mean to hunt them from their hiding-places so that they may atone for their blood-guilt and go to the gallows with the Empress and the rest of them.

[*Storms of applause.*]

GAMBETTA

There is plenty of time for all that! There are more urgent things to do! We must arm! Not an inch of our dear Fatherland shall we surrender to the King of Prussia. Not a stone of our fortresses shall we give up to General Moltke! We still have friends in Europe. (*Applause.*) We shall not rest until we have brought France's mortal enemy—this Herr von Bismarck—to the gallows! [*Tumultuous acclamations.*]

ROCHEFORT

M. Gambetta's phrases leave us cold! Prussia made war only on the Emperor. No one will touch a hair of the head of our new Republic. We refuse to build fortifications! We will build the new Commonwealth instead. (*Cheers.*) These gentlemen up there in their smart clothes and their secure posi-

tions are not our brothers! Our brothers are the German workmen and soldiers! Poor oppressed lads like you and me! [Cheers.]

VOICES (*at the door L.*)

Room for General Trochu!

[*A lane is made and a weather-beaten General enters. FAVRE, much relieved, hastens to him.*]

VOICES

We want no more Generals!

FAVRE (*soothingly*)

That's nothing, General!

TROCHU (*looks calmly round, and in a resounding tone*)

Nothing, M. le Député? [A silence.]

GAMBETTA (*half aloud to him*)

The Republic is an accomplished fact. It has been the least bloody revolution in history. All Paris is overjoyed. I think there'll be illuminations to-night. But, unless you take up the reins now with a firm hand, there will be an aftermath of revolution, and there'll be chaos!

TROCHU

And if I take command, do you regard the war as won?

ROCHEFORT

The war is over! Go home and put on your old civvies! [Laughter.]

TROCHU (*goes straight up to him*)

Monsieur! Whom do you think you are addressing?

ROCHEFORT

We have ceased to be afraid!

[Two groups form, surrounding the two men.]

TROCHU

Then *you* won't be afraid to take measures to prevent two million people starving when the Prussians besiege us!

ROCHEFORT

They won't besiege us now!

TROCHU

That's a mere phrase! We've got to face it!
[Pause. The crowd becomes quieter and listens. A Soldier with bandaged head forces his way forward.]

SOLDIER

Listen to the General! I come from the Front! The Germans are terrible! I am a poor mason, 74 Chaussée d'Antin. I am one of yourselves! Listen to the General! The Army of the Rhine is no more! The Germans are before Rheims. Each one does what he is ordered! Endless columns of steel are marching on Paris. They are rolling up on us with their evil faces and their siege train! Fellow citizens! Defend yourselves! The war is *not* over! We must entrench Paris!

CRIES

Entrench Paris!

FAVRE (*anxiously*)

Do you hear the crowd? Will you accept?

GAMBETTA (*emotionally*)

You alone can save France now!

TROCHU

Assure me first on three points. (*A sudden silence.*)
God, Family, Property.

THE DEPUTIES

We pledge ourselves!

TROCHU

Then I will defend Paris!

ROCHEFORT (*on the other side, shouts*)

Have nothing to do with them! What are we
doing here? For eighty years revolutions in Paris
have been made at the Hôtel de Ville!

[*The Marseillaise is struck up again.*]

SHOUTS

To the Hôtel de Ville! To the Hôtel de Ville!
[*Tumult.*]

SCENE II—*An ante-chamber in the Tuileries. The
doors are open, two Servants are seen hastening
through the room. They meet.*

FIRST SERVANT

Let's be off! Let's be off!

SECOND SERVANT

You think we can still get through?

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FIRST SERVANT

In front, through the Porte Bourbon, it is impossible.

SECOND SERVANT

Come through the Louvre. I'll break open the door to the Egyptian Museum and there we'll hide behind the sphinxes. To-morrow morning, when everything has settled down again, we can get out quite easily into the street.

FIRST SERVANT

But if it's kept shut to-morrow? During revolutions it's always shut.

SECOND SERVANT

How do you know that?

FIRST SERVANT

'48. Louis Philippe. I was in it as a boy.

SECOND SERVANT

Have you got anything?

FIRST SERVANT

To eat?

SECOND SERVANT

No. (*Makes a gesture of stealing.*) That.

FIRST SERVANT

Only a little silver. (*Shows something gleaming under his coat.*) And you?

SECOND SERVANT

Bread and cheese. If I hide you behind the sphinxes will you give me half?

FIRST SERVANT

Yes. But if we are shut in you'll give me half your cheese?

SECOND SERVANT

Agreed. Let's be off!

[*Both exeunt R. Enter the EMPRESS with her Lady-in-waiting R.*]

EMPRESS

Who was that running there?

LADY (*very much frightened*)

Oh! I don't know! One of the servants.

EMPRESS (*masculine, resolute, and hard*)

I have no doubt. They're on the run! How many do you suppose are still in the Palace?

LADY

Oh! a dozen I'm sure.

EMPRESS

That is to say, three or four. The remaining fifty—or how many were there of our rabble?

LADY

Oh! think of yourself, your Majesty.

EMPRESS

Of ourselves, you would say! Are you very much frightened, my dear?

LADY (*shivering*)

Oh! not in the least.

EMPRESS

When you begin with oh! you always fib.

LADY

Oh! no, your Majesty.

EMPRESS

Where is my Pompadour?

LADY

Forgive me, I forgot—I was in such a hurry——!

EMPRESS

You've been forgetting everything of late, my dear.

LADY

Would your Majesty meanwhile deign to take mine——

EMPRESS

Red! I won't have red! Quick, fetch me the light blue one with the silver handle.

LADY

I'll go at once. [Exit. Enter THIERS.

EMPRESS

For the second time, M. Thiers?

THIERS (*embarrassed*)

It—was no longer very easy to get through!

EMPRESS

What do you want me to do now?

THIERS

Resign the Regency at once into the hands of the

Committee. Perhaps you may still have time for that. If the mob takes your power from you it is all up with the succession!

EMPRESS

Who says so?

THIERS

I know it! If *you* take the initiative perhaps—*later*—your son may be elected by a plebiscite.

EMPRESS

Do *you* wish that?

THIERS

I am here only in order to advise an Empress of the House of Bonaparte.

EMPRESS (*coming nearer, warmly*)

You seriously think that, in spite of all, my son—my son. (*Bursts suddenly into tears.*) I don't know whether he's alive or dead!

THIERS

He was not under fire. He is alive. Be quick!

EMPRESS (*combative again*)

Why not a Regency under my Presidency?

THIERS

Too late.

EMPRESS

A Military Dictatorship?

THIERS

Trochu is in power.

EMPRESS

Trochu? Then we're lost! He will revenge himself. I've often hurt his feelings.

THIERS

A Frenchman doesn't revenge himself on a lady.

EMPRESS

You think that in this way my son might—? Very well. Draw up the order.

THIERS (*smiles*)

The "order"?

EMPRESS

Very well then, my decision!

THIERS

Where can I find writing materials? (*While he is searching enter TROCHU. In a whisper.*) Is it proclaimed? (*TROCHU nods.*) Then—it's too late.

EMPRESS

Won't you take me prisoner, General. I'm not a coward—I was born a Spaniard!

TROCHU

I come to advise you to fly at once.

EMPRESS

Is the Emperor—dethroned? (*TROCHU nods.*) And with him the Dynasty? (*TROCHU nods. A pause.*) Then my son has nothing more to lose!

THIERS

Only you have anything more to lose.

EMPRESS

Then I won't fly! I accept our dethronement. That may save bloodshed, but I will *never* desert.

TROCHU

Your personal safety is threatened.

EMPRESS (*passionately*)

Then they can do with me as they did with Marie Antoinette—or with any others of the women who have had the misfortune to reign over the most ungrateful of all peoples!

THIERS

Fly, your Majesty!

EMPRESS

And where should I fly to?

THIERS

To your home.

EMPRESS

In the middle of the Revolution? Besides, my home is France.

TROCHU

There is revolution here, too.

LADY (*returning*)

The blue Pompadour, your Majesty.

EMPRESS

Take it away! [*Enter* COUNT NIGRA *in haste.*]

NIGRA

Fly, your Majesty. I could scarcely get through the Guards with my papers. Fly! They are here!

EMPRESS

Ah! France! You won't allow your citizens to be unfortunate!

THIERS (*polite but ironical*)

Only those whose good fortune has lasted long.

EMPRESS

Are my Guards still loyal, General?

TROCHU

As long as I bid them to be.

EMPRESS

Can you go on doing that without shooting?

TROCHU

No.

EMPRESS

But I'll have no Civil War!

NIGRA (*business-like*)

Have you—your pearls on?

EMPRESS

Here they are.

NIGRA

No. No, the big ones.

EMPRESS

Wait!

[*Exit R. The Lady follows. The Three Gentlemen wait. Pause.*]

THIERS

Pardon me, Count Nigra. Could you tell me why

the Italian Corps didn't come in on our side as arranged?

NIGRA (*loftily*)

No, M. Thiers. That I cannot tell you. (*To TROCHU.*) Could you tell me, however, General, how it came about that MacMahon so rashly allowed himself to be shut up in Sedan?

TROCHU

He was counting on the Italian Corps, your Excellency!

NIGRA (*smiling*)

Well, gentlemen, if *we* are to blame for the misfortunes of France it only remains for me to rescue your Empress.

EMPRESS (*returning with the Lady*)

I have them.

NIGRA

Quick.

EMPRESS

To your Embassy?

NIGRA

Impossible.

EMPRESS (*startled*)

Where then?

THIERS

To the Emperor?

EMPRESS (*sharply*)

So that I may have to beg Herr von Bismarck to give me a pass?

NIGRA

My dentist is American. He will conceal you. Then to Havre and so across the Channel.

EMPRESS (*passionately*)

Ah, must I really go the same way as the Orléans?

THIERS

The same way that Louis Philippe and his Queen went to make room for you!

EMPRESS

Will you look after this trembling creature? (TROCHU *nods*.) Then here is the key of my *secrétaire*. In the inmost pigeon-hole on the left is a miniature of the Prince Imperial. Let me have it later through the Italians.

LADY

I will look for it——

EMPRESS (*impatiently*)

You must *find* it, my dear.

NIGRA

A longer cloak, your Majesty!

EMPRESS

I am not cold.

NIGRA

But if you are recognized?

EMPRESS (*untameably*)

Hasn't Paris rejoiced to recognize me? Did I lose the Battle of Sedan? I will *not* disguise myself!

Let Paris see its ingratitude with its own eyes—that I am alive only because of the kindness of a foreigner!—Your arm, Count Nigra! [*Exeunt both in haste.*]

TROCHU (*to the Lady*)

Come.

LADY

But the miniature——

TROCHU

To the devil with it! For God's sake, come!
[*Exeunt both in haste.*]

THIERS (*looks contemplatively around him*)

In history everything repeats itself.

ACT V

Versailles

SCENE I—BISMARCK'S Room

November. A villa in the French taste, simply furnished. R., a chimney-piece with clock, writing-table L. It is evening. Lamps. At the writing-table BISMARCK in uniform, near him COUNT BRAY, the Bavarian Minister, in civilian clothes. He is tall, with thin whiskers, and has the countenance of a diplomatist of the old school.

BISMARCK (*polite, repressing a grumble*)

Then you still don't see your way to decide?

BRAY (*lukewarmly*)

We are awaiting the decision of our most gracious Master.

BISMARCK

Why doesn't King Ludwig come to Headquarters? With a chivalrous ruler like him we should come to terms in an hour. Most of the German Princes are here, why not the second greatest?

BRAY (*smiling*)

Perhaps because, where he is, he is accustomed to be the greatest.

BISMARCK

Hm! I'm sorry that I can't in a single instant multiply Bavaria's greatness by six.

BRAY

Moreover, we could scarcely—manage to house him suitably here in accordance with his fastidious taste.

BISMARCK

Can there be a more stately or romantic bedroom than the Green State Chamber in which the *Roi Soleil* loved to sleep?

BRAY

Ça dépend. But in any case—previously—we should have to raise certain points of difference which might irritate my Royal Master's nerves. First of all there are the rank badges which in Prussia are worn on the epaulettes, but which in Bavaria must be kept—as they are—on the collar.

BISMARCK

Does Bavaria's heart hang on a collar? I'll get that through all right. Only let us have *one Army* under *one oath*——

BRAY

The oath of allegiance must of course be in the name of the King of Bavaria.

BISMARCK

Each man to his own Prince? Are the German recruits to be praying to twenty-four different gods? Then each Prince might as well be allowed to send his own Minister.

BRAY

That — frankly — would also be one of our conditions.

BISMARCK

Hm! Could you be so kind as to tell me, then, in what would consist the unity of the Reich which it is our intention to found here?

BRAY

In the common Presidency—under the Imperial Title—which, of course, would have to alternate in some way between Prussia and Bavaria.

BISMARCK

Alternate? In that case I should advise you to take over the burden of the responsibility alone, and, in accordance with your old secret plans, unite all South Germany under the Crown of Bavaria! (*Rises angrily.*) Your Excellency, the negotiations are broken off. Tell the King that we have come to an agreement with all the other countries, and that we will conclude without Bavaria.

BRAY

Such unanimity surprises me all the more as the Army has been lying inactive here for weeks before Paris without any success, and the impression you are making on Europe is disquieting.

BISMARCK

Absurd!

BRAY

Eh bien! But M. Thiers, through his agents in Baden, is engineering a democratic conspiracy against Prussia, I am told, with growing success.

BISMARCK (*aside*)

Rubbish!

BRAY (*in French*)

Pardon, Excellence ?

BISMARCK (*not rudely, but in quite a friendly tone*)
I was speaking German, and I said rubbish!

BRAY (*smiling*)

Oh well, you'll soon be learning French in Prussia in order to govern your new subjects in Lorraine.

BISMARCK

We're not going to have any foreigners in our house.

BRAY

But won't you have to have some in the big, communal Imperial House of your dreams?

BISMARCK (*at first polite, then suddenly raising his voice, and finally thundering*)

I beg your Excellency's pardon—I am too much beset by opponents of *foreign* nationality. Whether I shall for long have to reckon you among my German opponents you will know better in Munich than we before Paris. I warn Bavaria! If your so-called patriots, who, at the outbreak of this war, shouted for neutrality, should this time also go their own way, then we shall, with thanks for your assistance, keep *you* separate with the united strength of Germany until you are deaf, dumb, and blind.

[*Enter* ROON. *Exit* BRAY *with a stiff salute to both.*]

ROON

I could hear you outside! Whatever is the matter?

BISMARCK (*goes angrily to the writing-table, where he throws the papers about*)

An arrogant lot, these Bavarians! They're up to mischief with Stuttgart and Carlsruhe, and conspiring with Vienna and all the enemies of Germany!

ROON

I think you sent Delbrück to King Ludwig?

BISMARCK

Yes, they argued for three hours about Papal Infallibility!

ROON

The Württembergers have also taken their departure.

BISMARCK

Adieu! Bon voyage! The Bavarians are setting them all on me. Did you look at that Count's face? It was like herring and eggs!

ROON

These culinary comparisons!

BISMARCK (*grows*)

Well, anyhow, I won't insult our good Pomeranian smoked goose by comparing it with Count Bray!

ROON

You gave us another splendid dinner last night.

BISMARCK

At the King's I always get up hungry. When I see that the number of the cutlets is the same as that of the guests I don't feel equal to preparing a decent peace.

ROON

Where *did* you get those wonderful pheasants?

BISMARCK

You can't get them, my dear Roon, by merely rapping a tuning-fork on the table.

ROON

But the King has forbidden all shooting?

BISMARCK

Shooting? Have you never heard of self-defence? On Friday morning I was riding past the ponds in the covert beyond the Park, thinking of nothing in particular, when I was suddenly attacked by three gigantic pheasants! Happily I had my gun with me. What could a man do but defend himself?—I ride very badly, I may tell you, for I have the gout.

ROON

An insurance for the next twenty years.

BISMARCK

Go along with you! I used to master every horse and every difficulty. (*Bitterly.*) That seems gradually to be going from me.

[*Sits down by ROON on the sofa, where they both gaze in front of them as they talk.*]

ROON

Now *I* wake up at night at all hours; it is so horribly quiet. There lie our 400 fine roarers like young maidens in their beautiful positions—and all silent, so that we may bring them home after the wedding in a state of complete virginity.

BISMARCK

What's the use of your being War Minister if you can't get the bombardment authorized?

ROON

You know the influences!

BISMARCK

Moltke too has ceased to be frank. He avoids me and keeps the most important things from me.

ROON

Yesterday morning, during the sortie, I was watching from the water-tower, and I saw how the gallant Württembergers were held in check and didn't dare to unlimber the big piece which would have settled the whole thing in ten minutes.

BISMARCK (*annoyed*)

You wait till we get home! You see if I get another set of Army Estimates through the Talking Shop for you! What a Staff! They're imperially mad; victory has gone to their crowns!

ROON

Ay, of course, the Crown! Everyone wants to keep in with the Crown Prince, and he is being bombarded by London through Berlin with prayers to spare "the centre of Civilization"!

BISMARCK

There they go, that English lot, sobbing at our expense and thinking—well, nothing can happen to us; thank God! we're afloat!

ROON

In the highest circles to starve is considered a nicer death than to be shot.

BISMARCK

It's scandalous! In two months you haven't gained an inch. Cholera may come as in '66. Then England will wriggle in with one of her cursed interventions and gracefully relieve us of the fruits of victory at the Conference! Always these women! First of all, our peace-loving Queen, who lately swore at Potsdam that, so long as *she* lived, Paris should not be bombarded. Then the Englishwomen: the Crown Princess, Blumenthal's, Moltke's, Gottberg's wives. The King's aide-de-camp is putting it about in Berlin that there are only two people who want to bombard Paris—I, because I am embittered against the General Staff, and Roon, because he's suffering from softening of the brain!

