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Historical Sketch of Germany, by Mary Platt Parmele**

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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF GERMANY ***

**THE
EVOLUTION OF AN EMPIRE**

**A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF
GERMANY**

**BY
MARY PARMELE**

SECOND EDITION

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EVOLUTION OF AN EMPIRE.

CHAPTER I.

Foundation building is neither picturesque nor especially interesting, but it is indispensable. However fair the structure is to be, one must first lay the rough-hewn stones upon which it is to rest. It would be much pleasanter in this sketch to display at once the minarets and towers, and stained-glass windows; but that can only be done when one's castle is in Spain.

Would we comprehend the Germany of to-day, we must hold firmly in our minds an epitome of what it has been, and see vividly the devious path of its development through the ages.

The German nation is of ancient lineage, and indeed belongs to the royal line of human descent, the Aryan; its ancestral roots running back until lost in the heart of Asia, in the mists of antiquity.

The home of the Aryan race is shrouded in mystery, as are the impelling causes which sent those successive tides of humanity into Europe. But we know with certainty that when the last great wave spread over Eastern Europe, or Russia, about one thousand years before Christ, the submergence of that continent was complete.

Before the coming of the Aryan, the Rhine flowed as now; the Alps pierced the sky with their glistening peaks as they do to-day; the Danube, the Rhône, hurried on, as now, toward the sea. Was it all a beautiful, unpeopled solitude waiting in silence for the richly endowed Asiatic to come and possess it? Far from it. It was teeming with humanity—if, indeed, we may call such the race which modern research and discovery has revealed to us. It is only within the last thirty years that anything whatever has been known of prehistoric man; but now we are able to reconstruct him with probable accuracy. A creature, bestial in appearance and in life; dwelling in caves, which, however, a dawning sense of a higher humanity led him to decorate with carvings of birds and fishes; but, certain it is, the brain which inhabited that skull was incapable of performing the mental processes necessary to the simplest form of civilization; and life must have been to him simply a thing of fierce appetites and brutal instincts. Such was the being encountered by the Aryan, when he penetrated the mysterious land beyond the confines of Greece and Italy.

The extermination, and perhaps, to some extent, assimilation, of this terrible race must have required centuries of brutalizing conflict, and, it is easy to imagine, would have produced just such men as were the northern barbarians, who for five hundred years terrorized Europe: men insensible to fear, terrible, fierce, but with fine instincts for civilization—dormant Aryan germs, which quickly developed when brought into contact with a superior race.

The earliest Indo-European migration is supposed to have been into Greece and Italy, where was laid the basis for the civilization of the world. The second was probably into Western Europe and the British Isles; then, after many centuries, the central, and last, and at a time comparatively recent, into the Eastern portion of the continent.

So by the fourth century B.C. three great divisions of the Aryan race occupied Europe north of Greece and Italy. The Keltic, the western; the Teutonic, the central; the Slavonic, the eastern; and these, in turn, had ramified into new subdivisions or tribes.

To state it, as in the pedigree of the individual, the Aryan was the founder, the father of the family; Slav, Teuton, and Kelt the three sons. Gaul and Briton were sons of the Kelt; Saxon, Angle, Helvetian, etc., sons of the Teuton; and all alike grandchildren of the Aryan; whom—to carry the illustration farther—we may imagine to have had older children, who long ago had left the paternal home and settled about the Caspian and Mediterranean Seas. Mede, Persian, Greek, Roman, apparently bearing few marks of kinship to these uncouth younger brothers whom we have found in Europe in this fourth century B.C., but with nevertheless the same cradle, and the same ancestral roots.

It is the Teutonic branch of the Aryan family with which we have to do now. The river Rhine flowed between them and their Keltic brothers,

CHAPTER II.

Greece and Rome were unaware of the existence of the Teuton until about the year 330 B.C., when Pythias, a Greek navigator, came home from a voyage to the Baltic with terrible tales of the Goths whom he had met. Nearly one century before Christ the inhabitants of Italy were enabled to judge for themselves of the accuracy of the description. Driven from their homes by the inroads of the sea, the Goths poured in a hungry torrent down into the tempting vineyards of Northern Italy. Gigantic in stature, with long yellow hair, eyes blue but fierce—what wonder that the people thought they were scarcely human, and fled affrighted, leaving them to enjoy the vineyards at their leisure.

Accounts of this uncanny host reached Rome, which soon knew of their breastplates of iron, their helmets crowned with heads of wild beasts, their white shields glistening in the sun, and, more terrible than all, of their priestesses, clad in white linen, who prophesied and offered human sacrifices to their gods.

But the sacrifices did not avail against the legions which the great Consul Marius led against them. The ponderous Goth was not yet a match for the finer skill of the Roman, and the invaders were exterminated at Aix-la-Chapelle, 102 B.C. The women, in despair, slew first their children and then themselves, a few only surviving to be paraded in chains at the triumph accorded to Marius on his return to Rome. Such was the first appearance of the Teuton in the Eternal City, and the last until five hundred years later, when the conditions were changed.

At the time of this first invasion of the Goths they had made some progress in political and social organization, though of the simplest kind. Predatory in habits and fierce as the wild beasts of their forests, they were, however, romantic in ideals, had a fine sense of the beautiful. They exalted woman, and honored marriage and the family relation to an extent beyond any ancient people. When I have said that, added to this, they had a glimmering sense of human rights in communities and in the State, it will be seen that the German race had the basis of a superior civilization; and when the Christian era dawned, though the world knew it not, a great nation was coming into organic form.

