

politicals lighted their bits of candle and placed them in their windows, and the celebration ended with a faint but perceptible illumination of the great prison quadrangle.

There seems to me to be something profoundly mournful and touching in this attempt of three hundred political offenders to celebrate together, in the loneliness and gloom of a Russian prison, the centennial birthday of a free people. Compared with the banners, the fireworks, the martial music, and the glowing pageantry of triumphant liberty in Philadelphia, the rudely fashioned stars and stripes hung out from grated cell windows, the faint hurrahing and singing of patriotic songs through water-closet pipes, and the few bits of tallow candle, illuminating faintly at night the dark, silent quadrangle of the prison in St. Petersburg, may seem pitifully weak, ineffective, and insignificant; but judged by a spiritual standard, the celebration in the House of Preliminary Detention in the Russian capital of the American Centennial Fourth of July, is an event almost as extraordinary, and to the heart and imagination of a freeman almost as impressive, as the splendid demonstration in Philadelphia. Human actions are not to be judged solely by the scenic effect which they produce, but are also to be regarded as manifestations of human emotion and purpose. When Mary Magdalene anointed the feet of her Lord and Master as an expression of her devotion and love it was a simple thing,

almost a trivial thing, but Christ said, "She hath done what she could." When the Russian revolutionists hung out rude imitations of the star-spangled banner from their cell windows and lighted at night their hoarded bits of candle as an expression of their devotion to liberty and their sympathy with the rejoicings of a freer and happier people, it too was a simple thing, almost a trivial thing, but they did what they could. Some of them were weak from sickness and long solitary confinement; some of them had just come from the voiceless casemates of the Petropavlovsk fortress, where they had lost count of days and months; some of them were living in anticipation of the unknown hardships and privations of Siberia, and upon some of them rested already the dark shadow of the scaffold; but in all their solitude, their loneliness, and their misery they did not forget the Centennial Fourth of July. What little they could do to show their devotion to the cause of freedom and their sympathy with a freedom-loving people on the centennial anniversary of the latter's emancipation, that little they bravely did; and the spirit by which they were animated transfigured their pitiful celebration, with its tricolored rags and its paltry bits of candle, and made it something infinitely more significant in the world's history than all the pomp and ceremony which attend the coronation of a Tsar.

George Kennan.



BISMARCK.

TWO colossal figures stand forth in the history of this century overtopping all their contemporaries, the first Napoleon and Bismarck, both creators of great empires—Napoleon, the first warrior of his time, who welded the revolutionary forces of France into a military machine to satisfy his own imperial ambition in subduing all Europe and making its kings his vassals; Bismarck, the foremost statesman of his time, the political leader of a mili-

tary people, whose strength he called forth to satisfy their yearnings for national unity, their ambition to become once more a great national power. Napoleon's gigantic plans broke down, after a period of amazing military triumphs, because the statesmanship which guided his warlike enterprises lost itself in fantastic conceptions, and, satisfied with no achievement or conquest, exhausted his means in attempting the impossible. Bismarck's statesmanship,



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BISMARCK IN HIS GARDEN.

leaning upon the military strength of his country, directs its efforts to the end of safely maintaining, against the dangers surrounding it, the national power that has been achieved, without striving for anything beyond—and his creation still stands.

In one important respect Bismarck's position is far stronger than Napoleon's ever could be. Napoleon was, and felt himself as, a soldier of fortune. Sprung from low degree, he won his imperial crown by the splendor of his military exploits, and he was constantly disquieted by the consciousness that by new splendors of achievement he had to preserve it. He had to prove the necessity of his remaining at the head of the state from day to day. He had to create exigencies which in the opinion of the people he alone could satisfy. He felt himself obliged to hurry from enterprise to enterprise without end, each to be more dazzling than that which preceded it. Thus there could be no stable condition of things, no repose for him and his people. Bismarck, not a monarch himself, enjoys all the advantage conferred by the historic "legitimacy" of the monarch whom he serves as minister. The hereditary loyalty of the people to the dynasty and their affection for the monarch are an essential part of the minister's power. The two together are not obliged to win popular admiration, and to make good their title to their places, by spectacular effects from day to day. They can stop without impunity. There is no necessity, there is hardly any temptation, for them to follow a policy of adventure and to run new risks for the purpose of maintaining their greatness. They can confine themselves to preserving and fortifying what has been won, and cultivate peace and repose without dangerous loss of prestige.

Yet the question is frequently asked, What will become of the German Empire when the old Kaiser, with his phenomenal popularity, and the old Chancellor, with his phenomenal genius, quit the scene? That question is asked and discussed not without reason. The Kaiser will be followed on the throne by another legitimate "sovereign," who will indeed not inherit the sentimental affection cherished by the people for his predecessor, but who will have the benefit of that hereditary loyalty with which the people regard the reigning dynasty. And so long as Bismarck is chancellor,—that is, so long as he lives, for no new Kaiser will be likely to take the responsibility of displacing him,—things will probably continue to run in the accustomed course. But who or what is there to replace Bismarck when he too disappears?