ROON

Yesterday I got one of those democratic pamphlets. It *dripped* so with humanity you had to hold a glass under it!

BISMARCK

One thousand five hundred carts with provisions for Paris are hampering the movements of our own supplies, all in order that immediate assistance can be given when the place falls! I am a Christian myself, but I think bacon for the Parisians should come after bacon for our own people!

ROON

And the Crown Prince?

BISMARCK

A nice enough pie, but too much Democratic sauce. He's busy with the new Imperial Arms. (*Rises, and in a lower tone.*) What I most fear about all this Empire planning is this glittering Court business on the Versailles pattern. Simplicity made Prussia great. If only the new scheme doesn't put an end to that! [*Enter KEUDELL, hurriedly.*

KEUDELL

Your Excellency, a negotiator has come.

BISMARCK (*with a change of tone*)

This is sudden! How did he get through our lines?

KEUDELL (*shrugging his shoulders*)

A pass from the General Headquarters Staff.

BISMARCK

And they tell me nothing about it, Roon!

ROON

Nor me either! They're afraid I would tell you!

BISMARCK (*furious*)

Then General Moltke should make peace himself! (*Pause.*) Who is it? Jules Favre again?

KEUDELL

No. This time it is M. Thiers.

BISMARCK

Thiers? Oh well, if they're already beginning to send their cleverest——

ROON

Good evening!

[*Exit.*

BISMARCK

Thiers? Their trump card!—Show him in.

[Exit KEUDELL.

[Enter THIERS. *His bearing is confident and sagacious. A formal greeting, the tone of which quickly becomes more cordial.*

BISMARCK

I am glad to make the acquaintance of the author of the History of Napoleon. I admire your work.

THIERS

Admiration is due rather to its great subject.

BISMARCK

Certainly not! I feel more for my Fatherland than for a foreigner of genius who trampled on it.

THIERS

That's just what I was thinking, your Excellency, as I crossed your threshold just now!

BISMARCK

I—have neither his genius nor his power, and above all, I am not so unmerciful to your country as he was to ours.

THIERS

That gives me hope.

BISMARCK

Indeed, your Excellency, we don't want to destroy anything.

THIERS

To take away is one way of destroying. What may I hope?

BISMARCK

A few weeks ago I told your colleague, M. Favre.

THIERS

Is Alsace still in question? Strasbourg is not German.

BISMARCK

Hm— (*Pause.*) Have you the keys of your house with you?

THIERS

You are wrong, your Excellency; the house you want to lock up—

BISMARCK

Has its keys in the Stadttor at Strasbourg? I must have that in my pocket if I am to sleep in peace.

THIERS

Then you will make a very dangerous mistake. The feelings of Alsace will never be German; she will never be a comfort to you.

BISMARCK

I didn't say she would. But we need a pledge of security so that we shan't have to defend ourselves once more in three years or in ten.

THIERS

If you take territory you will excite the desire for revenge. France is more sensitive on the point of honour than other countries.

BISMARCK

That is an unfortunate prejudice of yours! I cannot see why German honour should be less to be

prized than French. What in the world do you base such a claim on?

THIERS (*cautiously*)

Then you place *your* country's sense of honour first?

BISMARCK

That is not our German habit, M. Thiers. I respect every nation's claim to the same feeling.

THIERS

A most laudable trait in the German character—I know it is inborn. (*Frankly.*) It is equally inbred in us to see France at the head.

BISMARCK (*looks at him—a pause—then rises to come to the point*)

What brings you to me?

THIERS

We wish to know your terms.

BISMARCK

To-day we are asking for Alsace and three milliards. After the fall of Paris it might be Lorraine also and perhaps double that sum.

THIERS (*rising, suddenly passionate*)

Never! Ask as much money as you like, but no Frenchman will ever surrender to you an inch of his country!

BISMARCK

We have plenty of time, your Excellency.

THIERS (*animated, as above*)

That you should ask *us* for that, Count! We who voted against the war, who first warned, and then deposed the Emperor and proclaimed the Republic!

BISMARCK

I am not making peace with M. Thiers who was so sagacious—minorities always are. I am making peace with a people whose wayward susceptibilities we shall always, unfortunately, have to reckon with.

THIERS (*argumentatively*)

Susceptible people are usually attractive. The Rhine divides not blacks and whites, but nations who for centuries have been exchanging their goods, their customs, and their ideas. Why should you spoil it all again by land grabbing?

BISMARCK (*keenly*)

Had you been Minister of a victorious France, M. Thiers, would you have hesitated to take the left bank of the Rhine from us?

THIERS (*frankly*)

Scarcely, I think.

BISMARCK

Where's the difference?

THIERS (*politely, as a matter of course*)

The Rhine is Germany's frontier, your Excellency!

BISMARCK (*very civil*)

Where is that laid down?

THIERS

In every French heart!

BISMARCK (*shaking his head reflectively*)

You are a wonderful people! (*Laughs gently.*) All my ancestors have fought against you for the last five hundred years. And to-day, when we are lying before your gates, victors and masters of your country—and I'm sitting here by my lamp calculating how much we should demand—there comes an envoy who tells me with a smile that the Great Heart of his People *demands from me* no less than a whole province!

THIERS (*confidently*)

Europe is watching, your Excellency!

BISMARCK

'We have no reason for fear.

THIERS

We have reason for hope. Powerful friends are stirring outside.

BISMARCK

Do you smell the dawn because for some weeks the daily bulletin has been "no developments before Paris"? Do not deceive yourselves. While they have been pitying you in Vienna and London an iron girdle has been fastened round Paris, and (*emphatically*) one morning when we are ready—it will blast you with thunder and lightning!

THIERS

If the Germans dare to bombard the Mecca of Culture a cry will go through the whole of Europe!

BISMARCK

If this is Mecca I am an unbeliever. We have to thank France for having taught us much. But we shall end this war as soon as we can, not with polite compliments, but with fire and sword.

THIERS

Why do you continue a war, begun by the Emperor, against the Republic?

BISMARCK

The same orchestra. Only the conductor is new.

THIERS

You have a reason for it. You want to restore Napoleon.

BISMARCK

We Germans are not accustomed to prescribe constitutions for foreign countries. Though, frankly, I think you did your country an ill turn when you deposed him. (*Pause.*) Do you wish to speak further of our terms?

THIERS (*decisively*)

They are unacceptable! I'm going back to Paris. (*Makes as if to go, but returns.*) As you spoke to me, however, about doing my country a bad turn, let me thank *you* for a good one. You freed us from our Emperor. You, I understand, are on the point of making one for yourselves, and, some day, it will be you who will be thanking us for helping you to get rid of *him*!

BISMARCK (*after a deprecating pause, smiling*)

As to that—I hope to continue our conversation after, say, a century.

[*Exit THIERS. Enter KEUDELL.*]

KEUDELL

He looked stubborn. So there was nothing in it?

BISMARCK

Obstinate people! Until we bombard, Paris will not be ripe for peace. They will have much to answer for on that score. Keudell, I won't put up with it any longer. The King must decide to-day!

KEUDELL

There's still a bag to go through. The messenger goes to-morrow morning.

BISMARCK

Keudell, why didn't you see that we had a piano with us? I must have music if I'm not to peg out here! Only an hour in the evening. Everything is at a dead end. Nothing succeeds. I want to relieve this miserable existence with sweet strains—but—come on—the bag—only the most important things!

KEUDELL (*stands reading out while BISMARCK lounges on the sofa and dictates answers*)

Inquiries from various Highnesses when they can see you.

BISMARCK

Is *that* important? Put a notice on the door, "To-day the Federal Chancellor is giving no interviews," and let it hang there for a month. (*Suddenly*

furious.) They should go and see the christening-bowl of the Duc de Reichstadt and calculate how much more heavily it is gilded than the one they gave their offspring. Next!

KEUDELL

Two articles in the *Koelnische* and the *National Zeitung*. Napoleon is too comfortable at Cassel.

BISMARCK

What donkeys! We can't be too kind to him! Thiers is secretly trembling at the possibility of a Restoration which would turn them all out again. We must keep them guessing in Paris. It stimulates their internal differences.

KEUDELL

Memorandum from the General Staff on the necessity of retaining Metz.

BISMARCK (*springing up again*)

I will *not* have Metz! We'll be biting off more than we can chew. Note, to speak to General Moltke.

KEUDELL

Inquiry from the General Staff: how does the question stand of the rank badges in South Germany after the foundation of the joint army?

BISMARCK (*beaming*)

Here they are again, our beloved epaulettes—Prussia—Bavaria—collars—shoulder-straps. A fight to the death—even if German unity itself, at which we have been hammering for eight years, should go to pieces in the process. I can't do any more. To-night

I'll have something to eat in my room alone. (*Exit KEUDEL. He sits stiffly, leaning on his elbows, and soliloquizes.*) Yes, if one had power, even for five minutes, things would be done so, and no otherwise! But one has to beg for every piece of dirt! If one were only a Landgrave now! I could deal with the trouble then! But I didn't have a fine enough Papa!

ORDERLY

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince.

[*Enter CROWN PRINCE, who sits down by BISMARCK in the friendliest way.*]

CROWN PRINCE

Don't disturb yourself. Mere curiosity. His Majesty is also on his way. Well? Was Thiers more amenable than Favre?

BISMARCK (*emphatically*)

Till Paris is bombarded, nothing doing.

CROWN PRINCE (*evasively*)

Pshaw! No Frenchman will sign for a loss of territory. It's as much as any of their places are worth.

BISMARCK

Thiers is not ambitious. He is just simply a Frenchman, and can't understand that he has lost the war.

CROWN PRINCE (*cautiously*)

That might be proved to them very clearly if, on their own soil, we were to show them who we are.

BISMARCK

Your Royal Highness means—Reich and Kaiser?

CROWN PRINCE

We should proclaim the Kaiser in camp in the presence of the majority of the Princes.

BISMARCK

Majority? A kind of Electoral procedure?

CROWN PRINCE

The impulse must of course come from the Reichstag. The Reichstag should come to Versailles.

BISMARCK (*dryly*)

Good God! Are we to have them on our hands too! I am balancing on the lightning rod. If we have to parley with 400 of them here we shall have a pretty Constitution! (*Emphatically.*) If we don't get this business through by New Year, your Royal Highness, it may be held back for a century!

CROWN PRINCE

In Berlin Delbrück has handled the whole business much too prosaically. You would really think he was pulling the Imperial Crown out of his trousers' pocket, wrapped in newspaper.

BISMARCK

There was, indeed, a certain amount of newspaper. (*Coldly.*) But we can't be too prosaic about it.

CROWN PRINCE

Do you wish this great act to be carried through coldly, unimaginatively?

BISMARCK

Enthusiasm in politics, your Royal Highness, is as

dangerous as revenge, retaliation, and other unpractical ideas.

CROWN PRINCE (*proudly*)

On that point you should allow yourself to be converted by the young, Count Bismarck!

BISMARCK (*bristling*)

I used to point out the way for the young. But if they know better than I do what is needed——

CROWN PRINCE (*rises, speaking more sharply*)

I have been serving under you, year after year.

BISMARCK

Not longer than I have been serving the King.

CROWN PRINCE

As if you didn't rule him!

BISMARCK (*with emphasis*)

Alas, no!

CROWN PRINCE

Alas?

BISMARCK

Why should the King have Ministers if they are not to advise him—and gently lead——

CROWN PRINCE

I—should perhaps take a very different line.

BISMARCK

If there were Ministers who only signed!

CROWN PRINCE

A time is coming when there will be a great deal more freedom in our country.

BISMARCK

I hope by that time, your Royal Highness will have a people mature enough for such freedom.

AIDE-DE-CAMP

His Majesty.

[*Enter the KING.*

KING

Well? Any developments?

BISMARCK

Nothing.

KING

Have patience. They're coming round.

BISMARCK

We must shoot.

KING (*embarrassed*)

We—haven't nearly enough heavy ammunition yet.

BISMARCK

Roon says we have.

KING

Moltke is against it too.

BISMARCK

I am responsible for the peace, your Majesty, and I can't carry on if we're going to starve Paris for months. Europe is on the watch. Thiers is quite right about that.

KING (*impatiently*)

After all, I'm not wholly ignorant about things. Paris! Why, when I was a lieutenant of seventeen I marched into Paris with the rest.

BISMARCK

If you want to reach your objective this time we must harden our hearts and make haste.

KING

I—I hear something about an Imperial cockade? I take it that it'll at any rate be worn alongside the Prussian?

CROWN PRINCE

In all the Imperial Army?

KING (*enraged*)

There is *no* Imperial Army! I must forbid that absolutely!

BISMARCK (*gently didactic*)

According to the agreements with the Southern States, your Majesty, the Prussian Army must merge in the Imperial Federal Army just as the King merges in the German Emperor.

KING

Merge! Ay, there you go again! I will never put up with that!

CROWN PRINCE

Just as, 170 years ago, the Elector of Brandenburg merged in the King of Prussia.

KING (*like any old gentleman in great irritation*)

That was quite another thing! And it happened

long ago! (*Pauses, then categorically.*) As King of Prussia I am superior to my cousins. My ancestors founded, consolidated, and enlarged their power. That has been my Right and my Honour for as long as I have worn this coat! And now you come and try to make me accept a new-fangled office like this! A title against which the Great Frederick himself took arms!

BISMARCK

It is only a confirmation—just as when one has long been acting commander of a regiment and in the end is formally appointed Colonel.

KING (*furious*)

And who's going to appoint *me*? I forbid such nonsense!

CROWN PRINCE

It is the last and highest step in the upward progress of our House!

KING

These are mere phrases! I desire no precedence over the Kings!

BISMARCK

None is given. When Charles VI met the Kings in a pavilion they entered simultaneously.

KING (*more and more obstinate*)

Well, even if it was so *then*, it's for me to direct how it shall be *hereafter*!

BISMARCK (*drily*)

It won't be, your Majesty—as we're not going to win.

KING

What do you mean?

BISMARCK (*standing to attention*)

If we are not going to shoot I must request to be relieved of all responsibility, and that my resignation may be immediately accepted.

KING (*vehemently, divided between anger and affection*)

You are not to request anything, your Excellency. You are to stay with me—if I live to be ninety!

BISMARCK

In that case—may I protest against the irresponsible humanitarian influences which I am informed are being brought to bear from the entourage of Her Majesty—

KING

Upon my word and honour! Here's the Federal Chancellor who's now going to direct my private correspondence as well as everything else. Good evening! [*Exit angrily, accompanied by his son.*]

BISMARCK (*standing with his back to the writing-table, alone, in a gloomy and depressed tone*)

Nailed to the rock like Prometheus! Dependence! (*Coolly enumerating.*) No bombardment, no peace. No peace, no Reich. No Reich, no Kaiser. The King doesn't want to be Kaiser. The King of Bavaria does. So does the Crown Prince, in another way. (*Bursting out.*) May the devil take Kaiser and Reich together! (*To KEUDELL, who comes in at this point.*) We shall be sitting before Paris till Whitsuntide, Keudell! Have an asparagus bed made in front of the house!

SCENE II—*Ante-room to the Galerie des Glaces,*
18th January.

Music. Noise as of a feast. Outside are heard marching and words of command. Clear midday sunshine. Throughout the scene are also heard dull reports of cannon shots at regular intervals. Glass doors behind. In front, L., a fireplace with fire, and before it two chairs. From behind, through the glass doors, enter CROWN PRINCE and ROON.

CROWN PRINCE (*in romantic exultation*)

That we should live to see this day, Roon! That we should be able to look up to heaven, our task fulfilled, and say the goal is reached!

ROON (*reserved and quiet*)

Now thank we all our God!

CROWN PRINCE

Yes. I missed that hymn to-day. After the battles—let me confess it—when that song went up to heaven I couldn't help feeling somewhat conscience stricken; for they, over whose downfall we were rejoicing, were after all God's children too. But to-day we have won the greatest and the most peaceful of victories. The brothers who were always at feud—the Germans—are united! The struggles which have been tearing them asunder for a thousand years are over! The roof is built which at last will shelter us! You are reserved, General! What are *your* thoughts?

ROON

One should die to-day. What could there be after this?

CROWN PRINCE (*with enthusiasm*)

Life, Roon! Only now can the dream we dreamed just now, there in the Galerie des Glaces, begin to come true. To bring that about will be *my* life's work. If I come into power I will not seek to conquer. I will only guard this New Empire, with all the strength and patience of which I am capable, against the dangers which threaten it. This I swore to myself in there when they were rejoicing round the new Kaiser, and I felt it every time he grasped the hands of those who wished him joy.

ROON

Only one—he overlooked.

CROWN PRINCE

I noticed that. It was an irony indeed. My Father, in his greatest hour, because of some quarrel about forms, is aggrieved at the man who conceived and carried out—everything.

ROON

He wouldn't be able to go on very long without him.

CROWN PRINCE

Do you think Bismarck will bear malice for the affront?

ROON

He has other things to think of.

CROWN PRINCE

I wonder what's going on in that head to-day?

ROON

I would rather see into his heart.

CROWN PRINCE

Here he comes! *Au revoir!* I'll see you at dinner.

[ROON *salutes and exit.*

[*Enter* BISMARCK *in gala uniform, pale and very serious. He is lost in thought and is seen approaching slowly. He does not see the CROWN PRINCE till he is on the stage.*

BISMARCK (*slowly, in gloomy tones*)

Your Royal Highness here! Why not with the King?

CROWN PRINCE (*cordially*)

I wanted to give you the handshake which my Father, in the excitement of the moment, forgot to give you.

BISMARCK

Oh? Did he forget? I didn't see much in there. There were too many mirrors and too much gilding for me.