At this period, Julius Cæsar had made Roman provinces of Gaul and Britain; and now the wave of conquest naturally overflowed the boundary line into the land of the Teuton; and the German, in his barbaric simplicity, stood face to face with that finished human product, the astute, cultivated Roman.

For centuries they fought—always on German soil—the legions often repulsed, yet pressing on and on, until a chain of Roman fortresses stretched from the Rhine to the Baltic, and the people were held—not subjugated—by Roman power.

About the year 100 of our era there arose the first heroic figure in the history of Germany, when Hermann made a prodigious but ineffectual attempt to consolidate his people and expel the Romans. The colossal statue only recently erected in Germany, is a tribute to the unhappy hero of eighteen centuries ago.

At the time of this attempt the Germans had learned much from the superior civilization by which they were invaded. They were no longer the barbarous race which had trampled down the vineyards of northern Italy two hundred years before. Nor was this lesson in civilization yet over. For five hundred years Teuton and Roman continued the struggle. The one by the process growing wiser, richer in resource, and in supplementing his rude strength with the finer methods of old civilizations, becoming a more and more dangerous adversary; while the other saw himself more and more enfeebled, and, wearied with the conflict, felt decrepitude stealing surely over him.

In the year 300 the Teutons had ramified into six branches—the Burgundians, Thuringians, Franks, Saxons, Allemani, and Goths—all one in race, but each with its own distinct traits and life. The Allemani were so called from *aller-mannen*—all men; seeming to signify that this tribe

was composed of the fragments of many tribes. Why this tribal name should have become that of the whole German nation is not apparent. Obviously the word *Allemagne* has this origin, just as *Deutsch* may be as readily traced to Teuton.

But of these six tribes it was the Goths who first adopted Christianity, and took on the forms of a higher civilization.

CHAPTER III.

As some winged seed is wafted from a fair garden into a dark, distant forest, and there takes root and blossoms, so was the seed-germ of Christianity caught by the wind of destiny, and carried from Palestine to the heart of pagan Germany, where, strange to say, it found congenial soil.

The story is a romantic one. A Christian boy in Asia Minor, while straying on the shores of the Mediterranean, was captured by some Goths, who took their fair-haired prize home to their own land, and named him *Ulfila*.

The boy, with his heart all aflame for the religion in which he had been nurtured, told his captors the story of Calvary—of Christ and His gospel of peace and love—and lived to see the terrible sacrificial altars replaced by the Cross.

The Goths had no alphabet, so *Ulfila* invented one, and then translated the Bible into their rude speech. A part of this translation is now preserved in Sweden, and is the earliest extant specimen of the Gothic language. Even to the unlearned observer, this Gothic version of the Lord's Prayer, written by *Ulfila* more than one thousand five hundred years ago, bears such strong marks of kinship to the German and English versions that it can be easily read by us to-day, and makes us realize how much of the Teuton has mingled with our own life and speech.

The enormous vitality of the Teutons was evinced in their restless desire to extend themselves. They were not comfortable neighbors. The Franks made predatory incursions into Gaul, which they finally overran and possessed; the *Allemani*, into Italy; the Saxons, in the same manner, overran Britain; while the stalwart Goths addressed their blows to the Roman Empire—the common foe of all—until 410 *Anno Domini*, when, for a second time, Teuton feet trod the streets of Rome, this time not chained to the chariot of a *Marius*, but conquerors. And when the gates of the Eternal City yielded to the blows of *Alaric*, the Roman Empire virtually ceased to exist.

So this rude people, which in the time of *Julius Cæsar* was buried in the forests of Central Europe, in six hundred years from his time occupied all of Europe, and was beginning to lay the foundations of a new empire upon the fragments of the old.

There is not time to tell how the newly Christianized and civilized Goths were now in turn attacked by the Huns, a race vastly more fierce and terrible than they had ever been, who swarmed down upon them suddenly, like the locusts of Egypt, and under the leadership of *Attila* swept everything before them; then, after leaving a track of blood and ashes through Germany, disappearing again over the steppes of Russia, from whence they had mysteriously come; a tremendous upturning force, but bearing no relation to the future result more than the plough to the future grain.

There had been no repose for Europe yet—inconstant tribal changes; a surging mass of humanity pouring from one land into another. The troubled continent was a great, seething caldron, from which was to emerge a new civilization. But soon after this final convulsion of the Hunnish invasion the migrations ceased, and now, about the year 570, the foundations of the present European divisions began to appear. In Britain, subjugated by the Angles and Saxons, we see foreshadowed the Anglo-Saxon England of to-day; in the country lying east and west of the Rhine, France and Germany begin to be outlined; while the smaller German states are distinctly visible, some of them with geographical divisions almost the same as now. Modern Europe was beginning to crystallize.

CHAPTER IV.

I cannot resist the temptation of saying a few words about the Anglo-Saxon occupation of Britain, which, as it virtually converted us from Kelts into Teutons, is not a digression.

