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WILLIAM II., EMPEROR OF GERMANY.



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VICTORIA, EMPRESS OF GERMANY.

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE.

VOL. XLII.

AUGUST, 1891.

No. 4.

THE GERMAN EMPEROR:

A SKETCH OF THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF HIS REIGN.



WILLIAM II. has been for three years emperor, and in this time has succeeded not only in winning the respect of foreign cabinets but in strengthening himself at home. He succeeded a father idolized by all who came within the sphere of his gentle and generous nature; his grandfather left behind a warlike fame so great that only the age of Frederick II. can afford a parallel. The present Emperor has had, therefore, no easy task before him, for it has been necessary for him both to remove prejudice and to give the country confidence in his intentions as well as in his abilities.

The secret of the Emperor's power with his own people arises mainly from three causes:

First. He has courage.

Second. He is honest.

Third. He is a thorough German.

If the whole country had to vote to-morrow for a leader embodying the qualities they most desired, their choice would fall unquestionably on their present constitutional ruler. Perhaps the virtues I have specified appear commonplace, and will be taken for granted by the reader; but an emperor must be compared with others in the same trade.

His honesty has been the cause of nearly all the malevolent criticism that outside papers have accorded him, for he has said freely what older or more politic people might have placed in a different way. He has made many minor mistakes from acting upon the impulse of the

moment, but these mistakes have never betrayed to his people a want of sympathy with their development. He has made his share of minor blunders in handling large masses of troops at the grand manœuvres, but the army would be happy to see him make a thousand times as many rather than to miss the active interest he takes in keeping the military machine in working order.

Since Frederick the Great no king of Prussia has understood his business like this emperor. He knows the routine of the public offices from having sat upon office stools. He knows what material development means from a practical inspection of foundries, mills, shipyards, irrigating-works, canals, factories, and the rest of the places where the strength of a nation largely displays itself. He knows the army from having carried a knapsack, obeyed his superiors, and worked his way up like the every-day Prussian. If a new ship is to make a trial trip, he goes in person to learn something new in naval construction. He has traveled in the most intelligent way the principal countries of the Old World, has come in contact with the men responsible for the state of affairs in Europe, and does not need to be prompted when a new ambassador presents his credentials.

From a child he has been noted for his love of outdoor sport, and as emperor has directed the taste of the growing generation away from pipes and beer-pots and has led them to seek their pleasures in more manly recreation.¹

The Emperor believes in force, and with editor, the German Emperor has no such redress against the abuse of international courtesy.

I may add that I have seen the Emperor on a dozen or more convivial occasions when, if ever, he might with impunity have indulged the taste attributed to him by this ill-informed and poison-spirited scribe, and that on no occasion has he given grounds for such statements.

¹ A press association furnished to the American papers of February 21 a charge of intoxication at the dinner in his honor given by the Brandenburg Diet. This article was fabricated either in London or in New York, though headed Berlin.

Such lies do more mischief than at first glance might be supposed, because, while a private man may occasionally venture to bring a libel action against an

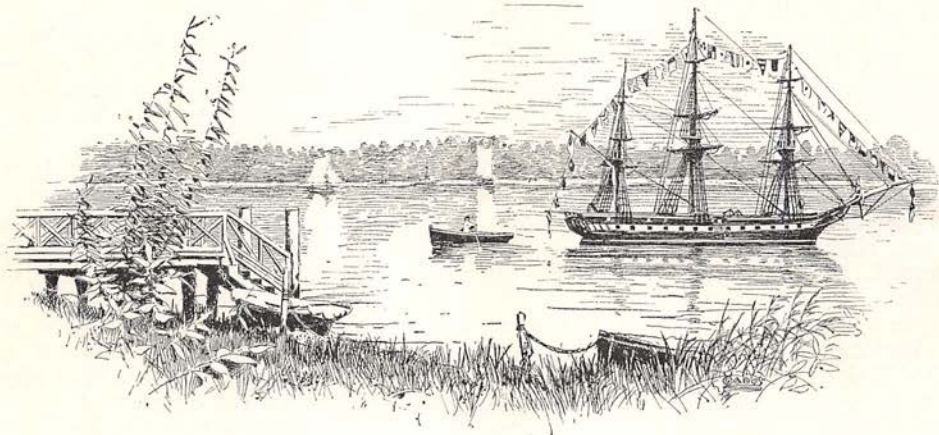
good reason. Prussia has fought her way into the family of European nations at the point of the bayonet; it has taken her about 250 years of drilling and fighting to make Europe understand that she has come to stay: and the habits engendered by generations of barrack-room education cannot be altered in a few years. Not only does the Emperor believe in force, but his Germans almost to a man hold the same creed. The people of the fatherland all serve in the ranks, not merely because their Kaiser wishes it but because they themselves are convinced that this sacrifice is the only one that can guarantee them against invasion. The universal service is to-day the most popular institution in Germany; and while outcry is made against particular abuses in the army, and many desire to have the term of service reduced, no government could live a day that attempted to abolish it altogether. The public language, therefore, which the Emperor uses sounds strangely autocratic when read in the columns of one of our dailies, but calls forth no such reflection in Berlin.