CROWN PRINCE (*with fire*)

An emblem of the brilliant new age!

BISMARCK (*significantly*)

God forbid!

CROWN PRINCE

All is rapture and rejoicing on this day of days for which Germany has waited for centuries! And you, who have brought it all to pass, why are you so sad?

BISMARCK (*holding out his hands to the fire*)

I'm cold. I was nearly frozen in the Hall there.

CROWN PRINCE

You are overwrought.

BISMARCK (*after a pause, with renewed gloom*)

I am cold because I am tired out. I think—I should like to sleep for a month.

CROWN PRINCE (*pushes forward a chair, into which BISMARCK falls*)

Refresh yourself with your achievement! The Reich is roofed in at last. The fall of Paris is only a question of hours; we have both provinces in our pocket. Could any people have a happier prospect?

BISMARCK

The people—may have its toys—its mirrors and its crowns. (*In a low voice.*) The statesman hears the muffled roar of dangers—still far off. But your Royal Highness is standing. [*Makes as if to rise.*]

CROWN PRINCE

I'm still young. And you want to be alone. [*Exit hastily.*]

BISMARCK (*alone, stretching his hands to the fire*)

Le roi gouverne par soi-même. During all that hour those words of the *Roi-Soleil* blazed before me above my Master's canopy. To rule by one's self. That *must* be a fine thing!

[*Enter MOLTKE through the glass doors, hesitates at first, then approaches BISMARCK.*]

MOLTKE (*gently*)

It's time for dinner.

BISMARCK (*as if awakened*)
Dinner? Must I?

MOLTKE (*near his chair*)
Duty. [A pause.]

BISMARCK
How are things in Paris?

MOLTKE
At the last gasp.

BISMARCK
The last gasp inside: the first gasp outside.
Death and Birth. (*A pause.*) Do you think we're
getting old, General?

MOLTKE
We are in God's hands.

BISMARCK
But there are days in one's life on which one *would*
like to look behind the curtain. When a big thing
like this has been done—to idle or to do little things
would be mean. What is one to do here below now?

MOLTKE
Serve.

BISMARCK (*bounding from his chair*)
I will *not* serve all my life! When I have no one to
fight with any more I would rather say good-bye.
If God suddenly took away all my enemies I would
pray for death.

MOLTKE
And your friends?

BISMARCK (*bitterly*)

Are there any? (*Low.*) He won't take my one and only friend from me. She, at least, is sure. Perhaps Roon too. Perhaps. (*A side glance.*) Yet—everyone for himself.

MOLTKE (*suddenly steps right in front of him, speaking firmly but not loudly*)

Learn to yield yourself, Bismarck, and others will yield themselves to you.

BISMARCK (*touched, breathes heavily; a pause, then looking him in the face*)

Were you never—my opponent?

MOLTKE (*stretching out his hand*)

Always your friend!

BISMARCK (*shakily*)

In my old age—a new friend? (*Then in more aggressive tones.*) Moltke! Are you going—at last—to open your secretive heart to me? (*MOLTKE nods.*) Do you think that what we've established in there will last?

MOLTKE

For ever?

BISMARCK

What is for ever? For as long as man can foresee?

MOLTKE (*with a gesture*)

We must work and hope.

BISMARCK

Work—always! But hope—for what?

MOLTKE (*slowly with a look*)

For wise Princes.

[*A silence.*

[*ROON rushes in, waving a paper in wild excitement.*

ROON

I've been looking for you everywhere! See what I've brought!

MOLTKE (*quite changed and much excited*)

The white flag?

ROON (*beaming*)

Thiers and Favre are at our lines! They accept all our conditions.

MOLTKE (*bursts out, almost collapsing*)

Paris fallen!

ROON

The war is over.

BISMARCK (*firmly, but not sentimentally*)

Germany has come!

[*A shot in the distance.*

DISMISSAL

1890

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PRINCE BISMARCK (*Imperial Chancellor*).

PRINCESS JOHANNA VON BISMARCK.

HERBERT. }
BILL. } *His sons.*

KAISER WILHELM II.

BÖTTICHER.

LUCANUS.

WINDTHORST.

HINZPETER (*formerly Preceptor to the Kaiser*).

HEYDEN. }
DOUGLAS. } *Friends of the Kaiser.*
EULENBURG. }

Footmen, First and Second Servants.

ACT I

BERLIN: THE PALACE.

ACT II

SITTING-ROOM AT BISMARCK'S HOUSE.

ACT III

BISMARCK'S WORK-ROOM.

DISMISSAL

(1890)

ACT I

Berlin. The Palace ; the end of January 1890 ; a coldly brilliant room ; many lamps ; fireplace L. In front, R., COUNT DOUGLAS and HINZPETER. HINZPETER, an old man, in a long, old-fashioned coat, half clergyman, half professor. DOUGLAS, about sixty, rather stout ; speaks in a jovial Berliner fashion.

DOUGLAS

I tell you, my dear Geheimrath, it's coming to an end.

HINZPETER (*piously*)

Then may God's hand be in it, Count!

DOUGLAS

I only meant the Crown Council. What did you think I meant?

HINZPETER

I—I was beginning to fear! Anyone with my opportunities of seeing into our dear Master's soul from his earliest childhood days, knows how indelibly his admiration for the Chancellor has been imprinted, as with a graver, on his truly kingly mind.

DOUGLAS

But that graver, my dear Geheimrath, is getting

DISMISSAL

ACT I

a bit blunt. If one breaks one's pen, one takes a new one. So long as you had him under your claws he was, of course, a docile Prince; he didn't have a very gay time, especially with that strict Lady Mother of his. . . . Don't be afraid, footmen who listen at doors are already past praying for!

HINZPETER

Our poor dear Master did indeed grow up without any sunshine in his life, embittered by much ill-treatment.

DOUGLAS

In these eight months while the Old Man—over the hills and far away—was living in his Sachsenwald, His Majesty learned that there are other lights in the heavens, and that even moons like you and me shine perhaps more brightly than burnt out suns!

HINZPETER

The very wisest thing would be to enlighten him directly on that point.

DOUGLAS

Indirectly, my dear Geheimrath! Could he make it easier for us? Or do you think it a sign of megalomania that he feels himself to be a superman.

HINZPETER

If he does, God's justice will punish him.

DOUGLAS

Spoken like a Christian! But there is some up-to-date philosopher or other who, I gather, has been drivelling about supermen.

ACT I

DISMISSAL

HINZPETER

God has punished him by taking away his understanding.

DOUGLAS

Oh! Has he gone mad? No doubt that was why.
[*They laugh.*]

[*Enter VON HEYDEN and COUNT EULENBURG, both middle-aged. HEYDEN, in artistic negligé; EULENBURG in undress uniform, blue frock-coat with velvet collar and gold buttons, his effeminate head is from time to time thrown back in affected enthusiasm, but he is decidedly more cultivated than the others.*]

EULENBURG

May we share the joke? Or is it at our expense?

DOUGLAS

Not at all, my dear Count; *you're* still all right in the upper storey.

HEYDEN

That's a nasty one for an artist like Eulenburg, whose ballads have won him a seat on Parnassus. Won't you protest?

EULENBURG

One doesn't protest against Douglas. One asks Douglas how Alkali mines are doing.

DOUGLAS

I have become a perfect Parsifal. Ask Heyden, who used to be one of my mine managers. He still speculates, I'm sure.

EULENBURG

If artists speculate, bankers may take to painting their better halves in the altogether.

HEYDEN

Why only their better halves?

HINZPETER

And what are the great ones doing?

[Points to the door.]

DOUGLAS

They are brooding.

EULENBURG

I wish they would hatch!

[They put their heads together and the conversation continues in lower tones.]

HINZPETER

If only His Majesty stands firm to-day, all is won!

HEYDEN

Do you believe it possible that the Prince will countersign decrees making for the good of the workers, whom he both hates and fears?

EULENBURG (*smiling*)

Perhaps when you refer to Bismarck you would do well to avoid the word "fears"!

HINZPETER (*unctuously*)

Who would deny that the Prince has earned the lasting gratitude of our Fatherland! Undoubtedly——

DOUGLAS

Undoubtedly!

ALL FOUR

Un-doubt-ed-ly!!

HEYDEN

But, gentlemen, he is tremendously overrated. Such a want of understanding sympathy with the poor! Now I, who have had opportunities of mixing with the proletariat——

EULENBURG

You're too fond of low life, my friend. I shall have to tell His Majesty about you!

HEYDEN

I *have* told him of my recent visit to a workman's family. The man is a model of mine, and it was in fact my description—His Majesty was moved almost to tears—that decided him actually to sign the decrees which had hung fire so long.

EULENBURG

So they arose, like Aphrodite, from a sea of tears!

DOUGLAS

There's a compliment for you, my good old Samaritan! Did it smell good?

HEYDEN

"Humanity's vast sorrows gripped me——" as Schiller says.

HINZPETER (*whispering*)

Goethe, Herr von Heyden.

HEYDEN (*irritated*)

As you will!

DOUGLAS (*boisterously*)

Goethe, my dear Heyden!

HEYDEN

Well, well! All the truer then, if it is Goethe!
“ Humanity’s vast——”

[*The door opens. Enter two Footmen, then
LUCANUS in undress uniform like EULEN-
BURG. He is dignified neither by age nor
breeding, but is supple; he speaks
smoothly, but very precisely.*]

LUCANUS

Good evening, gentlemen!

ALL FOUR

Well, how are things in there?

LUCANUS

Everything in excellent order!

EULENBURG

We were hoping for excellent disorder!

HEYDEN

Did he threaten to resign again?

LUCANUS (*smiling and illustrating with a gesture*)
His Highness’s threatening forefinger is historic.

DOUGLAS

Blackmail then!

LUCANUS

That would be using rather a harsh expression,
Count.

DOUGLAS

Don’t split hairs, your Excellency! Did he or
didn’t he?

LUCANUS (*still smiling*)

All I know is that in a few minutes His Majesty will close the Council, full accord having been reached.

HINZPETER

Poor soul! What has he not to suffer?

DOUGLAS

Did the Old Man speak sensibly and coherently in spite of the gramme of morphia he takes every night?

HINZPETER and HEYDEN

What! How? Are you sure?

EULENBURG

Yes, we got to know of it through a servant at the Imperial Chancellery, who saw the measuring glass.

LUCANUS

But a whole gramme, gentlemen! Which of you would dare to swear to this gramme?

EULENBURG

The sitting is over. Here comes Bötticher.

[*Doors open as above. Enter BÖTTICHER in ministerial uniform; he is in his early fifties, has the face of an official but of the ruddy type, wears a pince-nez; he is cautious, not malevolent, but mean. Speaks in muffled tones; much more the bureaucrat than the courtier.*]

BÖTTICHER

Good evening!

[*All except LUCANUS crowd round him.*]



[Sch 115 Bilder 11 n 1

BOTTICHER

HEYDEN (*with insincere cordiality*)

That was a chivalrous act of yours, Excellency! In the name of the poor permit an artist to shake you by the hand!

HINZPETER (*thinking aloud*)

Could no one mediate? Perhaps Count Herbert?

EULENBURG (*with a gesture*)

His Majesty is fed to the teeth with *him*!

DOUGLAS (*with another gesture*)

To the *eyes* you might well say, Eulenburg!

HEYDEN

Well, what's going to be done about it now, if I may ask you wise people?

[LUCANUS *makes a subtle questioning gesture.*

BÖTTICHER (*shrugging his shoulders*)

I dare not allow myself to think of the immeasurable misfortune of a break. Thank heaven His Majesty still needs the Prince—and at once—for the Military bills.

HEYDEN

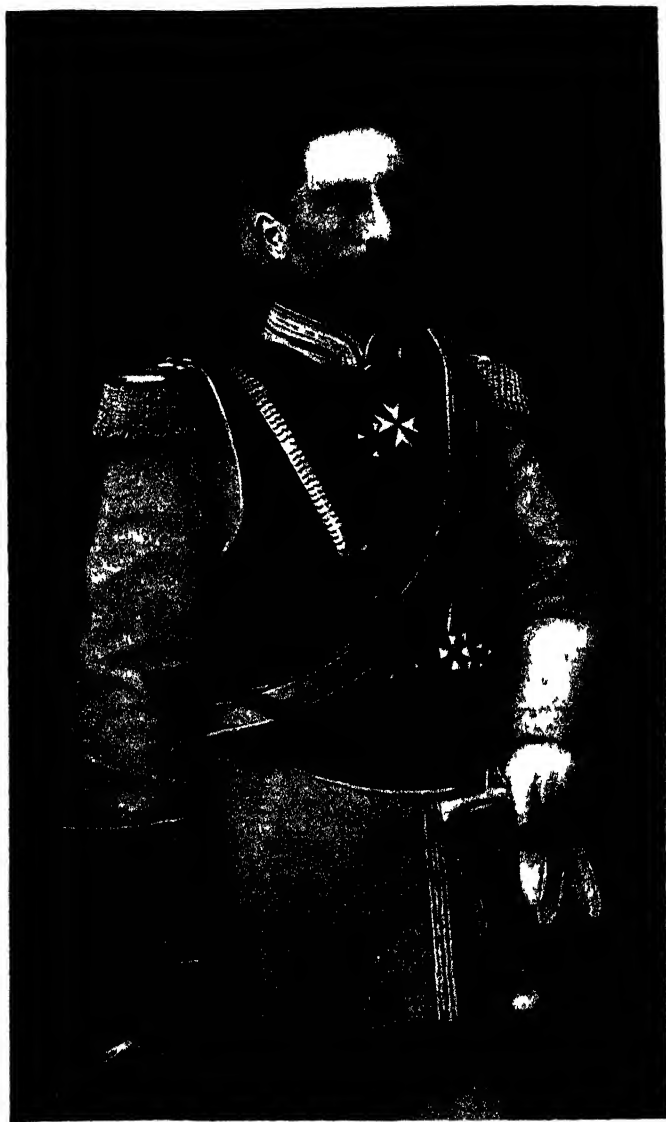
Then the old Moor can go! What?

THE OTHERS

“The old Moor!” That is priceless!

[*They all laugh.*

[*The folding doors suddenly burst open. Alarm and suspense of all five gentlemen. Low bows. An Aide-de-camp announces, not loudly, “His Majesty!” then, hurrying past him, enter KAISER WILHELM.*



KAISER WILHELM II

ACT I

DISMISSAL

It's only the Chancellor who thinks my move is "dangerous." He's still living in the days of my ancestors of blessed memory! (*More rhetorically.*) We moderns—who in our veins feel the pulse-beats of a great new age—we look the future of the lower classes in the face and say, "We are all brothers in Christ"! That is why we wish to raise you from the dust and to mitigate the hard lot the Norns have sent you! Let there be light and sunshine even for the poorest!

EULENBURG

Words of Odin, and truly Christian, your Majesty!

KAISER

No flattery, Eulenburg! (*To HINZPETER.*) But you, my dear teacher, tell these gentlemen what moral persecution I suffered in my parents' house for no other reason than my admiration for this Chancellor, whom I regarded as having forged the sword of Empire! Speak freely, my dear Hinzpeter!

HINZPETER (*half to the others*)

Often have I found His Majesty, when a boy, bathed in tears because some harsh word about the Chancellor had fallen from the lips of Her Majesty the Empress-Mother.

KAISER

You hear? Does not that ring true?

ALL

Without a doubt, your Majesty!

KAISER

Instead of which he—do you know what he is

DISMISSAL

ACT I

doing? He is trying to corner me, and in the harshest terms openly threatens me with his resignation. (*All manifest horrified amazement.*) Bötticher! What did the Prince say just now in the Crown Council?

BÖTTICHER

His Highness remarked: "If His Majesty no longer attaches any importance to my advice I do not know whether I can remain at my post."

DOUGLAS (*genially*)

Then all your Majesty has to do is to seize the opportunity!

KAISER (*reflectively*)

Pshaw, Douglas! You look at it from your point of view—as if it were a question of dismissing a mine manager! But what would the country say? What will Clio say hereafter—the severest of the Muses? (*HINZPETER beams.*) You agree with me, my old Mentor! You understood?

EULENBURG

After such an affront perhaps it would be best for your Majesty to have a private heart-to-heart talk with the Prince immediately.

KAISER (*after a pause*)

Bravo! The very thing! Is the Prince still in the palace?

LUCANUS

His Serene Highness can scarcely have reached the main entrance.

ACT I

DISMISSAL

KAISER (*after a short but anxious pause, during which he bites his lips*)

Ask him to come back.

LUCANUS

At your Majesty's orders.

[*Gives an order to the Footman, who hurries away.*]

KAISER (*suddenly*)

'Evening, gentlemen! . . . Bötticher! (*All, with low bows, retire backwards and exeunt, except BÖTTICHER. Throwing himself into a chair.*) Now or never!

BÖTTICHER

Does your Majesty really wish to face this renewed agitation?

KAISER (*springing to his feet*)

Do you think I am a coward? I believe you're half a "Bismarckian" yourself!

BÖTTICHER

The Prince's great services do not blind me to the excrescences of his autocratic temper.

KAISER

"Excrescences of his autocratic temper!" A good phrase! What on earth did he threaten you with before you came to the Crown Council? You all looked as if you had been flogged when he got up and put me in my place. Tell me.

BÖTTICHER

At the Cabinet meeting, when I advised them to

BÖTTICHER

But Frederick, your Majesty, would never have become Frederick the Great had he been confronted at his accession by a character as strong as Bismarck's.

KAISER (*stands up and walks thoughtfully towards the fire. After a pause, sotto voce*)

Yes, Frederick was free! When one is free one can act according to one's own conscience, being answerable only to God who placed us where we are. What a burden it is! Shall I have to wait, as my Father waited—and wait, moreover, in my case, merely for the retirement of a Chancellor? Has he not himself taught me to disregard Parliaments and Ministers? Which of us two then is by the Grace of God . . .? (*In the midst of the silence which follows the doors are opened at the back. Looks up.*) Wait near by, Bötticher. [Exit BÖTTICHER R.]