From the time of Julius Cæsar the island of Britain had been occupied by the Romans, and in consequence had become partly civilized and Christianized. Upon the fall of the empire, the Roman legions were withdrawn, and the people, left defenceless, became the prey of their own northern barbarians, the Picts and Scots; the drama of Southern Europe and the Goths being reënacted on a diminished scale. In the fourth century the Britons implored the Angles and Saxons to come and protect them from these savages. Invited as allies, they came as invaders, and remained as conquerors, implanting their habits, speech, and paganism upon the prostrate island. It was the extermination of this exotic paganism which impelled to those deeds of valor recited in the Round Table romances, and which made King Arthur and his knights the theme of poet and minstrel for centuries.

But the Saxon had come to stay, and Teuton and Kelt became merged, much as do the lion and lamb, after the former has dined! The Teutonic Saxon may be said to have dined on the Keltic Briton, and remained master of the island until the Normans came, six centuries later, and in turn dominated, and made him bear the yoke of servitude.

Nor was this French-speaking Norman, French at all, except by adoption; being, in fact, the terrible Northman of two centuries before, on account of whose ravages the noble had entrenched himself in his strong castle, and the wretched serf had in mortal terror sold himself and all that he possessed, for the protection of its solid walls and moat; and thus had been laid the foundations of feudalism. He it was who, with long hair reeking with rancid oil, battle-axe, spear, and iron hook—with which to capture human and other prey—had held France in a state of unspeakable terror for centuries, but who had finally settled down as respectable French citizen in the sea-board province of Normandy, and in two centuries had made such wonderful improvement in manners, apparel, and speech, that the simple Saxon baron stood abashed before the splendid refinements of his conquerors.

The origin of this mysterious Northman is unknown; but whatever it was, or whoever he was, he certainly possessed Aryan germs of high potency.

So the Saxon had built the solid walls of the racial structure upon a foundation of Britons; and, though with no thought for beauty, had built well, with strong, true structural lines. It was the Norman who finished and decorated the structure, but he did not alter one of these lines; the speech, traits, institutions, and habits of England being at the core Saxon to-day, while there is a decorative surface only of Norman.

So when the Englishman calls himself with swelling pride, a Briton, he speaks wide of the mark. The Keltic Briton was buried fathoms deep under seven centuries of Saxon rule, and then, to make the extinction more complete, was overlaid with this brilliant lacquer of Norman surface. And if that mixed product, the English people, have any race paternity, it is Teutonic, and herein may lie the impossibility of making the English and Irish a homogeneous people—the English Teuton and Irish Kelt being in the nature of things antagonistic, the particles refuse to combine chemically, and can only be brought together (to use the language of the chemist) in mechanical mixture.

CHAPTER V.

At the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasion of England, and for three centuries later, the history of France and Germany were one and the same.

The Roman Empire, in its decrepitude, found it a difficult task to retain its dominion over Gaul, and so enlisted the Franks as allies. Thus was made a breach in the wall between the Kelt and the Teuton, through which in time flowed an irresistible German torrent, intermingling with the former population, and, by virtue of its superior strength, spreading itself over the land in permanent dominion; and when Clovis, their Frankish leader, drove out from Gaul the last remnant of Roman power, in 483 of our era, all connection with the expiring empire was severed. The loose confederation of tribes was gathered by the strong hand of the conquering Frank under one head, and Clovis was proclaimed king, with hereditary rights for his children.

With this event the doors close upon antiquity, and we are in the path which leads swiftly to modern history.

Clovis, the son of Merowig, gave his name to the dynasty thus founded. One of his first acts was the renouncing of paganism, through the influence of his wife, Clotilde, so that from their very birth France and Germany were Christian, while England lingered for centuries under pagan rule.

The grandchildren of Clovis and Clotilde, Siegfried and Brunhilde, were the heroes of the "Nibelungen Lied," and their adventures inspired not alone the great German epic, but have lent to the greatest music of modern times its majestic, heroic swing.

The real Brunhilde did not immolate herself upon her husband's funeral pile, as in the musical romance, but an end more tragic and vastly more terrible was hers. After being tortured for three days, her hair was tied to the tail of a fiery horse, spurs plunged into his sides, and the unhappy queen was ground to fragments upon the stones of the Rue St. Honoré, Paris, where this tragedy occurred about the year 600 A.D.

But the heroic strain in the Merovingian blood soon exhausted itself. The kings became effeminate, luxurious, and, after a time, too indolent even to govern, and finally gave entire control of state affairs to a royal steward, known as "*maire du palais*" or *major domus*, who was indeed king *de facto*, with authority supreme over the king himself.

Pepin was the last of these royal stewards. Conscious of his own superior fitness, he took the crown from the long, perfumed locks of the last Merovingian king and placed it upon his own head. What matter that he had no drop of royal blood in his veins? He held the sceptre with firm hand, by the divine right of ability, leaving it upon his death to his second son Charlemagne, who was destined to wield it by divine right of born conqueror and ruler of men.

CHAPTER VI.

This colossal figure stands the one supreme historical landmark midway between Julius Cæsar and Napoleon Bonaparte. In looking back, he saw not his equal in history until he beheld Cæsar. Nor in looking forward would he have seen another until just one thousand years later, when the world seemed to have found another master in Napoleon Bonaparte.