No man in his position has in so short a time expressed himself so freely on so many impor-

and, as King of Prussia, defined his position as head of the state more clearly still.

"I am far," said he, "from wishing to disturb the faith of the people in the permanency of our constitutional position by efforts to enlarge the royal prerogative. The present rights of the crown, so long as they are not invaded, are sufficient to assure the amount of monarchical influence required by Prussia, according to the present state of things, according to its position in the Empire, and according to the feelings and associations of the people. It is my opinion that our constitution contains a just and useful distribution of the coöperation of the different political forces, and I shall on that account, and not merely because of my oath of office, maintain and protect it."

Opinions differ, even in Germany, as to the best distribution of political forces, but every Prussian, and every German as well, breathed more freely when their emperor had spoken the blunt words I have translated. The people were already beginning to feel that while they had to deal with a man who could fight for his own, he was, at least, not disposed to claim more than was his by law. The whole of that address

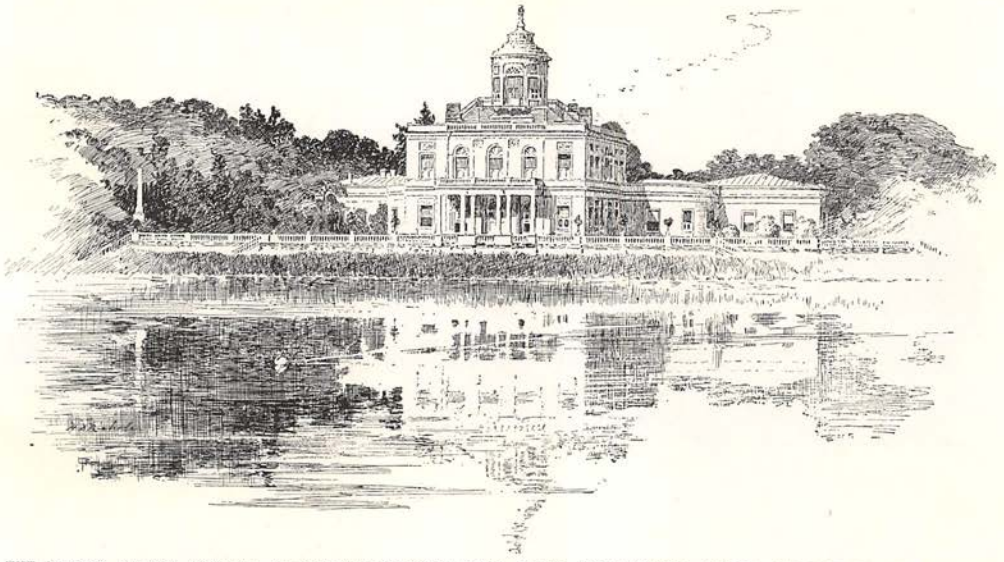


TOY FRIGATE ON THE HAVEL, NEAR POTSDAM, WHERE THE EMPEROR FIRST LEARNED TO BE A SAILOR.

tant topics as he, and if I have convinced the reader that his words are those of an honest and fearless man, I need offer no apology for quoting some of his own language as evidence that he is not devoid of judgment.

ON the 15th of June, 1888, William II. succeeded to the throne as German Emperor and King of Prussia. On the 25th he met the members of the imperial parliament, and gave them the assurance that he meant to govern according to the constitution, and to carry out vigorously all engagements, at home or abroad, connected with the welfare of the country. On the 27th he met the Prussian house of representatives,

is instinct with individual conviction, but much of its force was lost to the outside world because few knew how much of it was meant. When, for instance, he closes by promising to be the "first servant of the state," it was looked upon as a conventional figure of speech, such as even a Prince of Wales might use. How few then thought that he would work with an energy and persistence that would wear out any two ordinary servants; that he would have his study lamp burning long before the kitchen-maids of Berlin yawned themselves out of bed; that he would in person wait upon the drill-grounds of his regiments to see that punctuality was observed; that he would be accessible to every



THE MARBLE PALACE, POTSDAM, WHERE THE EMPEROR LIVED AFTER HIS MARRIAGE, BEFORE HE CAME TO THE THRONE.

complaint, whether from a day laborer or cabinet minister.