FOOTMAN

His Serene Highness the Prince Imperial Chancellor!

[BISMARCK, *gigantic in his Halberstadt uniform, stands in the doorway, glances darkly at the retreating BÖTTICHER, then comes slowly and heavily towards the KAISER and bows. He speaks slowly with much restraint which breaks down only once or twice in Acts II and III.*

KAISER (*holding out his hand, very friendly, motions the Footman away*)

I am sorry I have had to trouble you again. (*Makes as if to draw up a second chair near the fire for the Prince.*) Please, my arms are younger.

ACT 1

DISMISSAL

BISMARCK (*takes possession of the chair and lifts it to the fire with consummate ease*)

I thank your Majesty. I'm still up to that!

KAISER (*bites his lips and sits down suddenly*)
Pshaw—eternal youth!

BISMARCK (*sits*)

That is enjoyed only by the Gods and, now and then, by fortunate monarchs. I have worked it out that the average age of Princes is much higher than that of their Ministers who die in harness.

KAISER (*turning away, much hurt*)

I could wish no better death than to die at work or on the field of honour!

BISMARCK

Reality is usually less dramatic.

KAISER (*disconcerted*)

Everything is in God's hands!

BISMARCK

Nevertheless, influence may often be brought to bear—if not on the end of our lives, at any rate on the end of our work. A good Doctor and a loyal Prince may sometimes avert a crisis.

KAISER

But I hope there is nothing like a—*crisis*, your Serene Highness?

BISMARCK

I thought there was, and that that was why your Majesty has just recalled me.

DISMISSAL

ACT I

KAISER

I—only wanted to ask something, I didn't mention before, something I forgot—have you any news from Petersburg?

BISMARCK

Schweinitz sends excellent accounts. As soon as Schuwalow is back the negotiations can begin.

KAISER

And so you really hope for the extension of the treaty?

BISMARCK

Without cover from Russia we run the gravest risks.

KAISER

How people's views differ nowadays! Waldersee, for instance, demonstrates to me the inevitable necessity of a war with Russia.

BISMARCK

All generals demonstrate that when they're feeling up to the mark. My plan is to avoid it by making a friend of the Czar.

KAISER

And yet you wouldn't agree when I wanted to visit him this autumn.

BISMARCK

The Czar is fond of a quiet life. Many friendships are safest when conducted at a distance.

KAISER

I might perhaps have succeeded, personally, in

hindering the loan which has just been five times over-subscribed in Paris.

BISMARCK

Seven times, I understand. I can't charm away either the hopes of the Parisians or the impecuniosity of the Russians, but I can prevent a combination of the two. That was why at the Crown Council to-day I permitted myself to warn you against the Socialist Romantics. Only if we are armed against all internal unrest, only if we remain an unweakened Monarchy can we keep the Czar on our side.

KAISER

But my decrees won't weaken the monarchical idea.

BISMARCK

They will raise the expectations of the working classes, who will suspect that behind such concessions lies an uneasy conscience.

KAISER

All that is past and gone, Prince! The worker reads in the papers what profits the companies are making. You don't understand the new age!

BISMARCK

I understand the old one and I know that, in all ages, the Girondins have driven the coach of State to the edge of the precipice and often over it. We must preserve the Empire from that, your Majesty.

KAISER

Of course. But I also want to protect the workers instead of making laws against the Socialists and

DISMISSAL

ACT I

staining the beginning of my reign with the blood of my subjects.

BISMARCK

If you give way now, your Majesty, perhaps your reign will end red after all!

KAISER

You were the first to go in for social legislation!

BISMARCK

For that very reason I will be the last to be flooded out by it. When I was a Dike-reeve—before your Majesty was born or thought of—our motto was “Dam or be damned!” And the experience of a long life has confirmed it.

KAISER (*getting up irritably*)

Experience! Experience! (*Emphatically, almost severely.*) Understand me, Prince, I *must* have contented subjects!

BISMARCK (*deep in his chair by the fire, sombrely, in a low voice*)

Are millionaires content? Contentment! . . . Everything goes up in smoke and falls to ashes, like these fine fir logs in which the strength of German forests is spent through the Royal chimneys.

KAISER (*goes up to him, urbanely*)

What do you mean?

BISMARCK (*gets up heavily; his voice changes*)

What your Majesty has just said is almost exactly the tale told me by young Lassalle five-and-fifty years ago.

KAISER

That visionary! Thank you! What did he want?

BISMARCK

Just what you want—the happiness of mankind. Perhaps also a State entry through the Brandenburger Tor.

KAISER

As a clown?

BISMARCK

No, your Majesty—as President of the German Republic.

KAISER (*amused : in a low voice*)

Republic! Nonsense!

BISMARCK (*emphatically*)

The Kings of Prussia, whose servant I have been, put “contentment” in the second place. Their first object was to have a strong State. What your Majesty is thinking of is an English policy—and unfortunately, only half a one at that.

KAISER (*vehemently*)

I will have no English policy! My feelings are German!

BISMARCK (*more briskly*)

Then, your Majesty, there must be no giving way to threats, wherever they come from!

KAISER

Do you take me for a coward, Prince Bismarck?

BISMARCK

You must fight, your Majesty, as your Grandfather did in '62.

KAISER (*uneasily*)

Fight. . . H'm! . . . but loyal men are warning me against that——

BISMARCK

Am I not loyal, your Majesty?

KAISER

Others—warn me against being called King Grape-shot, like my Grandfather.

BISMARCK (*ironically, in a low voice*)

May it be granted to your Majesty to have as successful a reign as that King Grape-shot! It is to be hoped that these “loyal men” are smoothing the way for you. These dilettanti, among them, are taking upon themselves the responsibility which is mine.

KAISER

The responsibility falls ultimately upon me!

BISMARCK

No; not if the Chancellor countersigns. Public opinion credits the sovereign only with successes. We beasts of burden get the kicks.

KAISER

You speak more bitterly than you ought, considering the confidence shown you by my Father and Grandfather.

BISMARCK

Who does not speak bitterly when he is old? I don't really know whether the old Emperor's heir—whether your Majesty doesn't find me—in the way.

ACT I

DISMISSAL

KAISER (*an embarrassed pause, then suddenly*)
And my decrees?

BISMARCK

Are popular absolutism!

KAISER

That made Frederick great!

BISMARCK

Yes, your Majesty! But he had no Socialists, no Press, no Trades Union laws, and no Talking Shop! Such ideas are all right in certain drawing-rooms where Caprivi and Windthorst snuggle down side by side in the dark corner of a sofa.

KAISER (*walking nervously up and down*)

Windthorst! I detest that sanctimonious little dwarf!

BISMARCK (*slowly, standing upright by a chair*)

Yet giants are rarely geniuses. Little people are usually more subtle.

KAISER (*irritably*)

But there *are* also cunning giants, aren't there? (*Pointedly.*) Are you satisfied at present—with your Ministers?

BISMARCK

I? Your Majesty has just won the game!

KAISER

I? Won?

BISMARCK

Herr von Bötticher, at the Crown Council,

DISMISSAL

ACT I

declared that he had long had in his drawer proposals such as you wanted. (*Rather ironically.*) Everything, therefore, is going in accordance with your Majesty's most gracious will! All we want is a short interval to prepare the final draft.

KAISER (*eagerly*)

You will . . . then you would actually prepare a draft . . . of my decrees.

BISMARCK

If I carry the law against the Socialists, then, so far as I am concerned, you can forbid law-abiding workmen to hammer on Sunday, if you wish.

KAISER (*briskly*)

A solution then . . . entirely in accordance with my ideas?

BISMARCK

Only I must ask to be excused countersigning.

KAISER

That doesn't matter! I will sign!

BISMARCK

In that case, however, I fear we shall have bad elections in three weeks' time. Property owners will be made anxious and the workers bold. It's the 'sixties over again. You soon find yourself sliding downhill.

KAISER

I am not given to sliding! I will myself set the course of the ship of State.

BISMARCK

Well, she needs the ballast of authority and a strong Cabinet.

KAISER

Who displeases you, then, in the Cabinet?

BISMARCK

Most of them, your Majesty!

KAISER

Couldn't you at least be a little more friendly with Bötticher?

BISMARCK

I fear he is getting a bad influence over your Majesty. He suggests ideas to you which in your better moments you abhor.

KAISER

No one suggests anything to me! I should repulse anyone who dared to criticize my advisers.

BISMARCK

Absolute loyalty, of course, demands absolute confidence. As in marriage, your Majesty.

KAISER (*at a standstill*)

And I should like to confide to this well assured loyalty—if you—*since* you will stay with me—the conduct of the Army Bill for 80,000 men, in the Reichstag.

BISMARCK

I doubt whether the diminution of my Sovereign's confidence, which is already known, may not weaken my position.

DISMISSAL

ACT I

KAISER (*very friendly*)

There is no question of diminution, my dear Prince! It was only consideration for your health that led me to advise you to spend more time in your fine forests. Now you have come back rejuvenated, you accommodate yourself to my modern plans; you give me the support of your authority. What shall I do to give an outward and visible sign of my confidence before the nation?

BISMARCK

Outward and visible? Nothing. Only promise me that you will stand firm against irresponsible influences.

KAISER

I am a Hohenzollern!

BISMARCK

Otherwise—I couldn't carry on any longer, your Majesty. If he is to be responsible only one can rule!

KAISER

I hope in God we shall—from now on—do it together! Good evening, my dear Prince! (BISMARCK *bows and exit. Alone.*) *Only one?* That's just what I think!—Bötticher! (BÖTTICHER *returns.*) I have won! The Old Man has given way! The decrees shall issue with my signature! Europe shall see what a people's Prince is!

BÖTTICHER

Gave way, your Majesty? Without a counter-claim?

KAISER

I had to pay for his concession by agreeing to the anti-Socialist law, otherwise he'd get me into trouble with the Conservatives. But never mind! Eighty thousand men, Bötticher! Who but he could get me eighty thousand men through this—Reichstag?

BÖTTICHER

I—don't understand the Prince! What motives can——

KAISER

How blind you are! There's your great man for you! Nothing pains me more than the fall of what was once so great a spirit! (*At the window.*) Now the carriage door claps to, now he is leaning back smiling, and thinking, "I needn't be afraid now! I am indispensable"! (*He leaves the window.*) Well! he may breathe again for a few weeks! Only *one* can rule!



JOHANNA VON BISMARCK

they should have done, and the brute couldn't be stopped and dashed like a mad thing into the goods. And that's what has happened, so I told my wife, between these two men."

JOHANNA (*laughs gently*)

"A great big, respectable old goods train" is good. (*Sighing.*) Oh, to-day again it seems as if there would be no end to it! He has to snatch a mouthful of food when he can, and he arranges to have as many as possible of his appointments here. And the result is that he never gets to sleep before two. Oh, this weary Berlin!

BILL

What's on to-day?

JOHANNA

The Budget, I think.

BILL

Such folly! Why does he do it, mother?

JOHANNA

Yes, Bill, why? You're much better off in Hanover. You, at any rate, don't need to stimulate yourself with alcohol so much as your Father does.

BILL (*pushes the bottle away*)

Oh I say!

JOHANNA (*pours him out a glass*)

My dear, since when am I no longer permitted to tease you? (*She strokes his head, which is already growing bald. He clasps her arms affectionately.*) It's so nice to have you here! (*Sighing.*) Ah me!

DISMISSAL

ACT II

BILL

Mother dear! You haven't been back here four weeks and you're moaning and groaning worse than ever!

JOHANNA

At Friedrichsruhe it was so much better.

BILL

Was he quiet there?

JOHANNA

Quiet! Have you ever seen him *quiet* for four-and-twenty hours together? Only he wasn't so continually worried there. Here annoyances never leave off! I wish you had seen him before the Elections. There has been nothing like it since '66. And besides, these daily pin-pricks—(*gesture*)—from over there! It's enough to give a man of seventy-five a heart attack!

BILL

Why doesn't he get rid of the whole silly business once for all?

JOHANNA

Pshaw! Bill, that's what I've thought ever since—ever since you were born.

BILL

Thought, mother? We must *tell* him so.

JOHANNA (*shocked*)

Tell him? I've lived with him for forty years and never dared to do that!

BILL (*quietly*)

But someone should risk it!

JOHANNA

You'll do it? Don't you think you've got a little too much Château Lafitte on board?

BILL

Oh, I can carry my share of that all right!

JOHANNA

Do. If you have the courage! You will probably be thrown out of the room! What is it?

SERVANT

Her Excellency Frau von Bötticher sends over to ask if she may call on your Serene Highness to-morrow.

JOHANNA

Say I am sorry, to-morrow is impossible. (*Exit Servant.*) Not to-morrow and not this year! All this Bötticher lot that we have nourished in our bosoms! She's come to the right shop!

BILL (*amused*)

You expatiate in remarkable images and similitudes, mother!

JOHANNA

Not at all! False creatures that your Father dragged up from nothing and nowhere. Now he's sneaking about the Court. Of course, what he wants is to come in here! (*Doors open and shut. Her manner changes, and she cries eagerly.*) Ah, there he is! Thank heaven he is back! (*In a lower voice, disappointedly.*) Oh, it's you! Good evening, Herbert, where have you left your Father?

[HERBERT comes in from behind, carrying a



[Schulz's Bilderdienst]

HERBERT VON BISMARCK

BILL

After your Excellency! Are the latest figures out?

HERBERT

All losses.

BILL

A catastrophic defeat then?

HERBERT

That's another Puttkammerish exaggeration of yours! You sit in Hanover, take your glass, and hope Willem'll be a good boy.

BILL

The last would be the most difficult of these three occupations. But the best judge of the air in a room is someone who comes in from outside.

HERBERT

Well?

BILL

I suppose you've ceased to notice how it stinks here.

HERBERT

I don't think we take it exactly for Eau-de-Cologne.

BILL

Then for goodness' sake, put an end to it.

HERBERT

What are we to do?

BILL

Put an end to it, I say, Herbert. It's enough to make one vomit!

HERBERT

You think that Father should peacefully vanish amid soft music and a cloud of laurel wreaths?

BILL

Has any Prussian mortal ever controlled the lightning?

HERBERT

I think Father has been doing nothing else these thirty years!

BILL

Yes, but don't you see that you are surrounded?

HERBERT

Do you seriously believe that Father is going to capitulate to these pygmies, Bötticher, Eulenburg and Co.?

BILL

No. But who makes them so powerful?

HERBERT

Oh, *him*! We must get him in hand again!

BILL

The Old Man has been out of it too long.

HERBERT

He wanted to starve out the Kaiser.

BILL

But, on the contrary, Herbert, that eight months' absence has only made "the Eagle's wings" grow faster! Decrees without a counter signature! A sausage firm with a sleeping partner!

HERBERT

So you too miss the point? H.M. now sees the consequences!

BILL

But the Old Man must get himself a majority.

HERBERT

Oh! He knows what he is about. You can smoke your Havana quite at your ease so far as that goes.

BILL

But, after this Election smash, do you really think it possible for the chief performer to retreat gracefully *en pirouette*?

HERBERT

Perhaps—he will decide to confine himself to Foreign Affairs.

BILL

You must be quite mad! To have risen like a new star, to have been a comet for thirty years, and now to flicker out slowly like an oil lamp! They'll all want to worship the rising sun as fat old Frederick William used to say—Parties, Ministers, Federal Princes, Municipalities! Are you blind? They're all turning away from him already to please our Genius by the Grace of God! On such people, like Ritter Götz von Berlichingen, one should turn one's back!

HERBERT (*in a lower tone*)

Heroes don't give way. There is something heroic about Father.

BILL

Agreed! But there's nothing heroic about these times.

DISMISSAL

ACT II

HERBERT

He has always forced his times to be as heroic as himself!

BILL

Yes, when supported by the Man at the Top—not against him.

HERBERT

But there are other powers in the State, Bill.

BILL

The devil there are! Has Father built himself some kind of Parliamentary airshaft through which he can draw oxygen when he wants it?

HERBERT (*slowly, in a low voice*)

You don't know what you're saying! If you only knew! Cut the heart out of an organism like ours and see if it still can breathe?

BILL

Father is not the heart, I hope.

HERBERT

My dear Bill, for Father it would mean backing out before the fighting begins!

BILL (*rises, goes over to his brother, speaking low and seriously*)

Herbert! There are very few people besides us three who love Father. We must be the ones to see it first.

HERBERT

See what?

ACT II

DISMISSAL

BILL

That the Old Man lacks the youth for such a fight.

HERBERT

You think so? I have been thinking so, too, the last four weeks.

BILL

Herbert! It's not the same old hammer stroke.

[HERBERT is silent and gazes in front of him. Voices outside. They go apart and turn to the open door where BISMARCK, in civilian clothes, is standing beside his wife.]

JOHANNA

Have you really had enough supper?

BISMARCK (*cheerily*)

Thank you, my dear child! One never really has quite enough supper!

JOHANNA

Well, then, do have just a little *paté de foie gras*, Ottochen!

BISMARCK

Won't you come in with us, Johanna?

JOHANNA

Later, perhaps. You'll be talking politics all night. [Goes out.]

BISMARCK (*comes into the room, with enquiring glances*)

Well? You look like two conspirators. Have you already been discussing my funeral?

DISMISSAL

ACT II

BILL

If you are in good spirits, Father, we'll gladly bear the costs.

BISMARCK

Don't talk of costs! For six hours I have been thinking of nothing but figures. (*Sits at the table and points to the newspapers.*) Anything important in these things?