In the amplitude of his intelligence, in the splendor of his attributes, and in his seven feet of stature, Charlemagne was every inch a king. He was twenty-nine years old when, by the death of his father, Pepin, he became monarch, and set about his task, which was, to develop a great empire—overturning, conquering, despotic, often cruel, but always with the high purpose of giving to his race a higher civilization. In twenty-nine years more this task was accomplished, and a map of the German Empire was a map of Europe. On Christmas day, in the year 800, in the Cathedral of St. Peter's, at Rome, he received the imperial crown from Pope Leo III., and was greeted with cries of "Life and victory to Carolus Magnus, crowned by God Emperor of the Romans;" and at that moment he stood at the head of an empire which included all Christendom.

Charlemagne acknowledged the pope who crowned him as his spiritual sovereign, while, on the other hand, the pope bowed before the emperor who appointed him, as his temporal sovereign. It was a magnificent, all-embracing scheme of empire, of which the spiritual head was at Rome, and the temporal at Aix-la-Chapelle.

It seemed as if by this dual supremacy Charlemagne had provided for all possible exigencies of human government. He rested content, no doubt thinking he had embodied a perfect ideal in creating a system which should thus coördinate and embrace both the spiritual and temporal needs of an empire. Unfortunately, in order to be realized, it needed always the wisest of emperors and best of popes. As soon as his controlling hand was removed unexpected dangers assailed his work.

In less than fifty years from his coronation, his three grandsons had quarrelled and torn the empire into as many parts, the elder retaining the imperial title. This event, 841 of our era, marks the beginning of France and Germany as distinct nationalities; hence it is that both nations claim Charlemagne, whereas he belongs to the French just as Queen Elizabeth does to Americans.

In forecasting his plans of empire, it is not probable that danger of conflict between the spiritual and temporal heads ever occurred to Charlemagne. But that is precisely what happened. Even this astute, far-seeing man did not suspect the nature of the power with which he formed this close alliance. His plan of government made the pope distinctly the creation of the emperor. His creature, and hence subordinate. But there was a tremendous principle of growth in that spiritual centre!

The first five hundred years after Christ the pope had been simply Bishop of Rome. In the next five hundred years he was nominal head of the whole Church. As the Church was entering upon its third five-hundred-year lease, in the year 1073, the fiery monk Hildebrand, who had now become Pope Gregory VII., determined it should be supreme in authority over all other powers—a religious empire, existing by Divine right, independent of the fate of nations or will of kings and emperors. Henry IV., who was then emperor, indignant at these insolent pretensions, deposed the pope—this creature of his own appointing, who would override the authority of the power which had created him!

The pope excommunicated the emperor. Each had done his worst, pope and emperor; and had Henry stood his ground as he might, for he would have had ample support from his people, it would have been a gain of centuries for Europe. But—the ban of excommunication, with its

attendant horrors here, and still worse hereafter—it was more than he could bear. Affrighted, trembling, penitent, he crossed the Alps in dead of winter, crept to the castle of Canossa, near Parma, where Hildebrand had taken refuge; and there this successor to Charlemagne, this ruler of all Christendom, standing barefoot and clad in sackcloth shirt, humbly begged admittance. The pope's triumph was complete. So he let him shiver for three days in cold and rain before he opened the gates and gave him forgiveness and the kiss of peace.

The Church had never scored so tremendous a victory. She was supreme over every earthly authority, and the hands on the face of time were set back for centuries. Let Guelph and Ghibelline (the two political parties representing the adherents of the pope and the emperor) storm and struggle as they might, she need never more be afraid of overstepping any humanly constituted bounds.

And it was to be no empty panoply of power. The strong hand of priestly authority must have its hold on every human conscience and will.

She sat and watched complacently as her children drove back the infidel Saracens, conscious of her own growing strength, and that she was becoming still stronger as those three tidal waves of religious frenzy swept over Europe into the Holy Land.

There was no question of supremacy now between temporal and spiritual heads. All the lines of power—all the threads of human destiny—led to Rome, and were found at last in the papal hand.

But these were halcyon days. There was a cloud already on the horizon, the size of a man's hand, and that hand was—Wickliffe's—the hand which had torn the veil of mystery from the Bible by translating it into the speech of the common people, the hand which had written words inciting rebellion against church authority.

The clouds grew larger and darker when printing came, disseminating the new heresies. The Bible was broadcast in the hands of the people, who began to manifest a dangerous tendency to think!

The whole enginery of thumbscrew, rack, and stake was set to work. Tender human flesh shrinks from burning, lacerating, and torture, so the griefs, longings, and aspirations of thousands of hearts flowed in streams deep down below the surface, coming to light here and there for brief moments among the followers of Huss, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, only to be driven back again into silence and despair.

CHAPTER VII.

In the early part of the sixteenth century the fate of Europe was in the hands of three men—Charles V., Emperor of Germany; Francis I., King of France, and Henry VIII., King of England.

Charles was half Fleming and half Spaniard, with the grasping acquisitiveness of the one nation, and the proud, fanatical cruelty of the other. Small of stature, plain in feature, sedate, quiet, crafty, he was playing a desperate game with Francis I. for supremacy in Europe.

Francis, handsome as an Apollo, accomplished, fascinating, profligate, was fully his match in ambition. Covering his worst qualities with a gorgeous mantle of generosity and chivalrous sense of honor, he was the insidious corrupter of morals in France; creating a sentiment which laughed at virtue and innocence as qualities belonging to a lower class of society.