Like others in commanding positions, he is taxed heavily for all that he utters in public, but no one tells us of what he is in private. Because as head of the army he draws his sword he is charged with warlike ambition; if on the other hand he looks into the troubles of the day laborers he is attacked as a socialist in disguise; if he travels to visit his neighbors the paragraphers make merry over his perpetual junketing. The papers of England have hardly yet forgiven him for the crimes they imagine he committed while his father was at San Remo, though it has been abundantly proved that he acted as a loyal son and subject.

On the 16th of August, 1888, he made a few remarks at Frankfort on the Oder that set all tongues wagging as though he had already signed a declaration of war.

"Let me add one thing more," said he. "Gentlemen, there are people so weak as to say that my father thought of giving back what we conquered with the sword. We knew him all too well to accept coolly such a slander upon his memory. He was with us in thinking that nothing secured by the mighty efforts of those times should be given up.

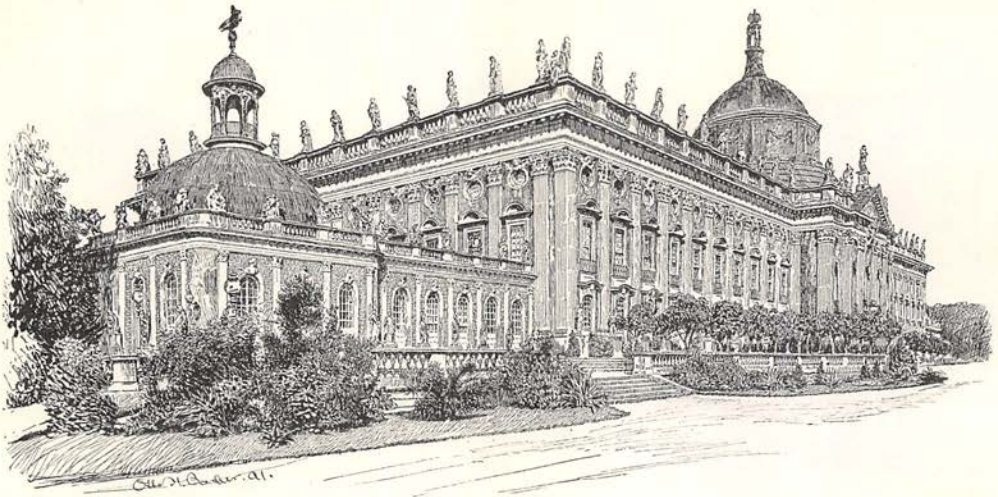
"I believe that we of the Third Army Corps, as well as the whole army, know that on this subject there is but one voice: let us rather lose our eighteen army corps and forty-two million inhabitants on the field than give up a single stone of that which my father and Prince Frederick Charles have won."

This is not pleasant reading in Paris, but it is the kind of language I should expect to hear in New York if any philanthropic move-

ment was on foot to hand Texas or Arizona back to Mexico. It is just the language that would be heard in London if an attempt were made to restore to France, not Alsace-Lorraine, but the Channel Islands.

Shortly after this much-abused speech came the great autumn manœuvres, at which two corps of about 30,000 men each, equipped as for real war, were made to fight one against the other, and to solve in an unknown country all the difficulties of a real campaign. Under the old Emperor William these manœuvres had of late years become rather perfunctory, because of his advanced years and his indisposition to make radical changes. The Emperor Frederick was of course too feeble to make any personal impression on the army during his three months of office, and all Germany looked with eagerness to see what their new emperor would do when commanding large bodies for the first time, and under conditions that would test in some degree his ability to command in real war. He had of course in the field veteran generals of three great wars, and a man of less courage could have readily found an excuse for taking a merely conventional part in these operations. But the Emperor dreamed of nothing less than this. From the beginning to the end of the seven-days' fighting I was able to watch him closely, and even a layman in warfare could note the extraordinary independence with which he made his dispositions, the coolness with which he met sudden emergencies, the attention he was able to give to detail, and the energy with which he appeared at every point of difficulty.

Did he make any mistakes? I presume so;



THE SUMMER RESIDENCE OF THE EMPEROR AT POTSDAM.