HERBERT

Nothing. But—Koloman Tisza has resigned.

BISMARCK (*strikes the table*)

The devil! Tisza! What cowardice!

BILL

But he had to.

BISMARCK

Had to? As if he were only some little Minister or other! Tisza! After fifteen brilliant years of uncurbed power in Hungary! It's as if I had been squeezed out in the year '77. (*Servant brings food.*) On the top of that one must certainly take something to pull oneself together.

HERBERT

Schweninger thinks that heavy things like that are bad for you at night.

BISMARCK (*eating*)

Schweninger is an ass. Let him come and have some, and he will at once see what an ass he is! Bill understands; 'seventy? (*In a low voice.*) Quite a tolerable year! (*Drinks.*) This clears away some of the disgust of things and makes you breathe again

for a while. If the old fellows like Tisza give way!
Well! Anything else?

HERBERT (*hands him the portfolio*)

A few signatures for the Chancellery.

[BISMARCK *turns over the pages, signing; then stops short.*

BISMARCK

What's this? Do you know the former papers?

HERBERT (*leaning over his chair, hesitates*)

No. Rottenberg says it's all right.

BISMARCK

Who put "approved" on this? You?

HERBERT

No. Bötticher must have agreed it alone with the Kaiser.

BISMARCK (*suddenly furious, thunders*)

Alone? So that's the present fashion, is it? The next thing will be that I shall hear from the *Kreuzzeitung* what's going on in the country! This caps all that everyone should be running direct to the King! Who, I ask you, is governing in Prussia?

[*A pause. The two sons stand silent.*

JOHANNA (*comes in R. gently*)

Don't excite yourself, Otto, my dear!

BISMARCK (*controlling himself*)

Forgive me, Johanna! I startled you. It's over now. Do stay with us.

[JOHANNA *seats herself lightly, half on the*

DISMISSAL

ACT II

sofa, near his chair and hands him his long pipe. BILL gives him a light.

BISMARCK

Thank you. . . . Is there anyone still in the Chancellery?

HERBERT

The night duty.

BISMARCK

Have the old Cabinet orders looked up at once. They are on the right hand below in the second bookcase. There should be one of the early 'fifties forbidding direct access of Ministers to the King. Eight copies are to be made and one sent to each of the eight heroes, with a note in my name asking that they will be good enough to remember it.

HERBERT

Immediately?

BISMARCK

To be delivered by hand first thing to-morrow.

[Exit HERBERT.]

JOHANNA (*taking advantage of the movement*)

I've still got things to do.

[Exit.]

[BISMARCK, alone with BILL, takes up the papers, turns them over irritably, and lets them fall.]

BISMARCK

Pshaw, Bill! Such is our life. Such is our life, day in, day out! What are they saying down your way in the country?

BILL (*looking contemplatively into his glass*)
Nothing, nothing but what is in the papers.

BISMARCK (*attentively*)
Your tone reminds me of Iago working against Othello.

BILL
I haven't read that play since I was at school, Father.

BISMARCK
You hear much and say little, Bill.

BILL
Perhaps I've inherited that trait, Father.

BISMARCK
Not from me. I have always told people the truth as I saw it to their faces so that they didn't believe it.

BILL
I suppose, if I did the same, you wouldn't believe me either?

BISMARCK (*crossly*)
Nonsense! In a crisis like this I must rely on the news I get from the few people I see. Of course you're not here by accident, and as a visitor you hear more in Berlin, than Herbert as a Minister.

BILL
Not much. Only when we were at lunch at Hiller's to-day Henckel, who came in after me, heard Lucanus say in the cloak-room that Bötticher was expecting a new and signal mark of favour from above.

BISMARCK

He has been doing that for the last twenty years.

BILL

But this time it seems to be coming off.

BISMARCK

I saw him weep because Verdy got the Red Bird before him. For a year he has been dreaming of being allowed to take precedence at Court with Field-Marschals. That man I dragged up out of the dirt so that he might betray me now. He is one of those people who think they are Rothschilds if they're in a position to change a hundred mark note.

BILL

Yet he seems to have captured most of his colleagues.

BISMARCK

The rogues would all be delighted and would cry out! if I finally shook the dust off my feet. Have you managed to see anything of Rauchhaupt?

BILL

No. But Lerchenfeld is saying that His Majesty has been complaining that you are getting up protests against your possible departure.

BISMARCK

These rags don't give much clue to that! All the more am I disposed to think that Bötticher *e tutti quanti* must be sent about their business!

[Takes up the paper again, and smokes vigorously.]

BILL

And if he—wants to keep them?

BISMARCK (*smoking quietly*)

Then I go.

BILL

In order to give them the pleasure of saying ouf!

BISMARCK (*lays down his pipe and looks at him with a wrinkled forehead from under his bushy eyebrows*)

Why do you sit so much in the shadow of the lamp? Why can't you come into the light?

BILL (*gets up and comes to the Prince—simply*)

Father! Let the whole lot go hang! The whole Hinzpeter, Waldersee, Bötticher gang—who are in a position to pull down the lion now that God has blunted his claws!

BISMARCK

What do you mean by taking the name of God in vain?

BILL

The King does it! He has the power, and it was you that gave it him!

BISMARCK

And am I now to hand over the old house to him so that he may tear it down with his clumsy fingers, and so that I in my old age may stand before the heap of ruins he has made, and think to myself, "that comes of my being so touchy!"

BILL

Your house must surely have been made of steel



[Scherl Bilderkunst

WINDTHORST

BISMARCK

It is long enough since I ceased to have that pleasure *dans l'intimité*.

WINDTHORST

Not so bad as all that—only about fifteen years.

BISMARCK

A mere moment in the life of a people, you would say. (*Offering cigars.*) You smoke? I hope you don't mind my pipe?

WINDTHORST

Not in the least. I am—quite hardened.

BISMARCK

In old age there is nothing left but this to make life endurable. (*Pointing to a newspaper.*) I see, by the way, your *Germania* announces this morning that I am already dead.

WINDTHORST

Your revival this evening may be all the more complete.

BISMARCK

That's my intention, anyhow!

WINDTHORST

Well, the result of this Election is the return to the arena, victorious and strengthened, of all those elements which your Serene Highness has described at different times as enemies of the Empire. (*Complacently enumerating.*) Socialists, Liberals, Centre, Greater Germans, Guelphs—

BISMARCK

And now, I gather, you are astonished to see that I am still comfortably smoking my pipe at 77 Wilhelmstrasse.

WINDTHORST

That surprises me less, your Serene Highness, than that I should be sitting beside you smoking your Havanas.

BISMARCK

What could any mortal soul expect after the Kaiser's decrees? His romantic ideas are smashed all along the line.

WINDTHORST

Yes, but while his ideas are responsible for this million and a half of red votes, he has himself had a personal triumph everywhere. Many votes were even given for Kaiser Wilhelm himself!

BISMARCK

If your conclusion is that I, personally, have lost the Election, I agree. But it touches me less than it does the Kaiser.

WINDTHORST

There I recognize your old courage! Always a fighter, as of yore! And yet you have never been so isolated since '66.

BISMARCK

Against that I have several shots in the locker. If I don't get a new majority in three days' time I shall circumvent the Reichstag through the Landtag.

WINDTHORST

And then?

BISMARCK

I shall dissolve the Reichstag once—twice.

WINDTHORST

And if even that fails?

BISMARCK (*clearly and soberly, putting away his pipe*)

Then I shall summon the Federal Princes to Berlin and, in concert with them, will alter the suffrage provisions of the Constitution. The vote will be taken away from the Socialists because they are enemies of the State. Then there will be revolts and we shall shoot. You smile?

WINDTHORST

I only smile, your Serene Highness, because you appear to be beginning your career all over again!

BISMARCK

True, we have had all this before in Prussia. I was supposed to be done for in '62. Nevertheless, I should prefer a new majority, for I dislike bloodshed even more than I dislike Parliaments.

WINDTHORST

H'm! A majority——

BISMARCK

Composed of the Conservative elements in the nation, including, of course, the Centre.

WINDTHORST (*sententiously*)

The great struggle for the preservation of Society and the State is too serious not to make us forget old quarrels.

BISMARCK

The hatchet has been buried for ten years.

WINDTHORST

It has sometimes seemed to us that your Serene Highness only covered it with a thin layer of sand

BISMARCK

You know my programme. What are your terms?

WINDTHORST

Nothing but what is reasonable and moderate. Denominational Schools and recognition of the Jesuits.

BISMARCK (*rises slowly, goes to the stove at the back and leans on it; a pause*)

We have been honourable opponents so long, your Excellency. Can we really become so easily reconciled in our old age? Are you prepared to burden your Christian conscience with such an ally? Why, I think it would be more dignified for me to take my departure like Tisza in Hungary.

WINDTHORST (*gets up sharply and approaches him with short steps*)

For God's sake, your Serene Highness, don't go now! I have fought you so long that you will believe I am sincere when I say this. A world divides us, but a world's danger unites us. You are the last and the only man in Germany who has it in him to dam this red flood. If you went, the deluge of gross materialism and utter unbelief would break in on us. Under a fiery ruler, with the best and most Christian intentions, we should get on to the slippery slope,

and all chance of stopping would be lost! Listen to the advice of your old opponent!

BISMARCK (*comes forward smiling—a pause*)

Strange. Windthorst implores me to remain! Fifteen years ago your people would have given a good deal had a certain assassin aimed straighter!

WINDTHORST

Such is politics, your Serene Highness!

BISMARCK (*in a low voice*)

You might well have said such is life. Your demands are too high.

WINDTHORST (*suddenly cold again*)

I'm afraid the Party couldn't reduce them.

BISMARCK

Then it's not worth your while to make a sacrifice to secure my staying?

WINDTHORST

You have known public affairs as long as I, and better. I am old and satiated. But my colleagues in the Party want to be on the winning side, and would at best go with you *and* the Kaiser but, failing that, decidedly with the Kaiser.

BISMARCK (*half aloud*)

Attractive allies!

WINDTHORST

Rauchhaupt won't ask much on behalf of the Conservatives. Agree to our conditions and you

DISMISSAL

ACT II

have a majority. (*Re-enter HERBERT, followed by a big mastiff.*) But here comes your son with more work for you. I mustn't keep you longer. Good-bye to both of you. [*Exit* WINDTHORST.

HERBERT

Well, did he ask a lot?

BISMARCK

He looked like Alberich disguised as a Jesuit. He pretended he thought I was indispensable.

HERBERT

Did you threaten *him* with your departure?

BISMARCK

I only wanted to see whether he would rise. He exaggerated the importance of my staying in order not to have to lower his terms. Recognition of the Jesuits and Roman Catholic Schools. A long price! If I come to terms with Rauchhaupt to-morrow, Herbert, we have a majority.

HERBERT (*embarrassed*)

I fear—not. I found several—disagreeable things up in the Chancellery.

BISMARCK (*in the act of sitting down, turns sharply; and in a combative tone*)

What?

HERBERT

Rauchhaupt refuses for to-morrow.

BISMARCK (*grimly*)

He—won't come?

HERBERT

This afternoon he went to Bötticher and placed the Conservatives at the disposal of the Government on the ground that it was no longer possible to work with Prince Bismarck.

BISMARCK (*disconcerted, then laughs aloud*)

That's a good joke; playing the Protestant card and running after the Kaiser because he can't stand Windthorst. To-morrow I shall have an audience and demand Bötticher's head.

HERBERT (*much embarrassed*)

That—will be too late, Father.

BISMARCK

Why?

HERBERT

This evening—Bötticher—received the Black Eagle.

BISMARCK (*turning away, after a pause, in a low voice*)

“Thou hast won, Octavio!”

HERBERT

The very devil is in it! As if everything must happen at once, here is a letter in the Kaiser's own hand. *[Takes it out of his portfolio.]*

BISMARCK (*before reading it*)

A note in his own writing sent *open* through the Chancellery? So that my staff may see it before me? What are these enclosures?

HERBERT

The reports from our consul at Kieff which you held back.

BISMARCK

Yes, but from whom did the Kaiser get them?

HERBERT

Holstein must have given them to Waldersee.

BISMARCK

Though I forbade it?!

HERBERT

But read the note, Father!

BISMARCK (*reads*)

“The reports clearly show that the Russians are preparing for war. You might have warned me long ago against this terrible danger! It is high time to warn Austria and take counter-measures.” (*He breaks out.*) Is the boy mad? Stale old reports I held back in order to prevent his nerves and his distrust of Russia getting the better of him. For months I have been labouring to bring Russia to terms—and now he wants to alarm Vienna! To say this to me through my whole office! To meddle in my business! Do you know what the Czar thinks of him? (*Takes a paper out of his pocket-book.*) I haven't shown it to you yet, Herbert! It is a report from London with the Czar's opinion of the Kaiser. There—and there—particularly the third passage!

HERBERT

Good heavens, he does go for him!

BISMARCK

Give it me back! I feel happier when I have it in my breast pocket. (*Walks up and down breathing deeply.*) This really makes one young again. All the powers against me as in '62. And I am to give way! All because he said "grand-papa" to my old Master? I am not Tisza, your Majesty! Of my own will I will never humbly ask leave to resign——

HERBERT

The nation would rise to stop it, Father!

BISMARCK

The nation? Herbert—have you ever met a grateful German?

HERBERT

If there was only some way of protesting——

BISMARCK

You are biting your lips and thinking, like that hostile dwarf who was here just now, that it was I myself who made myself the prisoner of the Crown by giving the Parliamentarians so little scope in the Constitution.

HERBERT

I only thought——

BISMARCK (*slowly and gloomily*)

Good night, my boy!

HERBERT

Good night, Father!

BISMARCK (*alone; sinks down into the big chair*)

Is my own house in a conspiracy? The boys' faces

DISMISSAL

ACT II

were a study! Bill seems to know more than he says, and, when all is said and done, he is no fool! But you're all wrong! (*The dog raises his head towards him. He strokes him.*) Yes, Tyras! I still have you and Windthorst. You know, with Windthorst it is as if you suddenly went and gave a paw to every stranger and snarled at me? You dogs are the only loyal subjects! Frederick knew what he was about when he set up marble tombstones to your memory!

JOHANNA (*in her night attire, gently opens the door R.*)
Ottochen!

BISMARCK (*immovable in his chair*)
Yes, my love!

JOHANNA
Are you alone?

BISMARCK
Very much so!

JOHANNA
Who are you speaking to, then, in there?

BISMARCK
To the last and only one who never contradicts me!
[*Strokes the dog.*]

JOHANNA
You are so excited again. Won't you try the experiment of a sleeping-draught just for once?

BISMARCK (*not hearing; gently*)
But, when all's said and done—he won't dare!

ACT III

BISMARCK'S *workroom. A large portrait of the old Kaiser. Morning. Much bustle, doors opening and shutting. Two Servants.*

THE YOUNGER SERVANT

Quick, quick, open the windows. The whole place reeks of tobacco again.

THE OLDER SERVANT

Hands off! Leave it shut. If I were to open it the Old Gentleman would feel chilly.

THE YOUNGER SERVANT

Oh—a fig for the Old Man! His Majesty can't come into this atmosphere!

THE OLDER SERVANT

Are you in Willem's service or Bismarck's? Come on and help lift the stand a little this way.

THE YOUNGER SERVANT

Ugh! What dusty papers! They've been there ever since last year. He lets everything lie! Whose service am I in, you ask? I and you and the Excellencies and the Old Man himself—we're all paid by Willem. Isn't that correct?

THE OLDER SERVANT

From the constitutional point of view—lift, boy! There, that'll do! Constitutionally speaking, that's rather a moot point. As for the State, it pays us all

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ACT III

—even the King, do you understand? That is the Civil List. Come away from that writing-table! If you were to disturb a single sheet, it would be good-bye to your pension!

THE YOUNGER SERVANT

Well, I'll stand behind this door to hear His Majesty put his servant out by the other door. When the weather is stormy every word is worth hearing! That's the way we come into history, you see?

THE OLDER SERVANT

Get out!

[*Both exeunt quickly behind. Door opens L.*
[*Enter HERBERT and LUCANUS L. Both remain standing as they talk.*

LUCANUS (*even smoother than before*)

I am exceedingly sorry to have troubled your Excellency so early. Only the will of our most gracious Master——

HERBERT

To tell you the truth——this very early hour——

LUCANUS

His Majesty was so much disturbed yesterday evening by the latest events, that he could not delay any longer having a full discussion with his old adviser His Serene Highness the Prince Imperial Chancellor.

HERBERT

Unfortunately, the announcement of his visit has only just come, your Excellency!

LUCANUS

How annoying! It was certainly sent last night. Unfortunately, the Night Service occasionally fails.

HERBERT

If we Heads left off work as soon as our staff, the machine would soon come to a standstill.

LUCANUS

Indeed, yes. And our gracious Master surpasses us all in diligence! The inexhaustible powers of work of his ancestors of glorious memory, coupled with the fire of youth and the great Mission he has undertaken in the sight of God——

HERBERT

Your Excellency doesn't fear a scene?

LUCANUS (*still smiling*)

How could that be? The natural differences due to age are transcended on the one hand by the veneration of the Monarch for his First Servant, and, on the other, by the unshakable loyalty of His Serene Highness to the august Imperial and Royal House.

HERBERT

My Father has been very severely tried just lately, your Excellency!

LUCANUS

For that he is armed with the wisdom of age and his understanding kindness.

HERBERT

I'm not sure whether it isn't rather dangerous in

these days to allow his temperament to come into collision with the Kaiser's impetuous disposition.

LUCANUS

With your Excellency as mediator——

HERBERT

Not I—your Excellency!

LUCANUS

Oh! I am a simple fellow, a mere Court official—but—(*suddenly*) in any case, may we not flatter ourselves with the hope that your Excellency, independently of His Serene Highness's remaining in office and indeed eventually after he is gone, will carry on for the good of the Empire the great tradition of your family?