Each of these men was striving to enlist Henry VIII. upon his side, by appealing to the cruel caprices of that vain, ostentatious, arrogant king, who in turn tried to use them for the furthering of his own desires and purposes.

It was a sort of triangular game between the three monarchs—a game full of finesse and far-reaching designs. If Charles attacked Francis, Henry attacked Charles. While the astute Charles, knowing well the desire of the English king to repudiate Katharine and make Anne Boleyn his queen, whispered seductive promises of the papal chair to Wolsey, who was in turn to establish his own influence over his royal master by bringing about the marriage with Anne, upon which the king's heart was set, and then be rewarded by securing Henry's promise of neutrality for Charles, in his designs of over-reaching Francis—and after that, the road to Rome for the aspiring cardinal would be a straight one!

It was an intricate diplomatic net-work, in which the thread of Henry's desire for the fair Anne was mingled with Wolsey's desire for preferment, and both interlaced with the ambitious, far-reaching purposes of the other two monarchs.

All these events were very absorbing, and while they were splendidly gilding the surface of

Europe in the first half of the sixteenth century, it seemed a small matter that an obscure monk was denouncing the pope and defying the power of the Catholic Church. Little did Charles suspect that when his victories and edicts were forgotten, the words of the insolent heretic would still be echoing down the ages.

A few years later, and the Apollo-like beauty and false heart of Francis I. were dissolving in the grave—Henry VIII. had gone to another world, to meet his reward—and his wives—and Charles V. was sadly counting his beads in the monastery of St. Jerome, at Yuste, reflecting upon the vanity of human ambitions—but the murmur of protest from the unknown monk had become a roar—the rivulet had swollen into a threatening torrent. As it is the invisible forces that are the most powerful in nature, so it is the obscure and least observed events that have accomplished the most tremendous revolutions in human affairs.

In the year 1517, when it had not yet occurred to Henry's sensitive conscience that his marriage with Katharine, his brother's widow, was illegal, and while Charles V., that sedate young man, who "looked so modest, and soared so high," was revolving plans for the extension of his empire, Pope Leo X., the pious Vicar of Christ upon earth, and elegant patron of Michael Angelo and Raphael, found his income all too small for his magnificent tastes. It does not seem to have occurred to him that his tastes were too costly for his income; he simply recognized that something must be done, and at once, to fill his empty purse. But what should it be? A simple and ingenious expedient solved the perplexing problem. He would issue a proclamation to his "loving, faithful children," that he would grant absolution for all sorts of crimes, the prices graduated to suit the enormity of the offence. We have not seen the proclamation, but doubt not it was in most caressing Latin, for can anything exceed the velvety softness of the gloves worn on the hands which sign papal decrees?

Simple lying and slander were cheap; perjury and sins against chastity more costly; while the use of the stiletto, of poison, and the hired assassin could be enjoyed only by the richest. It worked well. In the hopeful words of a pious dignitary, "as soon as the money chinks in the coffer, the soul springs out of purgatory." Who could resist such promise? Money flowed in swollen streams into the thirsty coffers, many even paying in advance for crimes they intended to commit!

Martin Luther was the one man who dared to stand up and denounce this tax upon crime, this papal trade in vice. The people had at last found a voice and a leader.

Protestantism sprang into existence without the slow process of growth. It had long been maturing in silence and darkness, and at the trumpet tones of Luther, declared itself a power upon the earth. Here was a revolt beyond the reach of thumbscrew and stake! You could not burn a million people!

CHAPTER VIII.

The Church gathered herself for one supreme effort to stem this fatal tide, which was loosening her foundations.

Just one hundred years from the birth of Protestantism, pope and emperor, putting their spiritual and temporal heads together, planned a crusade against twenty-five million Protestants.

The desultory war against the new heresy had been ineffectual. As it was stamped out in one place, it blazed up afresh in others. Now it should be, at whatever cost, exterminated in the German Empire.

Thus was initiated what is known as the "Thirty Years' War," the most desolating in history. Generations came and went while it raged fierce and furious—eight million slain, and twelve million surviving to meet horrors worse than death. Cattle exterminated, food exhausted, the uncultivated fields drenched with blood and tears—a vast graveyard, in which were the mouldering corpses of eight million slaughtered people, one-third of the population of the empire! Earth was kneaded into bread; men found dead with their mouths filled with grass; and there are frightful stories of human beings hunted down, like deer, for food.

The spirit of the people was broken. Germany had been set back two hundred years. And for what? Not to accomplish any high purpose, not even from mistaken Christian zeal, but simply to carry out the despotic resolve of the Catholic Church to rule the minds and consciences of all men through its popes and priesthood. It was the old battle commenced six centuries before. Had Henry not gone to Canossa in 1073, there had been no Thirty Years' War in 1618!

The empire of Charlemagne virtually perished during this struggle, the Hapsburgs wearing its empty ornaments and trappings for a couple of centuries more, imaginary rulers of an imaginary empire, the reality and substance of which had departed.

There was a flickering of the dying splendor when Maria Theresa was empress (mother of the unfortunate Marie Antoinette), and impressed her own strong, brilliant personality upon her empire and age—an age rendered memorable also by the great Frederick, who brought Prussia from obscurity to be ranked with the great powers, and thus rekindled national pride and renewed the hopes of Germany.

CHAPTER IX.

