

his master-stroke, and yet another was on the point of falling.

HIS KEEN SIGHT.

On the day of Königgrätz, the tall Landwehr Major passed many hours by the side of the King, riding to and fro between Dub and Sadowa. At midday the Prussians were putting forth all their strength, and with anxious hearts the army leaders were awaiting the arrival of the Crown Prince's army. Under his spiked helmet, Bismarck's eagle eye was piercing the distance, when suddenly he observed certain lines on the far horizon. "They are the furrows of ploughed fields," was said by those around him. Another anxious silence prevailed for a little time, and Bismarck's eye resumed its searching investigation. "Those are no plough-furrows," at last he exclaims; "the intervals between are not regular; they are lines of troops on the march." And sure enough his was the first eye to spy the advance of the second army—the Crown Prince was there!

SLEEPING "WHERE THE COWS HAD BEEN."

Bismarck is fond of narrating the straits he was put to, to find a sleeping berth on the night following the battle of Königgrätz. He first "put up" on a carriage-cushion laid on the pavement in the street at Hoic, without straw or anything else. Every

house was filled with wounded. The Duke of Mecklenburg found him there, and took him with him to share half his room,—a very timely rescue, as it soon came on to rain. On telling the story at table one day, Bismarck said :—"I could have done without a pillow very well if only I had had a little clean straw. But all the straw had been used up for horses' fodder, and had become a rare and costly article. The dilapidated cushion I had got hold of was thick in the middle and thin at the sides, and much too short, and I get a pain in the loins every time I think of it. Once I had to camp in the open market, in a frightful Bohemian den with an unpronounceable name. I managed to get a hard sofa for the King, on which I left him tolerably comfortable. The streets were dark, and all the houses shut. I knocked at half-a-dozen doors, and banged at a dozen windows, but not a soul stirred. Presently, through a narrow gateway, I came to an unpaved yard, and advancing in the dark the ground failed from beneath my feet, and I found myself reposing on a dung-heap. I could not complain that my couch was hard, but I couldn't get accustomed to the perfume. So I jumped up, and got back into the street, and eventually into the market-place. There were pillars standing round—whether Ionic, or Doric, or Bohemian, or what not, I cannot say: but the latter most likely. However, I thought to myself, here at any rate is a roof over my head; so I

stretched myself on the naked flag-stones. I soon felt certain signs which proved that cattle must have been stalled on that very spot not many hours before. However I would not stir again, as I felt no desire for further wanderings. I was completely fagged out, and was soon as fast asleep as a mole. And yet this was not the worst 'shake-down' I met with in Bohemia. The most uncomfortable one I had was a child's cot." "A child's cot!" exclaimed one of the guests; "the Prime Minister of Prussia in a child's cot! But how could you get into it, Count?" "Oh, that was simple enough! I doubled myself up like a pocket-knife!"

HIS LAST CIGAR.

At the battle of Königgrätz he only had a single cigar left in his case, and he treasured this up the whole day as a miser does his hoard, and feasted himself with the bliss in store for him when, the battle over, he would be able to smoke it in peace and quietness. But he was robbed of the pleasure he so anxiously looked forward to, and how this was done we will let him say in his own words:—"It was a poor dragoon who deprived me of this jealously-guarded treasure. The poor fellow was lying with both legs crushed, moaning, and begging for some refreshment. I felt in all my pockets, but there was nothing in them but gold, and what good was that to him in his extremity? But stay, I had

one long-cherished cigar. I lit it up, and placed it between the wounded soldier's lips. You should have seen the poor fellow's look of gratitude! And never did a cigar taste so sweet to me as this one—which I did *not* smoke."

THREE ON A STRAW BED.

But Bismarck was sometimes put to great shifts also during the war with France. After the battle near Mars la Tour, for instance, all the houses were filled with wounded for two or three miles around. All the baggage had been left behind at Pont-à-Mousson, and it was a difficult matter to find a bivouac at Vionville for the King himself. At last a garret was found in which stood a camp bed, a chair, and a table. On taking possession of these quarters the King inquired: "And where are Moltke and Bismarck?" "They have found no lodging yet," was the adjutant's reply. "Then let them come and camp here with me," continued the King, laughing; "the camp bed can be taken away, and let some straw be brought, and a blanket or two; that will do for all three of us." And so it was arranged. The three greatest men of Prussia passed that rainy night in a garret with a truss of straw for a bed.