HERBERT

Of course, I stand and fall with my Father.

LUCANUS

Well! Well! There remains the hope that we shall see Father and son for many years yet in that splendid partnership. My compliments, your Excellency. Good morning! *Good morning!* I hasten to await His Majesty below. [*Exit.*]

HERBERT

I'll be with you immediately. (*Alone.*) It's *settled!* He's already asking whether I would remain after Father goes! H'm! these people have a curious notion of what family pride is!

JOHANNA (*hurrying in excitedly R.*)

Herbert! It is shameful!

HERBERT (*carefully closing the doors*)

Mother! The servants can hear every word you say!

JOHANNA (*beside herself*)

I wish all Berlin could hear—and all Germany!

HERBERT

Nevertheless we must avoid all noise just now.

JOHANNA

You are right. Your Father must have his sleep out.

HERBERT

No, but so that we may prevent the worst happening.

JOHANNA

I wish it would happen! You needn't glare at me like that! I have never made trouble all these forty years. But such want of consideration! To drag an old man from his bed at such an hour! In peace time, too! Your Father would never treat one of his tenants like this! At one and two last night I listened at his door. Nothing but tossing and groaning so that the very bed cracked! Who is he working for but for these very people? And this young monkey orders him about as if this were the porter's lodge!

HERBERT

Mother, such language only makes things worse.

JOHANNA

And I tell you he will *not* receive him! You tell him kindly and politely, but firmly, that in winter the Imperial Chancellor is not on duty so early as

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ACT III

half-past eight. That's what you're Secretary of State for!

HERBERT

Will Father soon be ready?

JOHANNA

I hope he has gone to sleep again!

SERVANT (*entering in haste*)

Your Excellency. The Imperial carriage is drawing up.

[HERBERT *hastens out at the back, the doors remaining open behind him.*

JOHANNA (*alone, remains standing before the portrait of the old Kaiser*)

If *he* had seen this! I used to be angry enough with him when Otto lost patience with him at Gastein and in the Kulturkampf. But at half-past eight in the morning! Such a thing would never have occurred to *him*! (*Doors bang, swords rattle, and spurs clink.*) Yes, you can clink and clatter through the whole house so far as I am concerned! We are never more than tenants here!

[*Exit R., slams the door behind her. Stage empty. Then immediately enter through door at the back the KAISER, in uniform, and HERBERT, while behind them LUCANUS, Officers, and Servants are seen for a moment and disappear again.*

KAISER (*speaking over his shoulder*)

I'll see you again presently, Lucanus. (*Then with obviously forced calmness.*) Your Father—is not up yet?

HERBERT

Pardon, your Majesty, the announcement came only a quarter of an hour ago.

KAISER (*still on his feet, looking round the room*)

Doesn't matter—I'll wait. (*A painful pause.*) No wonder with his years. It must make his work heavier for him, however well cared for he is in his honoured old age.

HERBERT

In his working hours, your Majesty, I think that, at seventy-five, he still excels all the younger Ministers!

KAISER

Come! Come! My people, too, are not lazy. (*Another pause.*) Besides, the Prince has been having a well earned rest for nearly a year. Is he now really well?

HERBERT

Better than for years past, your Majesty.

KAISER

That would be most gratifying! But we must be careful not again to endanger this happy state of things by over-strenuous work.

HERBERT

His is a restless spirit, your Majesty. Rest would kill him.

KAISER

That I can understand. I am like that myself! Life is movement—upward and onward! Do you think that a man over seventy can still keep up the pace? What do you think, Count Bismarck?

HERBERT

I think that my Father imposed that pace on your Majesty's Grandfather till he was ninety.

KAISER

That's a legend! The guiding spirit was and continued to be the Kaiser! (*Enter BISMARCK R. in uniform but untidy; he is fastening the lower buttons of his coat as he comes in. He is carrying a portfolio. His eyes are tired and his voice is at first dull, not as in Act II.*) Good morning, your Serene Highness!

BISMARCK

'Morning, your Majesty. I have only just been told of your intended visit.

HERBERT (*with a gesture*)

Does your Majesty wish me to go?

KAISER

No! No! There are no secrets! (*BISMARCK looks meaningly towards the door. A pause.*) It is your Father's order!

[*HERBERT bows and exit. An embarrassed pause.*]

BISMARCK

I must offer my apologies—so early. In these days one sleeps late. Things keep one up so late at night. (*Aggressively.*) Your Majesty doesn't yet know what that means. You are young.

KAISER (*proudly*)

I am, and I mean to remain so for some time longer. When I am worn out I will hand over the reins to my first-born.

BISMARCK

That would be a very good thing for dynasties. It's a pity it is almost never done.

KAISER

A pity? Would you have wished my Grandfather to abdicate ten years before his death in favour of my Father?

BISMARCK

His high sense of duty would have forbidden him to do that, your Majesty.

KAISER (*angrily sits down under the portrait of the old Kaiser*)

H'm! My sense of duty forbids *me* to look on in silence any longer while all parties are declaring against your government. Now the Conservatives also have gone into Opposition. On what party do you intend to rely?

BISMARCK (*sits down heavily*)

On the Crown, your Majesty.

KAISER (*haughtily*)

That would indeed be the most convenient arrangement.

BISMARCK

It was once the most dangerous one. The effect of your decrees has brought us into this position, as I told you it would. We must fight.

KAISER

It is not my decrees but your threats which have caused the confusion. I am a people's Prince and

determined to rule strictly according to the Constitution—*your Constitution, Prince!* I have charged a man who has my confidence to negotiate with the Parties to secure the best that is possible in the circumstances.

BISMARCK

In that case I must beg leave to hand over my office and my responsibility to that man, and to take my departure.

KAISER

Again, you are putting me in a very embarrassing position, your Serene Highness!

BISMARCK

Your Majesty, I was compelled repeatedly to place in that position the King whose honoured features I see above your own. And it is only because I swore it to him in an hour of extreme peril that, in spite of many mortifications, I have remained in his successor's service.

KAISER

God is my witness how many nights I have implored Him to soften your heart and spare me a separation!

BISMARCK

In these same nights I, too, have been unable to sleep for worry about the future of the Empire!

KAISER

And now is it your intention to govern this Empire of mine with the help of the Centre? You have received Windthorst, one of my bitterest enemies. You should have forbidden him your house, or at least consulted me about it.

BISMARCK

Your Majesty misunderstands the duties of the Chancellor which necessitate his conferring with Party Leaders. I must decline all control in this matter.

KAISER (*stands up suddenly—cuttingly*)

Even when I, as your Sovereign, command?

BISMARCK (*likewise stands up and looks him sternly in the face*)

Your Majesty's commands end at my wife's drawing-room.

KAISER (*turns away before his look, takes some steps away from him—controls himself*)

There can, of course, be no question of a command so far as you are concerned. I can only express my wishes. But such a provocation of the people as to-day's newspapers indicate cannot, surely, be your intention!

BISMARCK (*standing on guard before his writing-table*)

It is! There must be such a hullabaloo in the Empire that no one shall know what the Kaiser is at with his policy!

KAISER (*at some distance from him*)

Quite wrong! My intentions must shine before the eyes of my beloved people as clear as the Rhine gold.

BISMARCK (*unyielding*)

Then, your Majesty must play politics in the streets or in the theatre.

KAISER (*friendly but distant*)

No, my intention rather is to conduct them with my Ministers!

BISMARCK

They all depend on me and cannot deal direct with the Crown.

KAISER

You are relying on that mouldy old Order!

BISMARCK

The Tables of the Law handed to Moses are likewise corroded with mould and rust, but they still stand.

KAISER (*cuttingly*)

The order will be revoked: it is unnecessary.

BISMARCK

Only under an absolute monarch.

KAISER

Why then has nothing been heard of it for half a century?

BISMARCK

Because of the confidence reposed by three Kings of Prussia in their chief adviser, and because the invariable practice of these Kings took its place.

KAISER

So it is a kind of oath to the Imperial Chancellor! You are creating grave conflicts of duty for my officials.

BISMARCK

It is no part of my business to be the spiritual director of Privy Councillors, your Majesty.

KAISER

So you wish to keep my Ministers from me?

BISMARCK

After discussion in my presence it is always open to your Majesty to decide against me and in favour of the Ministers.

KAISER

You want to treat me like the Emperor of China, and lay before me only what you think fit.

BISMARCK

Your Majesty cannot govern the Empire alone. You must have a competent Chancellor to make a choice for you.

KAISER (*vehemently*)

Then what, may I ask, am I here for at all? Who, in fact, is governing this country?

BISMARCK

I have the impression that, through the medium of two Kings of Prussia I have, for the last twenty-eight years, been *de facto* conducting its affairs.

KAISER

Well, it is *my* intention, if God gives me life, to conduct them myself through the medium of my Ministers for the *next* twenty-eight years!

BISMARCK (*immovable*)

With my humble duty I hope your Majesty will be as successful as your Grandfather of blessed and glorious memory.

KAISER

Under God's providence the strength of my army will see to that. We are in a frightful crisis which, in spite of all our differences, we ought at once to meet in a united spirit. I am astonished, your Serene Highness, that you should have kept back from me the threatening news from Russia.

BISMARCK

Still more astonished am I that your Majesty should have accused me of nothing less than treason before all my officials.

KAISER

When did I do that?

BISMARCK

In your open note, written by your own hand, in which you complain that I have neglected the defence of the country!

KAISER

And you still fail to see the danger which threatens!

BISMARCK

Schuwalow, who returned to Berlin to-day, has just written me a most important letter. He has full powers to negotiate with me personally for a two years' extension of the treaty. That means the safety of the Empire.

KAISER

In this treaty is neutrality stipulated in Austrian wars in the Balkans?

BISMARCK

That is an essential point. The Austrian alliance is not a co-operative association.

KAISER

I, on the contrary, should have decided to stand loyally by my august ally at Vienna.

BISMARCK

Then, after twenty-four years, I have to regret that when I urged your Grandfather to conclude the alliance at Nikolsburg, I prepared an evil day for him.

KAISER

On the other hand I distrust this Czar profoundly. Sooner or later we shall have to cross swords with him.

BISMARCK (*takes up and opens his portfolio*)

If it were a mere matter of *personal* feeling your Majesty's erroneous generalization would be only too true.

KAISER

Have you any more recent news?

BISMARCK (*takes a paper out, seems to consider, then slowly*)

Not exactly news. Only reports Hatzfeld sends us from London.

KAISER

Why don't I get them?

BISMARCK

They—are not suitable for presentation. They are expressions the Czar is reported to have used

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ACT III

about your Majesty in London—and might wound your feelings.

KAISER

I don't think I'm at all vain. Please read them out.

BISMARCK

That is quite impossible! Never would I read such things to my Sovereign with my own lips——

KAISER (*snatching the paper from him*)

Give it me! (BISMARCK *observes him while he reads, flushes, breathes heavily, stammers, throws the paper on the writing-table, and finally bursts out.*) Impertinence! And it is with this fellow you want to make a treaty?

BISMARCK (*resuming possession of the paper*)

I warned your Majesty before you read it. But love is not necessary in such a marriage. In spite of everything the renewal of the treaty remains a paramount necessity of State.

KAISER (*out of himself, striking the table*)

You are wrong, Prince! With this enemy I will never renew a treaty!

BISMARCK

Then the Empire will have to make war on two fronts, and will go under.

KAISER

We shall know how to guard against that! It is in any case *my* Empire which is at stake!

BISMARCK (*growling*)

Yes, your Majesty, it is *your* Empire! (*A pause,*

then in violent crescendo.) But before your Majesty was born, when Friedrich Wilhelm IV obstructed the birth of this Empire, when King Wilhelm afterwards was in despair about it, it stood clearly before *one mind*. I really don't know *who* actually founded it, but so long as I draw breath I shall know how to defend it, your Majesty!

KAISER

That your Serene Highness will have to leave to the dynasty which did found it. I really don't know whether it was the Hohenzollern dynasty or the Bismarck dynasty!

BISMARCK (*comes a step nearer, terribly roused at last, but very slowly*)

The Bismarcks, your Majesty, are a family of Knights who have been longer settled in their hereditary estates in the Mark of Brandenburg than the Hohenzollern family who are more recent immigrants from Franconia. And because they acknowledge the divine origin of your Kingdom, they have, until to-day, served your family as free men may. As to the Hohenzollerns, however, I have read in a history book that in the 'sixties they were on the point of losing both their Country and their Crown, that the Heir to the Throne fled to England—and that the advice and the firmness of a spirited member of *my* family alone saved them!

KAISER (*much flushed, in the combative pose of an officer with his hand on his sword*)

It is a tradition of our House to show insubordinate families that their power comes of Our Grace alone. We Ourselves are answerable only to God. Any man

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ACT III

who sets himself up against me I will shatter. (*Tears the door open. Figures seen in the ante-room. The KAISER turns back and shakes hands nervously.*) Good morning, your Serene Highness!

BISMARCK (*with a deep, half-ironic bow at the door*)

With my humblest duty, good morning, your Majesty! (*Crowding figures, swords, and spurs sound on the stairs; the door remains open. Alone, in a low voice.*) "I will shatter him!" (*He walks twice silently up and down the room, then remains standing, silently contemplating the portrait of the old Kaiser. In a low voice.*) Forgive me, old Master——

HERBERT (*enters, hastily shutting the door behind him*)

Father!—it resounded through the whole house, even to the servants' quarters!

BISMARCK (*composedly*)

I wish it were still resounding in other servants' quarters. (*He takes several steps; then, in a different tone.*) Send at once to the Russian Embassy and say I should be glad if Count Schuwalow would come here at once. Everything now depends on hours. To-day is March 15. On April 1 the treaty with the Czar expires. On the 1st we—shall be removing. Before then the treaty must at any cost be renewed!

HERBERT

But—if the Kaiser——

BISMARCK

My full powers to conclude with the Russians will run for some days. I won't resign till the treaty is concluded! And if he dares to dismiss me, I will

ACT III

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not countersign the decree until we are through with Schuwalow.

HERBERT

But if the Chancelleries——

BISMARCK

I'll do it myself! The papers immediately! You'll act as private secretary! Quick! Let no one from the Palace intercept my message to the Russian Embassy!
 [Exit HERBERT *silently R.*]

BISMARCK (*alone, standing still*)

If only I can conclude for two years they can't commit any follies, at any rate till '92. By that time let us hope one will be underground.

[Sinks exhausted into a chair.]

JOHANNA (*entering hastily R.*)

Ottochen! They will be the death of him!

[Runs out again; doors open.]

BISMARCK (*softly*)

I thank thee, O Lord, that Thou hast raised up this Angel to me in the desert!

JOHANNA (*comes with a damp cloth, which she puts on his head*)

Ottochen, throw them all overboard!

BISMARCK (*low*)

I wouldn't mind about the Captain, but the ship!
 The ship!

[Enter a Servant.]

SERVANT

His Excellency Herr von Lucanus!

[The spouses look at each other in silence. He raises himself, takes off the cloth, and stands up to his full great height.]

BISMARCK

Ask him to come in.

LUCANUS (*enters with a deep bow, then looks at the Princess*)

Excuse me, your Serene Highness——

BISMARCK (*very quietly*)

The Princess is accustomed not to betray State secrets.

LUCANUS

It was only to spare her Serene Highness being troubled with business.

BISMARCK

What does your Excellency desire?

LUCANUS

His Majesty requests your Serene Highness to be so good as to submit to him as soon as possible a Cabinet order revoking, once for all, the Cabinet Order of the year 1852 respecting the reports of Ministers to His Majesty.

BISMARCK

Tell the Kaiser that, as he already knows, I will not revoke the order. Is that all?

LUCANUS (*much embarrassed*)

I regret that my mission is not yet over. His Majesty was pleased to direct me to acquaint your Serene Highness that, in case your Serene Highness seemed indisposed to revoke immediately the Cabinet Order of the year 1852, His Majesty would expect your Serene Highness at the Palace at two o'clock, in order that he may graciously accept your resignation and grant your retirement with the usual pension.

BISMARCK (*after a pause*)

Tell the Kaiser I won't come. (LUCANUS *stares at him.*) I will write! 'Morning, your Excellency!

[LUCANUS *bows silently and exit.*

JOHANNA

Brutes!

BISMARCK

Pshaw, dear Johanna! *He* crawled out of the egg in the historic State bed in the Palace at Berlin on the Spree, while I only came out of our plain wooden box at Schönhausen.

JOHANNA

Ottochen! Be glad! Now at last in our declining days we shall enjoy the quiet of the forest for which you have been longing for years!

BISMARCK

But the ship†

HERBERT (*comes hurrying back*)

Schuwalow will be here in a quarter of an hour!

BISMARCK

Too late!

HERBERT

So that was Lucanus in the carriage below!

BISMARCK

The only treaties I shall make now will be with the sawmill at Friedrichsruhe.

HERBERT

And you mean—to put up with it, Father?

JOHANNA

The people won't believe it!

HERBERT

Then we must put before them a plain issue.

BISMARCK

Do you mean the people—the nation? I am not accustomed to seek cover in a fight!

HERBERT

Even when your opponent covers his face with the Crown?

BISMARCK (*in a quiet, almost religious, tone*)

When he does that he is inviolable, Herbert! (*With a change of tone, getting up suddenly.*) But I might perhaps say to him, as I once said to Pleschke, who wanted to fell the old oak near the house to make room for an ornamental border. Who ever dares to fell my old giants may he be crushed in their fall!

[*A frightened pause.*]

JOHANNA (*soothingly*)

Ottochen!

ACT III

DISMISSAL

BISMARCK

Schuwalow is coming! Do you think you can even yet get the treaty through? If so, you must stay in office.