When the nineteenth century dawned, a new and striking figure had appeared in Europe. Napoleon Bonaparte had arisen with a bound from obscurity in Corsica to supreme authority in France, and with audacious display of power wielded by genius, hurled his battalions across the face of Europe.

He seemed the embodiment of some new and irresistible force. Kingdoms melted before him, and kings and princes vied with each other in doing his bidding quickly, as he tore down old political divisions, and, as it were, etched a new map of Europe with his sword; distributing thrones as boys do marbles, until there was not an uncrowned head in his own or his wife's family, or scarcely among his intimate friends. He made his brother Joseph king of Spain; Bernadotte, his friend, king of Sweden; Murat, his brother-in-law, king of Naples. Created the kingdom of Holland and gave it to his brother Louis; and another kingdom of Westphalia, which he gave to his brother Jerome. Appointed Eugene Beauharnais, his stepson, viceroy of Italy. Married Hortense, his step-daughter, to Louis, King of Holland; and Stephanie, Empress Josephine's niece, to the Grand Duke of Baden.

It will be observed that when there were not enough thrones to go around, he simply created a kingdom! Certainly, with all his faults, no one can accuse him of not having provided well for his family!

At a touch from this Man of Destiny, the shadowy fabric of the German Empire crumbled to dust. Just one thousand years from the crowning of its first emperor Charlemagne, its last, Francis II., laid down his arms and his sceptre before Napoleon, and with them the proud title of "Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire," assumed on that Christmas day, in the Cathedral of St. Peter's, in the year 800.

When Napoleon married Marie Louise, daughter of this deposed monarch who had occupied the throne of the Cæsars, his dream of universal empire seemed realized. The continent of Europe was actually under his feet. History had only twice before witnessed such a display of power, and contained only three men as colossal in triumphs—Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and Charlemagne.

But it was the mantle of these last two that he felt he was destined to wear, the glittering pinnacles of the great Roman Empire being ever before his romantic ambition. Hence, when the longed-for son was born he called him King of Rome. And why should he not? Was not his mother daughter of a line of emperors leading back to Charlemagne, first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire?

But with the first reverse, this artificially created empire trembled upon its foundations, and upon his defeat at Waterloo, 1815, one thousand years from the death of Charlemagne, the whole fabric fell apart into fragments. The crowns rolled off the heads of Joseph, Jerome, Louis, and the rest of them. The magical creation passed away like a vision of the night.

Europe rallied from the spell which this Corsican magician had thrown over her, and while he lay chained to the rock at St. Helena, the vulture of regret eating his heart away, Metternich, prime minister of Austria, was restoring order to Germany.

A confederation of states was formed, with Austria as its chief, each to be represented at a general Diet, held at Frankfort; and for fifty years such was the condition of Germany. Prussia, fallen from her high position under Frederick the Great, sinking lower and lower in the scale of nations, dominated by Austria, powerless to resent insult, her people helpless and hopeless, looking only to final disintegration and absorption into the powerful states about her.

CHAPTER X.

We have now reached a period with which readers of to-day have more or less personal

familiarity. This hour of deep depression in Germany was the one which comes before the dawn.

The Schleswig-Holstein episode was a complicated, tiresome tangle, even while it was enacting, and now is to most people only another name for a rusty German key with which Pandora's box was opened for Europe just twenty-five years ago. But it was a pivotal incident, and must be understood in order to make clear the rapid succession of events following, of which it was the first link in the chain.

The two adjacent dukedoms of Schleswig and Holstein, which constitute a sort of natural bridge about one hundred and fifty miles long and fifty miles wide, between Denmark and Prussia, are, by the way, the land of nativity for the Anglo-Saxon race, the Angles having inhabited Schleswig, and the Saxons Holstein, at the time they so kindly protected the Britons from the Picts and Scots!

So it is probable that every member of this Anglo-Saxon family has ancestral roots running back to that fertile strip of pasture land, which was geographically and, at a later day, historically so important.

At the time we are now considering, it had for many years been under the Danish protectorate, the King of Denmark being, by virtue of his position, also Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, just as the German Emperor is now King of Prussia by virtue of his imperial office.

But this little people were by no means merged with the Danish by this arrangement; on the contrary, they preserved very jealously their own traits and ancestral traditions. Among these, was the exclusion of women from the royal succession—the Salic law, framed by their Frank ancestors centuries before on the banks of the river Saale, being part of their constitution. Hence, when King Frederick VII. of Denmark died in 1862 without male heir, and King Christian IX. became king, the people of the two dukedoms hotly refused to recognize him as their lawful ruler, but claimed their right of reversion to Duke Frederick VIII., who was in the direct male line of succession.

Had the Salic law prevailed in Denmark, this Duke Frederick (father of the present young Empress of Germany) would now (1890) be King of Denmark instead of Christian IX. But it did not exist, so Christian, father of the Empress of Russia—of the Princess of Wales—and of King George of Greece—became, in 1862, lawful King of Denmark, with rights unimpaired by female descent.

This was the beginning of changes destined to alter the face of Europe.