He is a born commander of men, and as such insists upon accomplishing his objects in his own way. He is a born autocrat, and as such

profoundly convinced that his will must prevail. Those who have to work with him are to him not co-workers, but simply instruments. He employs them so long as they promise to be useful. He throws them aside as soon as their usefulness appears exhausted. He cares little, if anything, for what is commonly called political principle. No doubt he is loyal to his sovereign, but not because he unconditionally believes, as a matter of principle, in the divine right of kings; for while he clings with the utmost devotion to the house of Hohenzollern, which represents the strength of Germany, he did not hesitate to drive princes who were just as "legitimate," but who stood in the way of German unity under Prussian leadership, from their thrones and to confiscate their territories. When the constitution of the empire was made, he favored universal suffrage—not because he believed in the principle that the citizen is entitled to active participation in the government, but because he thought that its establishment would be apt to attach the people to the empire, and that, as he had to submit to some sort of representative institution, universal suffrage, embracing the poor as well as the rich, the ignorant as well as the educated, would be most likely to furnish representatives accessible to his influence. He has been a free-trader and a protectionist—not as if he had seen in either free trade or protection a principle consistently to be recognized and adhered to, but because he looked at different times first upon one and then the other as the system most likely to strengthen the country or to array on his side its political forces.

He has no respect for political parties, his policy being to use them each and all as it may temporarily serve his purposes. Before the war of 1866 he appeared identified with the Absolutists, in order to make preparation for the war which was to drive Austria out of the German federation and begin the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership, and for which the Prussian landtag refused to furnish the means. After that war he appeared to side with the Liberals—not as if he had shared their principles or approved of their ultimate aims, but because he depended upon them for the measures required to strengthen the new national organization. Then he turned to the Conservatives for support, because the Liberals aspired to the introduction of parliamentary government, which he thought would weaken the power of the monarch necessary for the defense of the country.

He was a fierce Anti-Clerical, because he feared the influence of the Catholic clergy as a dangerous element of disintegration in the empire. Then he endeavored to win the friendship of the clergy by abandoning some of the

principal features of the *Kultur Kampf*, and admitted even the friendly interference of the Pope in the elections for the German Reichstag, when he found the continuance of the fight against the Church useless and needed the votes of the clerical party for his military and fiscal measures. Thus he cajoles or rebuffs, attracts or repels, treats as friends or as enemies, each and all political parties in turn as they appear fit or unfit to serve the objects he has in view, trying to form, with each session of the parliament, new combinations of political forces to furnish to the government the necessary majority. The party is, for the time being, that which obeys his will. He accepts the advice only of those who agree with him. To those who differ from him he yields only as much as he must, and then only temporarily, to resume the fight with the same stubborn determination at the next convenient moment until he carries his point. In this manner has Bismarck achieved his great successes.

Such a statesman must needs have certain peculiar advantages to sustain him in power. One of these is a constitutional system which raises him above the control of parliamentary majorities. In this respect Bismarck is situated comfortably enough. As minister of the Prussian crown and as chancellor of the German Empire he is, according to the prevailing constitutional theory, responsible only to the King and Kaiser. His official acts, done in the King's and Kaiser's name, are "government acts" of the sovereign, who is responsible only to God. According to this constitutional system, the parliament may pass or defeat bills, grant or withhold supplies, but it cannot drive a minister out of his place by a direct or implied vote of want of confidence. There is no minister living whose measures have been so often defeated in parliament as Bismarck's have been; but, undisturbed, he holds his post, regarding the adverse vote of a parliamentary majority not as a decision, but merely as an adjournment of the struggle.

Still, all these constitutional advantages would not suffice to secure his position did he not possess another and far more potent element of strength. It is not merely his ability as a debater, which, however, although he is not an orator in the ordinary sense, shines the more brilliantly the more difficult the occasion: it is rather that imposing authority acquired by the greatness of his achievements. It is the immense personality which seems to preside over the destinies of the Old World, and which, standing behind what he says and does, over-awes the minds of men. Certainly, not a few of his measures of home policy have called forth much well-grounded criticism; his startling po-

litical marches and countermarches, the fierce outbursts of his autocratic temper, his undisguised contempt for the principles of parliamentary government, the petty police prosecutions which pursue those who offend him, have deeply irritated many men of liberal views and of self-esteem. Nobody else could have done these things without serious harm to himself. But, in spite of it all, Bismarck's popularity has grown larger from year to year. He can say to his opponents what no one else can say: Remember your resistance to me when I prepared the first blow for German unity. Those who most bitterly denounced me had then to confess that I knew better than they what was good for the Fatherland—that they were wrong and I was right.

This, indeed, does not prove that he is always right; but it goes far to nourish the popular impression that he may be right again, his opponents not knowing it, and that those who are against Bismarck may turn out to be against their country. Thus a large portion of the German people have, under the fascination of this imposing authority, gradually lapsed into the acquiescence of the consciously inferior understanding, trusting that whatever Bismarck may do will be well done. And this condition of things is not now unlikely to last while Bismarck stands at the head of affairs.

But his disappearance will at once reveal the fact that he has no successor. Whoever may follow him will look small in his place. The spell of mysterious superiority will be broken. Bismarck's peculiar power cannot be bequeathed to any one else. His system of policy, if it may so be called, fitted only him. Neither has he suffered to be developed any other system that might take the place of his own. No statesman has been permitted to grow into greatness by his side, nor have parliamentary parties, under his rule, been allowed opportunity to acquire the sense of governmental responsibility. The participation of the representatives of the people in practical government has of late years in Germany rather shrunk than expanded; and yet nothing is more certain than that a determined effort to expand it will be made as soon as the great one-man authority which stands in the way is removed. Germany is full of able men, and a thousand hitherto suppressed ambitions will then make themselves felt. Had they been trained to larger responsibilities, the changes which will inevitably come would probably be easier. It is said that no man is necessary in this world; but Bismarck has been and still is so tremendous a factor in the history of his time, that the uncertainty which his disappearance will leave behind it appears uncommonly obscure.



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ENGRAVED BY J. H. E. WHITNEY, AFTER A PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES HIDEUX.

PRINCE OTTO EDWARD LEOPOLD BISMARCK.

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