HERBERT

Not an hour longer than you.

BISMARCK

Then—I must abandon the fate of my Empire to its hereditary Kaiser!

T H E E N D

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ARAGO, EMMANUEL (1812-1896). French politician, son of the celebrated physicist, astronomer, and politician, François Arago. Became a member of the Government of National Defence in 1870.

AUGUSTA, QUEEN OF PRUSSIA, GERMAN EMPRESS (1811-1890). Daughter of Karl Friedrich, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar, and granddaughter of Karl August, friend and patron of Goethe. Admirably educated, she had seen Goethe in the flesh, and was a link with the high and humane culture of his generation. She was interested both in art and literature, and was herself the author of many original musical compositions.

In 1829 she married Wilhelm, Prince of Prussia, subsequently Wilhelm I, King of Prussia, German Emperor, and had two children, one of whom was afterwards the Emperor Frederick, the other, Luise, Grand Duchess of Baden. In 1849 she took up her residence at Coblenz, to which she became much attached.

At the Imperial Court she represented the interests of culture and benevolence, though she was reproached (perhaps not unjustly) with Romantic tendencies, and though her tendency to meddle in politics was often the subject of Bismarck's acid comments.

BISMARCK, HERBERT VON (1849-1904). Son of Otto von Bismarck. Severely wounded at Mars la-Tour. Entered the Foreign Office in 1873, employed at the German Legations at Dresden, Munich, Berne, and Vienna, as well as in his father's office. In 1882 he was Councillor of Embassy in London, in 1884 he occupied a similar position at St. Petersburg, and in the same year became German Minister at the Hague. Returning to the Foreign Office at the end of 1884 he became Under Secretary of State in May 1885. He had become a member of the Reichstag in 1884, but his membership lapsed

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on his becoming Secretary of State in 1886. He remained in this post until his father's dismissal in 1890, and from 1893 was again a Member of the Reichstag. In 1892 he married Margarethe, Countess Hoyos, and in 1898 he succeeded to his father's title of Prince.

BISMARCK, JOHANNA VON (1824-1894). Daughter of a Pommeranian landed proprietor, she married Otto von Bismarck, 1847. Of this very happy marriage were born three children, the Countess Marie (afterwards Countess Rantzau) and two sons, Herbert and Wilhelm. She came of a strongly evangelical family, and exercised a somewhat pietistical influence over her husband.

BISMARCK, OTTO VON (1815-1898). Born at Schönhausen, near Magdeburg, he came of an old military and legal family. His youth was spent in legal and administrative pursuits, in the management of the family estates, and in provincial politics, in which, by 1847, he was already a Conservative leader. He won the favour of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV and received a succession of diplomatic appointments. He was Minister to the Federal Diet at Frankfort (1851-1859) and at St. Petersburg (1859-1862). In Spring 1862 he represented Prussia at the Court of Napoleon III. In the same year he became Prussian Prime Minister. The three outstanding points in the next and most brilliant phase of his career were the joint war of Prussia and Austria against Denmark in 1864, which resulted in the annexation of Schleswig Holstein, the victorious war of Prussia against Austria in 1866 which led to the foundation of the North German Confederation and the Prussian hegemony of Germany, and the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, which in the latter year resulted in the foundation of German unity in the Empire.

Bismarck was created a Count in 1865, became Federal Chancellor of the North German Confederation in 1867, and in 1871 became Imperial Chancellor of

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Germany and received the title of Prince. After the foundation of the Empire Bismarck's activities in internal politics were marked by a violent conflict with the Ultramontanes, a quarrel with the National Liberals who left him on the question of Protection, and antagonism to the Social Democrats whom he provoked in 1878 by his anti-Socialist law.

In foreign politics his Administration was marked by strenuous and elaborate efforts to maintain peace and the advantages secured by Germany's victories. He acted as "honest broker" at the Berlin Congress of 1878, and later concluded alliances with Austria Hungary (1879), Italy (1883), and the "reinsurance" treaty with Russia.

In 1890 Wilhelm II quarrelled with Bismarck about certain legislation for the protection of workmen which the Emperor desired to see passed. Bismarck refused to abolish a Cabinet Order of 1852 which affected the authority of the Imperial Chancellor, and this led to his dismissal. He afterwards lived at Friedrichsruh and criticized the policy of his successors both in newspaper articles and in speeches to the crowds of admirers who came to salute him.

BISMARCK, WILHELM VON (1852-1901). The Count Bill of the plays, born at Frankfort, he studied law at Bonn, served in the war of 1870 as orderly officer to General von Manteuffel. He afterwards had a distinguished administrative career chiefly in the provinces. He was a member of the Reichstag (1878-1881) and of the Prussian Chamber (1882-1885). He married his cousin, Sibylle von Arnim-Kröchlendorff, in 1885 and was survived by one son, Wilhelm Nikolaus, and three daughters. He died at Varzin.

BOTTICHER, KARL VON (1833-1907). Born at Stettin. After an official career in the Ministries of Commerce and of the Interior, and also in various provincial posts, he was elected a member of the Reichstag in 1878, and in 1880 at Bismarck's instance was made Prussian

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Minister of State and Secretary of State of the Imperial Office for Home Affairs. In this position, as the Imperial Chancellor's representative, he was very active and exercised much influence. In July 1888 he replaced Putkammer as Vice-President of the Ministry of State, a post which he held until his retirement in 1897. The part he took in the quarrel between Wilhelm II and Bismarck gave rise to much controversy.

BRAY, OTTO C. HUGO, COUNT (1807-1899). Entered the Bavarian Diplomatic Service and was successively Minister at St. Petersburg and Vienna. In March 1870 he was appointed Bavarian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and at Versailles in October of the same year concluded the agreement whereby Bavaria entered the German Empire, thereby demonstrating his patriotism. He was again Bavarian Minister at Vienna (1871-1897).

CASTELNAU. French General. Had a distinguished military career under the Second Empire, and was aide-de-camp to Marshal Vaillant during the Italian campaign of 1859, to the Minister of War, and subsequently to the Emperor. Napoleon III sent him on a confidential mission to Bazaine in Mexico in 1866, and at the capitulation of Sedan he was the Emperor's personal representative.

DONNIGES, HÉLÈNE VON (1846-1911). Lassalle's admirer. Born in Munich, her father was Baron Wilhelm von Dönniges, distinguished as Professor of Political Science, as the friend for many years of the Bavarian Crown Prince Max, and as a Bavarian diplomatist. She was a woman of unusual charm, highly gifted but excessively romantic. Having met Lassalle in Society she decided to marry him. Her family, however, had selected Herr von Rakowitz as her husband: a duel followed between the two men in which Lassalle fell. She afterwards married von Rakowitz, secondly, the actor

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Siegwart Friedmann, with whom she made frequent and successful appearances on the stage, both in Europe and America, and thirdly, Schewitsch the author. She committed suicide with her third husband in Munich in 1911.

DOUGLAS, HUGO SHOLTO, COUNT (1837-1912). Served in the army (1866 and 1870-71). Founded the alkali mine known as Douglas Hall near Westeregeln, and was a member of the Prussian Chamber from 1882. A friend of Kaiser Wilhelm II, he was raised to the rank of Count and made a member of the Council of State. In 1888 he wrote a book entitled *What we may hope from our Kaiser*.

DUNCKER, MAX (1811-1886). Born at Berlin. A student at Bonn and Berlin, he was condemned to six years imprisonment for membership of the Burschenschaft, but was released. Graduated at Halle in 1839, and became editor of the *Hallische Allgemeine Literatur Zeitung* and a Professor. As a member of the Chamber of Deputies he belonged to the old Liberals. In 1857 he was Professor at Tübingen, and from 1861 till 1866 was acting political councillor to the Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm (afterwards the Emperor Frederick). He was afterwards (1867-1874) Director of the Prussian State Archives.

EUGENIE, EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH (1826-1920). Eugénie Marie de Montijo de Guzman, born at Granada, was the second daughter of the Count de Montijo and Teba, Duke of Penaranda, and of Mary Kirkpatrick, a member of an old Scottish family. Her youth was spent in travelling, in the course of which her remarkable beauty attracted universal attention. She married Napoleon III in 1853, and in 1856 the Prince Imperial was born. At first devoted chiefly to Society and Fashion she subsequently developed political interests and sought to influence the Government. She frequently partici-

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pated in Ministerial Councils, and in July 1870, as on previous occasions, was entrusted with the Regency during the Emperor's absence. She believed that the Dynasty could only be maintained by a successful war, and, after the earlier disasters, decisively opposed the Emperor's return and the retreat of MacMahon's army from Châlons on Paris. By insisting on the march to relieve Bazaine in Metz she made herself responsible for the culminating disaster of Sedan. On 4th September she fled from the Tuileries and spent the rest of her long life in England. She became a widow in 1873, and her son the Prince Imperial was killed in Africa in 1879. She died while on a visit to her native country fifty years after the fall of her Dynasty, having lived through the Great War.

EULENBURG, PHILIPP, PRINCE ZU EULENBURG UND HERTEFELD. Born 1847 at Königsberg, entered the Prussian Guard 1866, served in the war of 1870, and afterwards travelled in the East and studied law. He then entered on a diplomatic career, becoming German Ambassador at Vienna in 1894. In 1902 he retired from the Diplomatic Service owing to ill-health. He was an intimate friend of Kaiser Wilhelm II, who frequently invited him to share his northern journeys. He assisted the Kaiser in composing the hymn *O Aegir, Herr der Fluten*, and was otherwise known as a composer, poet, and novelist. Grave charges were brought against his character which led to much scandal, and in 1908 he was prosecuted for perjury, but the proceedings were stayed and no judgment was pronounced against him. He survived until after the Great War.

FAVRE, JULES (1809-1880). Better known as an orator throughout his life than as a diplomatist, and famous for his statement in 1870 that "France would not yield to Germany an inch of her territory or a single stone of her fortresses." Within a few months Bismarck was demanding unconditionally Alsace and Lorraine. He

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made, during the crisis, one blunder after another. Having with Thiers opposed the war, he became Vice-President of the Ministry of National Defence—and as Minister of Foreign Affairs was as clay in Bismarck's hands. Among other things he opposed the removal of the Government from Paris. He was finally discredited and withdrew from the Ministry.

FRIEDRICH III, KING OF PRUSSIA, GERMAN EMPEROR (1831-1888). Best known in England as the Emperor Frederick, he was born at Potsdam, and was the son of Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, afterwards first German Emperor, and Princess Augusta of Saxe-Weimar. He married, in 1858, Victoria, Princess Royal of England, and became Crown Prince of Prussia on his father's accession to the Throne in 1861. Though at variance with Bismarck on the constitutional question between 1863 and 1866, he took a prominent part in the Danish and Austrian wars, and supported Bismarck's policy of an immediate peace with Austria in the latter year. In the war of 1870 he commanded the Third Army, won the victories of Weissenburg and Wörth, and decided the victory of Sedan. From January 1871 he was styled Crown Prince of the German Empire. After the peace, in addition to acting when required as his father's representative, he carried on his military work. He shared his wife's interest in culture and did his best to stimulate educational progress, but in politics he was thwarted by Bismarck. In 1887 he fell ill of a throat complaint which was treated by Sir Morel Mackenzie, but grew steadily worse. In 1888, having lost the power of speech, he returned from Italy to take up the succession to his father, retaining in office Bismarck and the other Ministers with one exception. His disease made rapid progress, and he succumbed after a short and unhappy reign of ninety-nine days.

GAMBETTA, LÉON MICHEL (1838-1882). Born at Cahors of a family of Genoese origin, he became an

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advocate in Paris in 1859. He was very successful in his profession and became conspicuous for his remorseless opposition to the Empire in the Corps Législatif, where he was the leader of the Extreme Left. In 1870 he condemned the frivolity with which war had been declared but voted for the required credits. On 4th September 1870 he became Minister of the Interior in the Government of National Defence. On 8th October 1870 he left beleaguered Paris in a balloon and reached Tours, where part of the Government had assembled. He then took over the Departments of War and Finance, assumed the dictatorship, and endeavoured to inspire the masses with the idea of *guerre à outrance* and to raise new armies. No failures could persuade him of the falsity of his calculations. After the fall of Paris he still refused to hear of peace, and by an unconstitutional decree endeavoured to exclude from the National Assembly Deputies of another way of thinking. This decree was annulled and he resigned.

He was elected to the National Assembly by nine Departments, led the Republican Left, and founded the journal *République Française*. During the reaction of 1877 he successfully led the opposition but did not accept office, and refused to be President of the Republic on MacMahon's retirement. He contented himself with the Presidency of the Chamber. His adherents obtained a great majority at the subsequent election, and he formed his so-called *Grand Ministère* in November 1881. He aimed at constitutional reform and, in foreign policy, at co-operation with Russia and England against Germany. England declined his proposals for common action in Egypt, and the Chamber threw out his Constitutional proposals, on which he at once resigned. He became mortally ill in December 1882 and died a year later.

GRAMONT, ANTOINE ALFRED AGÉNOR, DUC DE (1819-1880). Was known until the death of his father as Duc de Guiche. After the Revolution of 1848 he attached himself to Prince Louis Napoleon, whose confidence he

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won and who gave him diplomatic employment. In 1857 he was Ambassador at Rome, and in 1861 he went as Ambassador to Vienna. After the plebiscite in May 1870, he was appointed to succeed Count Daru as Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Ollivier Cabinet. He immediately began to carry out the "Revanche" for Sadowa which he had prepared in Vienna with Beust. The Hohenzollern candidature for the Throne of Spain seemed to him to offer the opportunity he sought for declaring war, the victorious outcome of which he never doubted. His provocative speech on 6th July 1870, as well as his offensive demands on King Wilhelm, were intended to make war unavoidable. He succeeded in silencing the Opposition and in making the Corps Législatif vote for war. Gramont fell with the Ollivier Ministry after the battle of Wörth. In 1872 he published a book (*La France et La Prusse avant la guerre*) justifying his action.

HATZFELD, SOPHIE, COUNTESS (1805-1881). Was the daughter of Marshal de Castellane. She married Count Maximilian Hatzfeld, Prussian Minister at Paris, in 1844, and was famous as the mistress of Ferdinand Lassalle, and as the chief figure in the "Cassette" theft case in 1848. This scandal arose in the course of divorce proceedings between Count and Countess Hatzfeld, during which the Countess was consistently supported by Lassalle. She is described by Lassalle in one of his speeches during the case as "the noblest of women, brutally maligned by an unfaithful husband," but by one of her contemporaries as "a terrible person who smoked huge cigars, wore thick false eyebrows and a red wig, and who, from being Lassalle's mistress, had become an absolute tyrant." (Vide *Hélène von Rakowitz*, English translation, Constable, 1911, p. 74.)

HEYDEN, AUGUST VON (1827-1897). German painter; son of the poet Friedrich August von Heyden. He took up mining as his profession and had reached the position

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of Director of the Mines belonging to the Duke of Ujest when circumstances permitted him to devote himself to Art. He began his studies in Berlin in 1859, and continued them in Paris under Gleyre and Couture in the early 'sixties. His first large picture, representing St. Barbara bringing the Sacrament to a dying miner, gained a gold medal at the Salon of 1863. He thereafter produced a series of pictures of reputation in their day, a good deal of decorative work for public buildings (*e.g.*, the drop scene for the Berlin Opera House) and some work in book illustration and industrial design. He was an authority on costume and was lecturer on that subject in the Berlin Academy of Art (1882-1893). He was also the author of works on artistic subjects and of two fairy tales illustrated by himself.

HINZPETER, GEORG ERNST (1827-1907). Born at Bielefeld, studied philology at Halle and Berlin, and became private tutor in families of position in Western Germany, with some interludes of teaching at the Gymnasium at Bielefeld. In 1866 he became tutor to Prince Wilhelm (afterwards Kaiser Wilhelm II) and accompanied him to Cassel, where the Prince was a pupil at the Gymnasium until 1877. In 1889 Wilhelm II consulted Hinzpeter about the conditions of the mining population in the Rhine provinces and Westphalia, and in 1890 about the reform of higher education, and he presided over the committee subsequently appointed. In 1904 he received the title of Excellency.

KAROLYI, ALOYS, COUNT (1825-1889). Born at Vienna, Court Chamberlain 1852, Austrian Minister at Copenhagen 1858, Minister in 1860, and in 1871 Ambassador at Berlin, Austrian plenipotentiary at the Berlin Congress 1878, Austrian Ambassador in London, 1878-1888.

KEUDELL, ROBERT VON (1825-1903). Born at Königsberg, he was appointed by Bismarck to the Ministry of

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Foreign Affairs in 1863 after an official career in other departments of State, and after 1870 remained in close attendance on the Chancellor as confidential councillor of Legation. In 1869 he represented Germany at the opening of the Suez Canal. In 1871 he was German Minister at Constantinople, and in 1873 at Rome, where he afterwards became Ambassador (1876-1887). Thereafter he lived on his estates in Neumark. He was a member of the Prussian Chamber (1888-1903), and of the Reichstag (1890-1893). He married a daughter of the Grand Duke Ernst of Württemberg, the issue of his morganatic marriage with Frau Natalie Grünhof.

LASSALLE, FERDINAND (1825-1864). Born at Breslau, son of Lasal, a wealthy Jewish silk merchant who intended him for the business. Lassalle, however, secretly left Leipzig, where he was being trained according to his father's ideas, and studied Philosophy, Philology, and Archaeology at Breslau and Berlin. The series of his writings begins at this time, and he formed relationships with some of the most distinguished men of his time. In 1844 he made the acquaintance of Countess Hatzfeld, who was living apart from her husband. He offered her his assistance in her litigation with the Count, and in a series of law-suits extending over a period of nearly ten years he successfully vindicated her claims.