Schleswig-Holstein revolted against being held by a ruler who, according to her constitution, was not the terminal of the royal line, and insisted upon bestowing herself upon the German Duke Frederick VIII. Denmark naturally resisted this *anti-Christian* revolt. Salic law or no Salic law, the dukedoms were hers, and should stay. And, indeed, they were a charming pastoral possession, a morsel which must have sorely tempted the German appetite to be invited to take. But in those days Prussia's big brother, Austria, had not alone to be consulted, but placated. This was the more bitter because of having once tasted the sweets of national greatness under Frederick; and now even little Denmark dare defy and insult her! And was not this crown, which King William had received from his dead brother in 1857, but a badge of brilliant servitude, after all, to Francis Joseph, who was his chief?

However, in this instance the big brother, for reasons of his own, thought well of the cession of the twin dukedoms to Prussia, and they would have been quickly absorbed into the German "*Diet*" had not the Great Powers (who since the Napoleonic episode had been very alert in such matters) grimly said, "Hands off!"

It was just at this crisis, in 1862, that Bismarck, having been appointed to the office of Prime Minister of Prussia, came from the courts of St. Petersburg and Paris, where he had been ambassador, and commenced his series of brilliant games upon the European chess-board.

King Christian of Denmark, pleased with his success in retaining the refractory states, determined to go still farther; that is, to adopt a new constitution separating these Siamese twins, which should, in fact, detach Schleswig from Holstein, incorporating it permanently with Denmark.

This was in direct violation of the treaty with the Great Powers made in London, 1852, and afforded the needed pretext for war.

The moment and the man had arrived. Bismarck, with the intuition of a good player, saw his opportunity, pushed up the pawn, Schleswig-Holstein, and said, "Check to your king."

The Prussian and Austrian troops poured into Denmark, and in a few short weeks the blooming isthmus had ceased to be Danish, and had become German.

Austria generously said, "We will divide the prize. Schleswig shall be Prussian, and Holstein Austrian."

Could anything be more odious to the Prussian? The long arm of Austrian tyranny stretching

way over their land, up to their northern seaboard! It might almost better have become Danish. But "all things come to him who waits," and—Bismarck waited.

In the diplomatic adjustments which followed it was an easy matter to quarrel over the prize, and once more the needed pretext was at hand. Bismarck again pushed up his useful little pawn, and said "check," but this time to the Emperor of Austria. Ah! here was a game worth watching. Europe and America, too, were willing to let their morning coffee get cold in studying the moves. Francis Joseph did not see as far into the game as his astute adversary, whose keen eye was focused at long range upon a renewed and consolidated Germany.

The conflict was short (only seven weeks), but the preparation had been long and thorough. The 3d of July will long be remembered by Germany. King William was there; the Crown Prince was there, now become "Unser Fritz" by his superb military achievements, the ideal prince and soldier of modern Europe; and Königgrätz, like Waterloo, decided the game. Francis Joseph was checkmated. Germany was the head of its own nation. Its servitude to Austria existed no more. What wonder that the people were glad, or that Unser Fritz became their idol, and Bismarck their demigod!

The dismembered parts were soon, under a new constitution, consolidated into a national union, which was Protestant and Prussian, and forever separated from all that was Catholic and Austrian. In five short years what a change! Truly, blood and iron had proved a wonderful tonic!

And what of poor little Schleswig-Holstein, that land of our race nativity? If she had indulged in any innocent expectation of benefit from such brilliant espousal of her cause, such hope must have been rudely dispelled when she found herself between these upper and nether millstones, and she must have realized that she had been only the humble hinge upon which the door of opportunity had swung open for Germany.

CHAPTER XI.

The rest can be briefly told. Napoleon III., in brand new splendor, was watching these events from Paris. He had an uncomfortable sense that everything was too new and fine. There is nothing like the smoke of the battlefield to simulate the delightfully mellow tone which, in its finest perfection, comes only from age.

To humiliate this newly reconstructed Germany would give just the needed touch to his prestige, and as no slightest pretext for war could be found, one was made to order, in the shape of a pretended affront to the French ambassador by the kindly old King William, while peacefully sunning himself at Ems.

The question at issue was of the candidature of a Hohenzollern to the vacant throne of Spain. Finding this was unpopular, the name was promptly withdrawn by Prussia, and there the incident would naturally have ended. But Bernadetti, French ambassador to Germany, had instructions to press the matter offensively upon the king, who, recognizing an intended impertinence, turned on his heel and left him.

The telegraph swiftly bore the news that the ambassador had been publicly insulted by the King of Prussia. The French heart was industriously fired, and the leaven worked well. The insolent Germans must be taught that the great French Empire was not to be insulted with impunity. Did not the beautiful empress herself buckle the sword upon the emperor, and even upon the boy Prince Imperial, who should go and witness for himself his father's triumphs, and receive an object lesson, as it were, in avenging insult to the imperial dignity, which would one day be in his keeping?

The miserable end came quickly!

In less than one month the emperor was a prisoner, and in seven months his empire was swept out of existence; the Germans were in Paris—and King William, Unser Fritz, Bismarck, and Von Moltke were quartered at Versailles.

Here it was that the dramatic climax was reached when King Ludwig II. of Bavaria, in the name of the rest of the German States, laid their united allegiance at the feet of King William of Prussia, as the head of the German Empire, begging him to assume the crown of Charlemagne, which should be hereditary in his family! Poor, mad suicide though he was, for this act Ludwig's memory should be forever enshrined in the German heart, for he certainly first suggested, and then carried to completion, this splendid consummation, apparently indifferent to the fact that his own kingly dignity would be abridged. Adoring the picturesque and dramatic as he did, perhaps it seemed to this royal spendthrift not too much to pay a kingdom for the privilege of acting in one scene so imposing and dramatic!