A STRANGE KING'S BENCH.

It was a strange "King's Bench" on which King William and Count Bismarck were sitting on the

evening of the day on which the severe engagement near Gravelotte was fought. They were waiting to hear how the day had gone. The bench consisted of a ladder, one end of which was resting upon a tottering barrel and the other on a dead French cavalry horse. Close at hand a cloth-mill was burning, and lit up the neighbourhood with its weird light. Suddenly Moltke gallops up: "Your Majesty, the victory is ours!" The King looked up with a grateful glance, but his face was sad and earnest, for he was thinking of the thousands that must have fallen that day, and of the coming grief of their wives and families. Meantime some of the escort had called up a passing sutler, and the exalted personages filled their flasks with his red wine of doubtful quality. The King drank his out of a footless glass, while Bismarck tried his teeth upon a crust of hard regulation bread. That night the King made shift at Rezonville, his bed consisting of two carriage cushions and a cloak.

AN INTERCEPTED LETTER.

On September 3rd, 1870 (after Sedan) Bismarck wrote a letter from Vendresse to his wife, which never reached its destination, as that day's mail to Germany was captured by *franc-tireurs*, and this letter, which was singled out from all the rest, was afterwards published in a French paper. It ran as follows:—

' MY DEAREST HEART!

"I left my quarters here the day before yesterday morning at daybreak, and returned to-day, having in the meantime assisted at the great battle of Sedan, in which we made thirty thousand prisoners, and drove the remainder of the French army (which we had followed up from Bar-le-Duc) into the town, where, with the Emperor, they had to surrender as prisoners of war. At five o'clock yesterday morning, after having been up till one o'clock in negotiation with Moltke and the French generals respecting the terms of capitulation, General Reille (whom I know) awoke me to say that Napoleon wished to speak to me. Without breakfast, and without even waiting for my morning ablutions, I rode towards Sedan, and found the Emperor in an open carriage, with three adjutants also in the carriage, and three others on horseback. I dismounted, greeted him with the same courtesy as I did in the Tuileries, and inquired what his pleasure was. He said he wished to see the King, and I replied with perfect truth that his Majesty was three miles away, at the place I am now writing from, where he had his quarters. On Napoleon asking where he had better go to, and as I was not acquainted with the neighbourhood, I suggested Donchéry, a village close by Sedan; he adopted my suggestion, and, accompanied by his six officers, by myself, and Carl (who in the meantime had followed

me on horseback), he drove away in the misty morning. On the journey he seemed to shrink from the idea of possibly meeting with a crowd of people, and he asked me whether he could not alight at a lonely workman's cottage which stood by the roadside. I sent Carl to see what it was like, and he returned with the report that the place was poverty-stricken and dirty. '*N'importe,*' said Napoleon, and presently I was ascending with him a rickety narrow staircase. It led to a room about ten feet square, containing a deal table and two rush-bottomed chairs, and there we sat for an hour, the others remaining below. What a contrast was this with our last meeting in '67 at the Tuileries! Our conversation was difficult and halting, as I wished to avoid any subject which might wound the already heavily-stricken man. I had despatched Carl back to the town to fetch some officers, and to beg Moltke to come. When they arrived we sent one of the officers to reconnoitre the neighbourhood, and about half a mile away, at Fresnois, a château with a little park was found. I accompanied Napoleon thither, with an escort of cuirassiers which had in the meantime arrived; and there with General Wimpffen we settled the terms of capitulation, according to which from forty to sixty thousand Frenchmen—I can give no nearer estimate—with all their belongings gave themselves up as prisoners. Yesterday and the day previous, therefore, have cost

France a hundred thousand men and an Emperor. To-day the latter, with all his attendants, horses, and carriages, have started for Wilhelmshöhe near Cassel. This is a great historical event—a victory for which we must humbly give God the glory, and which ends the war, even if we have to carry it further against the country deprived of its leader. But I must conclude. I was pleased to see, by the letters received from yourself and Maria to-day, that Herbert had arrived home. I spoke to Bill [his son Wilhelm] yesterday, as I have already told you by telegraph, and embraced him in view of his Majesty, I being on horseback, and he standing up straight on his feet. He is very well and happy.