I hope so, at least. And every soldier who saw him in those days blessed him for making them there rather than in the presence of a real enemy. He was learning to use his great military machine, and every German felt better at hearing that their Kaiser showed talent for his work. What if he did miscalculate the exact front that a division should occupy in an attack? what if he did bring his cavalry a bit too soon upon the enemy's infantry? The very fact of his doing so on this occasion was the best assurance that it would not happen in real war.

ON the 14th of May, 1889, before he had been a year on the throne, he received a deputation of dissatisfied workmen, and, two days later, a similar body of employers. He spoke to each practically, briefly, sharply. He did not pat the employers on the back and order the workmen about their business, nor did he seek to curry favor with the mob by using the delusive phrases so common with politicians on the eve of political elections. What he said to each gave no pleasure to either, but, spoken as it was, honestly and for the good of both, it has given workmen and their employers throughout Germany a feeling of confidence in the Government as a judge in matters industrial.

To the workmen he said :

"Every subject who has a desire to express has of course the ear of his emperor. I have shown this in giving you permission to come here and tell your wants personally. But you have put yourselves in the wrong; your movement is against law, if only because you have not abided by the fourteen-days' notice required to be given before striking. You have therefore broken your contract. Naturally this breaking of your engagement has irritated the

employers, and does them a wrong. Furthermore, workmen who did not desire to strike have been prevented from working either by violence or threats."

He summed up the wrong they had done, but nevertheless promised to have the matter thoroughly investigated. It is needless to say that he kept his word. When the employers came before him, no doubt expecting sympathy as against strikers, they were taken to task more cuttingly still for their selfishness. "I beg of you," said the Emperor, "take pains to give workmen a chance to present their grievances in a formal manner. . . . It is natural and human that each one should seek to better himself. Workmen read newspapers and know the relation that their wages bear to the profits of the company. It is obvious that they should desire to have some share of this."

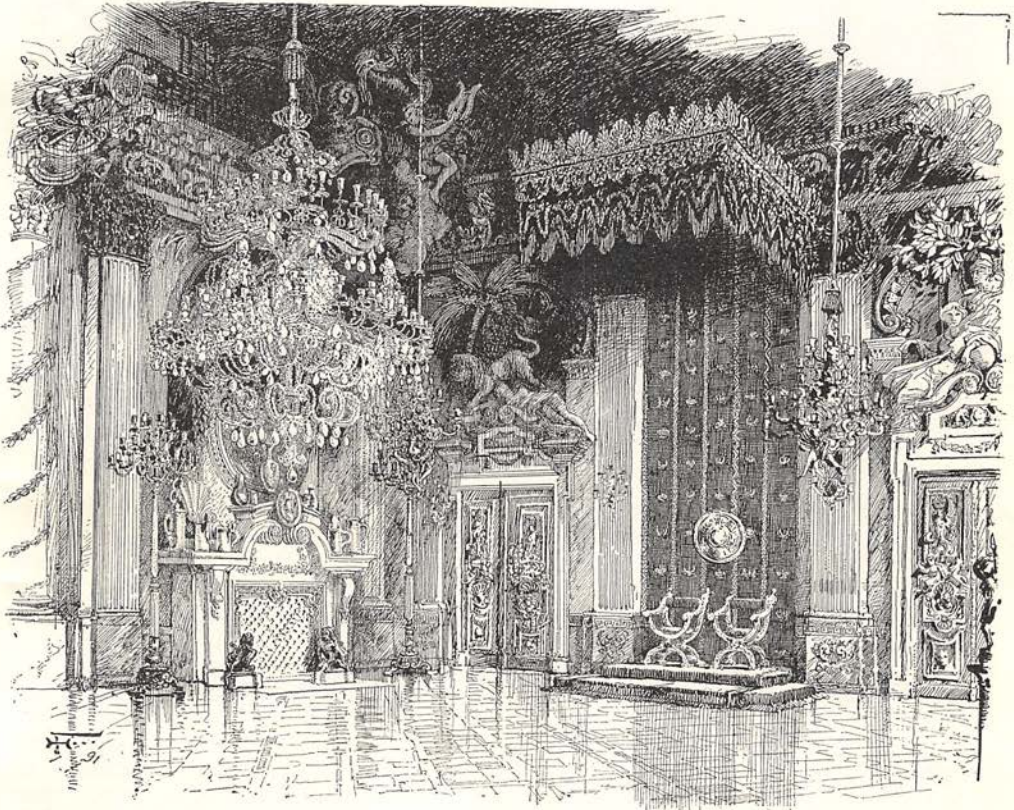
Were these utterances the dictation of a political economist paid for joggling the imperial elbow in matters industrial they would deserve only the attention accorded to official papers read from the throne. But when they reflect the convictions of a ruler bent upon solving questions that are tormenting every industrial community, they are remarkable.