So, in January, 1871, in the Hall of Mirrors in the palace of Versailles, King William assumed

the title of "Emperor of Germany"—a Germany richer by two French provinces and an enormous indemnity from the conquered state; great in prestige and under the best of emperors and greatest of prime ministers, augmenting hourly in all that constitutes power in a state. In less than one decade—not yet ten years from Bismarck's return to Berlin—a new Germany had arisen from the fragments of the old, a Germany so great and powerful she was likely to forget the degradation and humiliation of only a quarter of a century ago.

CHAPTER XII.

When that kingly old man, Emperor William, sank at last under the weight of years, the crown so brilliantly won at Versailles in 1871 rested on the head of Unser Fritz—no longer in the flush of victorious youth, but a poor, stricken man. The tardy honors had come too late. In vain he struggled against the inevitable, striving to inaugurate the beneficent policy which had been the dream of his life. Unhappy Frederick! His death-chamber seemed the playground for every hateful human passion, and the Furies to have made it their abode, as his unfulfilled life slipped away from his loosening grasp! At last it was ended. The untarnished soul and the tortured body parted company, and William II. reigned in his stead.

The sensibilities of the world had been shocked by the unfilial conduct of this youth, and it was with little respect that he was seen restlessly flitting from one court to another, displaying his imperial trappings like a child with new toys. People laughed to think they had ever been afraid of this aimless boy. Upon one point only was he relentless. Man or newspaper breathing faintest whisper of praise for the dead Frederick came swift under the political guillotine! Did he wish to efface his father's memory from the hearts of his people? Would he really, if he could, tear that brief, sad chapter from his nation's history? It seemed so. Europe watched him much as one does a headlong boy, who, with the confidence born of vanity and ignorance, plays with deadly weapons, and imperils his own and his neighbors' safety. The peace of the continent lay more than ever in the hand of Bismarck, who alone had power to restrain this dangerous young ruler.

But when William II. posed as the friend of the workingman and ally of the socialist, the absurdity and the unexpectedness were amusing. What did he care for industrial problems and the condition of the laboring classes? The idea uppermost in his restless brain was that he was a predestined hero, not fitted for the *rôle* of a Merovingian king, with a *maire du palais*. He would be the artificer of his own policy, and be enrolled among the great sovereigns of history.

There were rumors of dissension with his chancellor, whom finally he removed, and said practically, "*l'etat, c'est moi.*" There was nothing now to restrain his restless vagaries, and a catastrophe seemed at hand.

This is the way it looked a few months ago. But writing current history is much like drawing pictures upon the sand, which the incoming tide effaces.

The man who had long held the destinies of Europe in his hand sat in the retirement of Schönhausen, complacently smoking and waiting for the catastrophe, and the recall which would surely come. But he was not needed. Was the *Zeit Geist* penetrating the iron-encrusted empire? William had forgotten his toys and was inaugurating reforms—industrial, educational, social, which touched the lowest stratum of his people.

We cannot yet forget those visits to San Remo, the cruel intriguing over his father's death-bed; but greatness lies in the path he has taken. His intelligence, quicker than his sympathies, sees, perhaps, that the forces of the future are industrial, not militant. His hand has grown less nervous, but steadier in its grasp, more human in its touch. The figure is filling out in stronger lines, with unexpected promise that it may become heroic.

He was not a pleasant youth, not a nice boy; but we can forgive much to a sovereign who desires to bring about a general disarmament of Europe! The early chapters of his biography will never be pleasant reading, but we will not linger over them if the concluding ones tell of a Germany brought into line with the world's highest and best development.

Europe to-day is like a field closely packed with explosives, with a plentiful sprinkling throughout the mass of that giant powder, nihilism. People step carefully, lest they jar the hostile elements, and "let loose the dogs of war." The slightest change in position of the little package marked Bulgaria, and it may be too late.

This province, which ten or twelve years ago was set up by the Great Powers with an autonomy of its own, lying athwart the coveted pathway to the Mediterranean, has, like Schleswig-Holstein, greatness thrust upon it. The plaything of diplomacy, with only a semblance of self-government, its *rôle* in European politics is both tragic and comic. Its king must await not alone confirmation by Turkey, but ratification by the Great Powers, and little care they who

ascends its slippery little throne, except as he will further or obstruct the private political ends of each; and Russia, thinking only of expansion toward the sea, is especially paternal toward the forlorn little state.

While this diplomatic game is enacting, there is a pause. Is it the hush which precedes the storm?

All eyes are fixed upon the Russian bear, cautiously and stealthily prowling toward the south and east.—Austria hungrily watches the Balkan provinces, over which the paw of the bear already hovers.—Italy, with hate and suspicion, has eyes riveted upon her hereditary enemy, Austria.—France, never for a moment forgetting Alsace and Lorraine, watches her opportunity with Germany, and draws into closer affinity with Russia—England, with gaze fixed upon an open pathway to India, suspects them all—and Germany, conscious that disaster is always imminent while the French thirst for revenge, and the Russian thirst for the waters of the Mediterranean are unabated, strengthens her defences and sleeps with hand upon her sword.

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