"Good-bye, darling. Kiss the children for me.

"Ever your

"VON B."

"A LIGHT, PLEASE!"

On the 1st of March, 1871, when the German troops marched into Paris, Bismarck paid a visit to the French capital. He was dressed in his well-known cuirassier's tunic, and rode along the highway at a footpace. On speaking of this visit afterwards, he said:—"The people gathered about the entrance into the city must have recognized me, for they gazed at me with dark and threatening looks, especially the men. But I knew the folk I had to deal with. I rode straight up to one of the

men, whose looks were darker and more threatening than those of his comrades, drew a cigar from my case and politely asked him for a light. The man, in the humblest fashion, immediately handed me a short clay pipe he was smoking, and I calmly lit my cigar and rode on as far as the Arc de Triomphe, and then returned by the same way."

A FRENCH GENERAL'S OPINION OF BISMARCK.

The French General de Wimpffen published a book in 1871, entitled *Sedan*, in which he gives the following opinion of Bismarck:—"His speech is fluent and elegant, even in foreign languages. Every word he says appears to be chosen with the greatest care, as the best fitted to attain the end he is striving for. The Count, whom I have met on two very important occasions, seems to me the most seductive and the most dangerous man that one could find himself opposed to. As inflexible as General von Moltke himself, he knows when to appear obliging and when to be reserved—to show himself propitiable, or stiff and unyielding—to raise hopes or drive to despair, and according to the results which follow he guesses at everything that he desires to learn from his antagonist. And added to all this, he possesses a dauntlessness which is astonished at nothing and shrinks from nothing, and which suddenly points out to him without cir-

cumlocution the way of obtaining his desired end, as soon as his far-seeing mind can perceive and measure the means whereby the object is to be gained."

HOW BISMARCK TAMED THIERS.

After the capitulation of Paris (January 28th, 1871) nearly a month passed before the peace preliminaries were agreed upon, and the signing of the conditions did not take place until Bismarck had listened to mighty floods of eloquence from "the little old man," Thiers, who conducted the negotiations on the French side. The little man, in his excitement, often appeared ready to jump out of his skin. To stop his swelling tide of words, Bismarck one day had recourse to an expedient which proved entirely successful. The discussion was proceeding in French, and the question was the amount of the war indemnity. When Thiers heard the words "Five milliards" he sprang up in a passion from his chair and exclaimed in French, "It is a scandalous robbery; a base and mean advantage!" "I regret," remarked Bismarck, "that I don't quite catch the meaning of those words" [of course he understood them quite well], "and I see that I am not so well acquainted with French as I thought I was. From this moment, therefore, we shall have to talk in German, and I really don't know why we have not done so all along." Count Bismarck then continued

the conversation in German, and M. Thiers saw himself compelled to do the same; but the use of this language was such a difficult matter for him that his wrath soon cooled down, as he could not find words fast enough to express it. He soon became quite meek and yielding, and was so disposed to make concessions that Bismarck said at last, with a smile: "On this basis, then, I am ready to resume the negotiations in the French tongue."

REST AT VARZIN.

When he could escape the toils of office, Bismarck loved to run down to Varzin to enjoy a little peace and quiet, but he found it difficult even here to protect himself from importunate visitors and correspondents. He gave instructions that letters addressed to him there should be returned unopened to Berlin. For their name was legion, and numerous were the manœuvres to which the writers had recourse to induce or to force the Chancellor to open and read them. One would write on the envelope: "Not to be opened by any other person." Another would write: "Very important. Only to be read by yourself." In one single year the Varzin postmaster says that as many as 6,500 letters and 10,000 telegrams passed through his hands for Prince Bismarck. During one of his stays at Varzin the amount of contributions solicited from him for one

thing and the other totalled up to a million and a half of thalers. It was just the same with importunate visitors. In order to escape from such, the Prince had a secret doorway made (his "sally-port" he called it), behind which was a winding staircase which led no one knew whither. "Once a visitor came," relates the Prince, "who sent me in word that if I would not receive him he would immediately go and hang himself. I sent him back a reply that if he had thoroughly made up his mind about it, I would have the newest and strongest rope on the premises supplied to him; but he didn't press for its delivery. He went away at last, and I certainly felt no qualms of conscience at the message I sent him."