His relations with Karl Marx converted Lassalle from Liberalism to Socialism. A speech at Neuss in November 1848, in which he incited the people to arm, led to a prosecution which lasted six months, but he was acquitted. Another charge of a similar kind led, however, to a sentence of six months imprisonment. In the intervals he wrote his tragedy *Franz von Sickingen* and other works.

In May 1864 he founded, at Leipzig, the General German Workers Union, which was the foundation of the Socialist Party. Constant agitation for the Socialist cause had undermined Lassalle's health and, after a triumphal reception in the Rhine provinces, he went to

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Switzerland to meet H el ene von D onniges, with whom he was already in association in Berlin. His relations with this lady led to a duel with her *fianc e*, Janko von Rakowitz, in which he was killed.

LEBOEUF, EDMOND (1809-1888). Marshal of France. Born in Paris, author of the famous saying in 1870, "So ready are we that were the war to last two years not a gaiter-button would be missing." Served with distinction in the Crimea, commanding the first Army Corps at the siege of Sebastopol. Speaking in the Chamber on the question of war or no war with Germany in 1870, he said, "I have only one political principle—to be always ready: whether there is war or not. That is my duty and I shall fulfil it." After the outbreak of war he was appointed Major-General in the army of the Rhine. He was deprived of this command after the reverses of Weissenburg and Worth for alleged incompetence, was re-appointed to the command of the third corps and subsequently greatly distinguished himself by his personal bravery at Noisseville and St. Privat. He was shut up with Bazaine in Metz and, on the conclusion of peace, returned to France and gave evidence before the Commission of inquiry on the surrender of that town, in which he strongly denounced Bazaine.

LUCANUS, FRIEDRICH KARL H. VON (1831-1908). Born at Halberstadt, he had a successful career in various Government departments, becoming Under Secretary of State in 1881. From 1888 he was the Chief of the Civil Cabinet of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

MOLTKE, HELLMUTH, COUNT VON (1800-1891). Born in Pommerania, he first joined the Danish, and afterwards (1822) the Prussian, Army. After an interlude of service in Syria and Turkey he returned to Berlin in 1840 where he held a series of important military appointments, becoming Chief of the General Staff in 1858. This post, owing to Moltke's activities, acquired (at the expense

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of the Ministry of War itself) the greatest possible importance both for the preparation and conduct of war. His greatest achievements were the victorious campaigns of 1866 and 1870. In 1866 he was made General of Infantry, and in 1871 General Field-Marshal. He was created a Count in 1870, and was a member of the Federal Diet from 1867 and subsequently of the Reichstag.

NAPOLEON III, EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH (1808-1873).

Third son of Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland, and Hortense de Beauharnais, daughter of the Empress Josephine. He was banished from France in 1815, and educated in Germany. In 1836 he endeavoured to restore the Empire by a military insurrection at Strasbourg, but was taken prisoner and deported to America. From 1838 he took up his abode in London. In August 1840 he made a second attempt at Boulogne, was again taken prisoner and this time sentenced to imprisonment for life. He was confined in the fortress of Ham but escaped to London in 1846, returning in 1848 to Paris where he became a member of the National Assembly and on 20th December President of the Republic. On 2nd December 1851 he became Prince-President as the result of a *coup d'état*, and on 2nd December 1852 was elevated by plebiscite to the Imperial Dignity. In 1853 he married Eugénie de Montijo. He raised France to the rank of a first-class power by the Crimean war, and won new fame by his successes in the Italian campaign (1859), but his ambiguous Italian policy, his ill-starred expedition to Mexico (1862-1867), and the failure of his Prussian policy lowered his reputation, which he in vain endeavoured to re-establish by a policy of liberal reforms. He allowed himself to be forced into war with Prussia, was captured with the French army at Sedan, and was a prisoner of war at Wilhelmshöhe until March 1871, when he went into exile in England. He died at Chislehurst two years later.

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NIGRA, COSTANTINO, COUNT (1828-1907). Italian diplomatist. During the war of 1848 he served as volunteer against Austria and was wounded. In 1856 he took part in the Conference of Paris by which the Crimean War was brought to an end. He was instrumental in arranging the marriage between Princess Clothilde, Victor Emmanuel's daughter, and Prince Napoleon, cousin of Napoleon III. When Napoleon III recognized the kingdom of Italy in 1861, Nigra was Italian Minister at Paris, and for many years he played a most important part in political affairs there. He was Ambassador at St. Petersburg in 1876, in London 1882, and in Vienna 1885. He represented Italy at the first Hague Conference, 1899. Nigra was a sound classical scholar, publishing translations of Greek and Latin poems with valuable commentaries. He was also a poet and the author of several works on folk-lore, of which the most important is his *Canti popolari del Piemonte*.

OLLIVIER, EMILE (1825-1913). Born at Marseilles. His father was banished from France as a vehement opponent of Monarchy. He himself was of the same way of thinking, and was elected Commissioner of the Republic in 1848 when only twenty-three. After a brilliant career as a lawyer and a politician he rallied to the support of the "Liberal Empire" towards the end of the reign of Napoleon III, and was in the position of Premier at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, and actually proclaimed in the Chamber that he entered it "with a light heart." Like others he allowed himself to be completely outwitted by Bismarck, and fled to Italy to avoid public resentment. He returned to France later but never regained political power. He married Liszt's daughter, and was one of the first to make Wagner popular in Paris. He was the author of *L'Empire Libéral*, a lengthy and elaborate justification of his policy.

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PICARD, LOUIS JOSEPH ERNEST (1821-1877). French politician. Originally a *protégé* of Emile Ollivier, he veered more to the Left. He founded the democratic paper *L'Electeur Libre*, and in the Ministry of National Defence in 1870 held the portfolio of Finance. In January 1871 he accompanied Favre to Versailles to arrange for the capitulation of Paris, and next month became Minister of the Interior in Thiers's Cabinet. Attacked by both the Monarchist and the Republican Press he resigned in May. Later he was sent as Ambassador to Brussels, where he remained two years.

RAKOWITZ, JANKO VON. Roumanian noble. Married the famous beauty Hélène von Dönniges, after killing her lover, the well-known socialist Ferdinand Lassalle, in a duel in 1864. He died of consumption after only five months of marriage.

ROCHEFORT, HENRI, MARQUIS DE ROCHEFORT-LUÇAY (1830-1913). French politician. His father, Edmund Rochefort, was well known as a writer of vaudevilles. Henri, after varied experiences as a medical student, as a clerk at the Hôtel de Ville, as playwright and journalist, joined the staff of the *Figaro* in 1863, and a series of his articles, afterwards published as *Les Français de la Décadence*, brought his paper into collision with the authorities and he was dismissed. He then published a paper of his own, *La Lanterne*, which was suppressed and he was imprisoned. On his release he fought a series of duels which kept him in the public eye. In 1869 he became a Deputy and was a member of the Government of National Defence in 1870, but he almost immediately severed his connection with law and order owing to his sympathies with the Communards. Following this he was again imprisoned and, in spite of Victor Hugo's intervention, was transported to New Carolina. Escaping *en route* he lived, till the general amnesty permitted his return to France, in London and Geneva, and founded *L'Intransigeant*. In later years, the

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Boulangist agitation, the Dreyfus case, and the Panama Canal scandals furnished him with various *points d'appui*. He became a leader of the anti-Dreyfusards, and subsequently edited *La Patrie*.

ROON, ALBRECHT VON (1803-1879). Born at Kolberg of a family of Dutch origin. An infantry officer in the earlier stage of his career, he devoted himself to the educational and technical side of his profession, and composed several works on military topography. From 1848 onwards he held important staff appointments. In 1859 he was made a member of the Commission on Army Organization, and in the same year became Minister of War, in which capacity he had to defend Army Reform in the Chamber of Deputies. In spite of obstruction and financial difficulties he got his way. His action in securing Bismarck's appointment as Prime Minister was a great service to his country. The success of the mobilization for the campaign of 1866 and, still more, the triumphs of 1870, gave supreme proof of his gift for organization. He was raised to the rank of Count, and when Bismarck temporarily resigned the Presidency of the Prussian Ministry, Roon (who had been promoted General Field-Marshal) was appointed in his place. He resigned in November 1873, and died six years later.

SCHLEINITZ, ALEXANDER VON (1807-1885). German statesman. He was educated at Göttingen and Berlin, and entered the Diplomatic Service in 1835. He was attached successively to the Embassies at Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, and London (1840), where he was for some time *chargé d'affaires*, and by his conduct of negotiations of the highest importance, fully justified the confidence of his Government. The events of 1848 prevented his proceeding as ambassador to Constantinople where he had already been appointed. Instead, he was sent to Hanover to decide the course that state was to pursue against Denmark. Having successfully accomplished that mission, he became Minister of Foreign

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Affairs at Berlin, but resigned owing to differences with his colleagues after a week. In May 1849, however, he had charge of the negotiations which culminated in peace with Denmark. He was a vehement opponent of Danish union and eventually resigned office on this question. He returned to the Foreign Office under the Prince Regent (1858-1861), and in the war between France and Italy, which broke out shortly afterwards, he pursued, in spite of opposition, a course which neither guaranteed to Austria the promise of Prussian help nor to France the promise of neutrality. He eventually resigned in 1861, but continued to serve the State in a useful capacity as Minister of the Royal Household (1861-1865). He was raised to the rank of Count in 1879. Possessing the special confidence of the Empress Augusta he was always found in opposition to Bismarck.

THIERS, LOUIS ADOLPHE (1797-1877). French statesman and historian. He studied for the legal profession but had no success and turned to History, Politics, and Economics. He went to Paris in 1820 and commenced a highly successful career as a Liberal journalist in opposition to the reactionary rule of Charles X. He exercised much influence through his paper the *National*, but took no actual part in the Revolution of July 1830, though he returned to Paris in time to draft the proclamation of the Duc d'Orléans, who became King as Louis Philippe. Thiers received rapid promotion. He was elected Deputy for Aix and made Under Secretary for Finance. He became a fluent and ready debater, and in 1832 was appointed Minister of the Interior. As Minister of Commerce and Public Works he was responsible for replacing the statue of Napoleon on the Colonne Vendôme and for the completion of the Arc de Triomphe. From 1836 to 1840 he was Leader of the Opposition.

After the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon, Thiers (who was equally opposed to Bonapartism and Socialism) was arrested and exiled for a time. On his return he devoted

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himself to Literature, but was elected to the Chamber by the City of Paris in 1863. In 1870 he opposed the war on practical grounds. In 1871 he was elected Chief of the Executive by the National Assembly at Bordeaux, concluded peace with Germany, and crushed the revolt of the Paris Commune. Elected President of the Republic on 31st August 1871 he was overthrown on 24th May 1873 by the Clerical Monarchist Majority in the National Assembly. His chief work is his *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire* (1845-1862).

TROCHU, LOUIS JULES (1815-1896). Served with distinction as a General throughout the Crimean War and in 1866 was appointed to the French Ministry of War for work on reorganization schemes. He published in 1867 *L'Armée Française en 1867*, a work inspired by Orleanist sentiment which brought him into bad odour at Court. At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War he was refused a command in the field. After the earlier disasters, however, he was appointed Governor of Paris and Commander-in-Chief of all forces destined to defend the City, and after the revolution of 4th September became President of the Ministry of National Defence. Throughout the successive sorties against the Germans during the siege, he proved himself a master of defensive tactics. His "plan" ("*J'ai mon plan*") for defending the city was doomed to failure, and when capitulation became inevitable he resigned, having previously declared that, as Governor, he would never surrender.

VICTORIA, EMPRESS FREDERICK, PRINCESS ROYAL OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND (1840-1901). Eldest daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Married, 1858, Prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. When her father-in-law, Wilhelm I, ascended the throne in 1861 she became Crown Princess. Four sons and four daughters were born of the marriage. She was highly gifted and ambitious, and devoted to art. She had much

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to do with the foundation of an Industrial Art Museum in Berlin, and founded many schools of Domestic Economy. In Politics and Religion she held advanced views. She accompanied her husband to Italy after he became ill and nursed him devotedly till his death, after which she was styled Empress Frederick and lived at her castle of Cronberg in the Taunus. A riding accident in 1898 was the cause of her last illness which terminated in her death three years later.

VIRCHOW, RUDOLF (1821-1902). One of the founders of Modern Pathology and in Medicine one of the greatest figures of his time. His medical career, in the course of which he held a number of eminent professional positions, was occasionally embarrassed by his highly Radical and progressive views which were displeasing to the Government. He entered the Prussian Chamber of Deputies in 1862 and was a founder and leader of the Progressive Party. He was the inventor of the expression *Kulturkampf*, and was in constant conflict with Bismarck. He was a member of the Reichstag from 1880 till 1893, and, apart from his more purely medical and political labours, he was associated with useful measures of public health and with the foundation of the German-Anthropological Society.

WALDECK, BENEDICT FRANZ LEO (1802-1870). Politician. Born at Münster, entered on a legal career, and in 1848 was elected to the National Assembly. He was extremely energetic as leader of the Extreme Left and as President of the Constitutional Committee, and the Constitution came to be known as "Waldeck's Charter." A stormy career during the events of 1848-1849 culminated in his sudden arrest in the latter year, when it appeared that he had been concerned in schemes involving high treason. He was, however, acquitted by a jury. In 1860 he returned to the Chamber and was one of the greatest orators of the Progressive Party, taking a leading part in all the controversies of the time. In the

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North German Federal Diet he declared against the Federal Constitution. In 1869 he retired from parliamentary activities owing to ill health and died in the following year at Berlin where, in 1889, a marble statue was erected as a memorial of his public work.

WILHELM I, KING OF PRUSSIA, GERMAN EMPEROR (1797-1888). Second son of Friedrich Wilhelm III and Queen Luise, born Princess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who was for long a rallying point of German patriotic enthusiasm. He took part in the battle of Bar-sur-Aube at the outset of his military career which proceeded through the usual grades until, on his becoming heir-presumptive to the Throne, he became Prince of Prussia and General of Infantry. In 1848 his brother Friedrich Wilhelm IV made him Governor of the Rhine provinces, but as the leading supporter of Absolutist tendencies he found it wise to quit Prussia for a time. He went to London but returned in 1849 to take command of the troops detailed to crush the Revolution, and subdued the revolts in Baden and the Palatinate in a few weeks. He became Regent in 1858 during the King's illness and in 1861 succeeded his brother on the Throne. The reorganization of the Army, which he pursued with much energy, caused many conflicts between the Government and Parliament. After the successful wars with Denmark in 1864 and with Austria in 1866, the political object of his new Prime Minister, Bismarck—freedom from Austria—was realized, and in 1867 he became President of the North German Confederation. In 1870 he was the Federal Commander-in-Chief against France, and in 1871 was proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles.

WILHELM II, KING OF PRUSSIA, GERMAN EMPEROR. Born 27th January 1859, eldest son of the Emperor Frederick and Victoria, born Princess Royal of England. After the customary academic and military career culminating in his appointment as Major-General in 1888, he succeeded in the same year to the Throne on the

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death of his father. He was interested in the development of higher education, and was zealous up to a certain point in the pursuit of a quasi-socialist policy. He was still more zealous in following a forward naval policy. After Bismarck's retirement, and under his successors Caprivi and Hohenlohe, the Kaiser made himself the actual controller of policy, and during the Chancellorship of Von Bülow and Bethmann-Hollweg, he continued to exercise a decisive influence. The inspirer of foreign policy was Baron Holstein, whose unreasoning hatred of England led to most unfortunate decisions.

Wilhelm II married first Princess Victoria Augusta of Schleswig-Holstein, by whom he had six sons, and one daughter who married the Duke of Brunswick. In October 1918 negotiations were entered into at Spa concerning his abdication, which was announced on 9th November by the Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden. From Amerongen in Holland, to which he retired on 10th November, he formally renounced all his rights to the Imperial and Prussian crowns.

After the death of his first wife (1921) he married in 1922 the Princess Hermine of Schönaich-Carolath.

WIMPFEN, EMMANUEL FELIX DE (1811-1884). Earned marked distinction as Colonel of a Turco Regiment in the Crimea, and with General MacMahon at Magenta. Before the disastrous battle of Sedan it was arranged that if anything happened to MacMahon Wimpffen was to succeed him. This was disputed on MacMahon being wounded, by a rival General, Ducrot, but Wimpffen produced his credentials and thus became responsible for the negotiations which involved the surrender of the whole French army. He was blamed for this to the end of his life, the remainder of which he spent in retirement in Algiers, writing books on various aspects of the war—notably *Sedan* (published 1871)—to defend his position.

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WINDTHORST, LUDWIG (1812-1891). Catholic politician. Born at Osnabrück and originally educated for the priesthood, he spent the first half of his life in Hanoverian politics and public affairs, becoming Minister of Justice in that kingdom in 1862. After the annexation of Hanover to Prussia in 1866, he took part in German politics and sat in the Reichstag and the Prussian Diet from the year 1867. He was the head of the Ultramontane Party in both these Assemblies, and a very adroit and formidable leader of opposition owing to his mastery of parliamentary tactics and procedure. His diminutive figure, distinguished by a highly characteristic head, was one of the best known and most popular in Germany.

WRANGEL, FRIEDRICH H. E., COUNT (1784-1877). Born at Stettin, he became a soldier and won the order Pour le Mérite in 1807 at Heilsburg. He took part in the subsequent campaigns of the Napoleonic war, and became a general in the early 'thirties. He was Federal Commander-in-Chief in the German-Danish war of 1848, was promoted Field-Marshal in 1856, and in 1864 was Commander-in-Chief of the Austro-Prussian Army. As he did not follow Moltke's plan of campaign, and failed to cut off the Danes in the Danewerk, he was removed from his command. He served as a volunteer in the war with Austria in 1866.

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