A NARROW ESCAPE FOR VARZIN.

One evening in company, Prince Bismarck told the following story:—"Do you know that in 1870 I was within an ace of losing my comfortable country house at Varzin? While we were in France a despatch fell into our hands which contained an order to the commander of the French Baltic squadron to attempt a landing on the coast, send a detachment to surprise my country seat, and burn it down, and raze it to the ground. Dispositions were taken to render an attempt of this kind fruitless, and so the German Empire was perhaps spared the expense of building me a new residence."

THE KULLMANN ATTEMPT.

In the spring of 1874, Bismarck was ill for some time, and he was ordered to Kissingen to drink the waters there. Every day at one o'clock he drove in a Bavarian court equipage from his residence on the right bank of the Saale to the wells, and a crowd of people invariably collected to see him drive away. On the day when the German Emperor was to meet the King of Bavaria, as he passed through Munich (July 13th), there was a greater crowd than ever lining both sides of the road between Prince Bismarck's house and the Saale Bridge, and loud cheers greeted him as he passed. At the moment when the vehicle turned from the carriage-drive into the street, there was suddenly a short pause, brought about by a man in clerical costume, who ran across the road close to the horses' heads, as if to get a better sight of the Prince. At the same moment a mean-looking fellow appeared at the carriage door, and fired a pistol point-blank at Prince Bismarck. The latter had just raised his right hand to his hat in answer to the cheering of the crowd, and the bullet flew between this hand and his temple, and grazed his wrist. Greatly vexed, but not for a moment losing his self-possession, the Prince stepped out of the carriage, and returned on foot to the house amid the frantic cheers of the people. In the meantime the would-be assassin had been seized

and taken to the lock-up, having first narrowly escaped being lynched. After the wound was dressed, the Prince drove in an open carriage with Count Pappenheim to the Court-house where the culprit was confined, and had an interview with him. It transpired that the man was a cooper by trade, by the name of Kullmann, from Neustadt-Magdeburg; that he belonged to the so-called "Catholic Men's Union," and that he had acted under the influence of a fanatical Catholic priest named Störrmann, to whom the ecclesiastical law was a grievance. The wound was not a serious one, and healed up in a few days.

THE REICHSKUND IN THE DARK.

The ex-Chancellor once related the following story:—"I had a strange experience last night. While lying in bed half asleep I suddenly heard a remarkable moaning, whining noise in my close proximity. I got up to strike a light, but my ever-attentive wife had closed the window-shutters in order that no noise from without should disturb me, and the consequence was that I was in total darkness, and couldn't find the matches. The noise soon ceased, however, and I fell asleep. Soon after, the same moaning, complaining voice woke me again, and then I felt a bulky something nestling close to me, and putting its arms around me. I began to feel rather uncomfortable. I put out my

hand, and it came in contact with a ribbon, and clutching it I broke it. The moaning instantly ceased, and the bulky something stole away. It turned out to be the Reichshund. On my birthday I always gave my dog an extra meal, and put a red ribbon round his neck. The faithful creature, on this occasion, had no doubt tried to rid himself of this ribbon, and in doing so had only pulled it tighter. He had, therefore, come to me to ask me to loosen it for him."

BISMARCK'S CONDESCENSION.

In a recent sketch of Prince Bismarck's life, by one of his own countrymen, it is recorded that in private life he was noted for his condescension towards, and affection for, his humble subordinates. He has always been on the most friendly footing with his servants and tenants, and has never been known to deal harshly with them. At Bar-le-Duc, during the French war, he one night cut off a piece of bread from his own loaf and carried it out himself to the famishing sentry standing outside of his quarters on duty; and after the fight near Beaumont he was seen to give drinks of brandy to marauding Bavarian camp-followers from his own field-flask, and to divide the contents of his cigar-case among them. He was a frequent visitor to the wounded in the *lazarettos*, and on one occasion, when a maimed soldier uttered a longing wish for a taste

of apple-marmalade, he promised to send him some and on reaching his own quarters ordered some to be taken to the wounded man.

FRAU BISMARCK'S MODESTY

Prince Bismarck's wife is described as being as modest and unassuming in her demeanour as she is plain and neat in her outward appearance. She has no desire to be looked upon as an "illustrious lady" merely because she has an "illustrious man" for a husband. She knows that a lady's excellence is not to be measured by the degree to which she is talked about, and she will not allow that even the wife of a man who has been an Imperial Chancellor can be any exception to this rule. She does not wish—so it is recorded—to exist for the world at large, but only for her revered and beloved husband. At a dinner some years ago, when one of the guests persisted in addressing her as "Excellency," she interrupted him thus:—"I beg you will not call me 'Excellency,' that is a title which I have a great objection to. There are people who, in their wish to gain some desired end, will fling 'Excellency' at me ten times in a breath, and that has put me out of conceit with the title. I like best to be called 'Frau von Bismarck;' that brings back the sweet remembrance of a quiet, gladsome time when Otto and myself, as simple rural gentry on the banks of the Elbe, in our fine old Schönhausen, had leisure

to live for each other and for our village folks—but now my husband belongs to all the world.” Bismarck was present, and heard his wife thus express her sentiments. “My dear,” he said, “these good old times will come back again, God willing, when we grow old and the world can make no further use of us.” Was there not a touch of prophecy in this?

A PARLIAMENTARY SOIRÉE.

The following is a description of the parliamentary *soirées*, or supper-parties, which Bismarck, while Chancellor, was in the habit of giving:—“It was a sight worth seeing, to witness how the Princess, in her neat but exquisite costume, would walk through the apartments, greeting the guests with natural heartiness, and, in her agreeable chats with each, choosing with admirable tact the subject in which each one felt most interested. Not the slightest trace of conventional phrases or of cold formality, and no sign of pride or superiority in either the lady of the house or her husband. While he, the Prince, has a way of taking hearts by storm, she, the Princess, has a way of gently winning them. He, the German knight and hero, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; she, the German lady, full of grace and amiability. The Prince now invites and encourages his guests to take some solid refreshment from a well-loaded table of comestibles,

or to partake of a draught of foaming beer or sparkling wine. Standing or sitting groups are now soon formed, in which the most famous men in Germany are engaged in lively conversation. No guest, whatever his rank, is overlooked, the Chancellor himself handing full glasses in every direction, accompanied by some friendly words. Now he sits down, and opens a discussion, and a dense circle soon gathers round him; all hang upon his words, and soon it is no longer a discussion, for the Prince gradually gets all the talking to himself, and his speech is always open-hearted and straight to the point. He knows very well that he can say things here to the members of the Reichstag which he cannot utter in open Parliament, and many a subject receives a very different handling on these occasions from that which it received in Parliament. At last, when midnight strikes, and most of the guests have departed, a little knot remains behind, the intimate friends of the family; and they sit for another half-hour in familiar chat and gossip, the Chancellor in the midst of them, contentedly puffing away at his great long pipe. Such occasions as these are never forgotten in a lifetime, and would not be exchanged for untold gold.”

COMPARISON BETWEEN ENGLAND AND PRUSSIA.

In a debate in the Landtag respecting the principles upon which the Prussian monarchy was based

Bismarck said:—"A comparison has been drawn between the way in which the English people in 1688, after the banishment of James II., stood up for their own rights, and the way in which the Prussian people are now able to get their rights recognized. Comparisons with foreign nations are always misleading. Russia is dangled before us as a pattern of religious forbearance, and the French and Danish financial systems are recommended to us as patterns of orderly administration. To return to the year 1688, and to the English example—I must beg to direct the attention of honourable members to one fact: At that time the English nation were in a very different position from that of the Prussian people at the present time. Through a century of revolution and civil war it had attained a position in which it had a crown to give away, and with this gift it could exact any conditions it liked, and these the Prince of Orange accepted. On the other hand, the Prussian monarchs owe their position to God's grace and not to the gift of the people; it is a crown not hampered by any conditions; and they have voluntarily ceded to their people certain of their rights—an example which is very rare in history."

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