During the grand manœuvres of 1889 he received a delegation of university professors and took the occasion to set the country thinking as to whether the present system of education could not be improved. "The more thoroughly and energetically the people understand history," said he, "the more clearly will they understand their position; and in this way they will be trained to united feeling in the presence of great undertakings." The language is not obscure to a German, who remembers the period of oppression under Napoleon I. and the many years that had to

pass before the people educated themselves to act and to think as one man in the struggle for unity. The Emperor has since taken means to put into practice the ideas he expressed to the professors of Göttingen, and Germans must thank him that the rising generation are permitted to form their ideals not merely from Greeks and Romans of very shadowy interest but from the flesh-and-blood patriots of these days—the Scharnhorsts, the Blüchers, the Gneisenaus, the Steins, the Colombs, Lützows, and other heroes of the great war of liberation.

entertain most strongly is that of relationship and friendship of long standing; and the future can only strengthen the heartiness of our relations."

This, I venture to say, is the most friendly language ever used by a German ruler or cabinet towards the United States, and it gains the more in value by coming from the mouth of a man who would not have said anything that he did not fully mean. The personal regard entertained for Mr. Phelps made the Emperor's language perhaps more easy for him ;



THE THRONE-ROOM IN THE EMPEROR'S WINTER PALACE, BERLIN.

Shortly after the manœuvres of 1889 he received our minister, William Walter Phelps, in a manner more than complimentary, saying, among other things: "From childhood I have admired the great and expanding community you represent; and the study of your history, both in peace and war, has given me particular pleasure. Among the many conspicuous characteristics of your fellow citizens the world admires in particular their spirit of enterprise, their respect for law, and their inventiveness. Germans feel themselves the more drawn to the people of the United States because of the many ties that inevitably accompany kinship of blood. The feeling which both countries

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but in addition to that, I am sure that few Germans who have not traveled in America are better informed of our conditions, our history, our resources, and our literature than he. When "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War" appeared, it was read by him with interest; as an officer in the army he attended courses of lectures on our principal military operations; and only within the past few weeks he was discussing with an American George Kennan's work on the treatment of Siberian exiles.

In February, 1890, he issued an order the gist of which is in these words: "In my army each individual soldier shall receive lawful, just, and humane treatment." This order was



THE WINTER RESIDENCE OF THE EMPEROR, BERLIN.

unexpected, for the army did not appear at the time to suffer more than ordinarily from the excesses of non-commissioned officers or even of commissioned officers. But it is the Emperor's habit to find out for himself what is going on in barrack-yards as well as in the cabinet. He does not wait until official red tape has permitted the Government to notice an abuse, or until dissatisfaction has spread. His language in this order has not made men more humane, but it has certainly made the brutal more cautious about venting their brutality, and this is as much as human law can hope for.

In the same month he calls together a congress of interested nations to see if something cannot be done to avoid the increasing friction between wage-payers and wage-earners. This congress may or may not achieve all that some have hoped for. The Emperor himself did not offer to solve any question of social philosophy; his attitude was strictly that of an inquirer. He virtually said to the delegates: "Gentlemen, the industrial situation of Europe is critical. Let us discuss it calmly, let us offer suggestions, let us see if the question is capable of simpler definition."

Whether anything comes of this effort, the fact is remarkable that the most conspicuous public effort of a young and powerful em-

peror has been to interfere in behalf of the daily laborers.

On the 20th of March, 1890, Bismarck left his office of Prime, or rather sole, Minister. I do not wish to enter upon this question here, except to point out that he left office immediately after a popular election which resulted in more votes for socialist candidates than were ever before cast in the history of the empire. He was in a hopeless minority in the Reichstag, and had proved to the satisfaction of his countrymen that, whatever his merits were as a foreign minister, they dwindled painfully when it came to treating the more delicate questions of finance, socialism, press laws, and internal improvement.

During the labor conference the Emperor showed marked civilities to the French delegate, Jules Simon, and afterward sent him as a present the musical works of Frederick the Great, accompanied by a most cordial letter. This was an opportunity offered to France to say something that might be regarded as a harbinger of peace; to cease the snarling over Alsace-Lorraine that has been kept up for twenty years, and promises to continue until after the next war. Germany was disappointed in the result, for France showed that she has now only one political faith, the basis of which is hate.

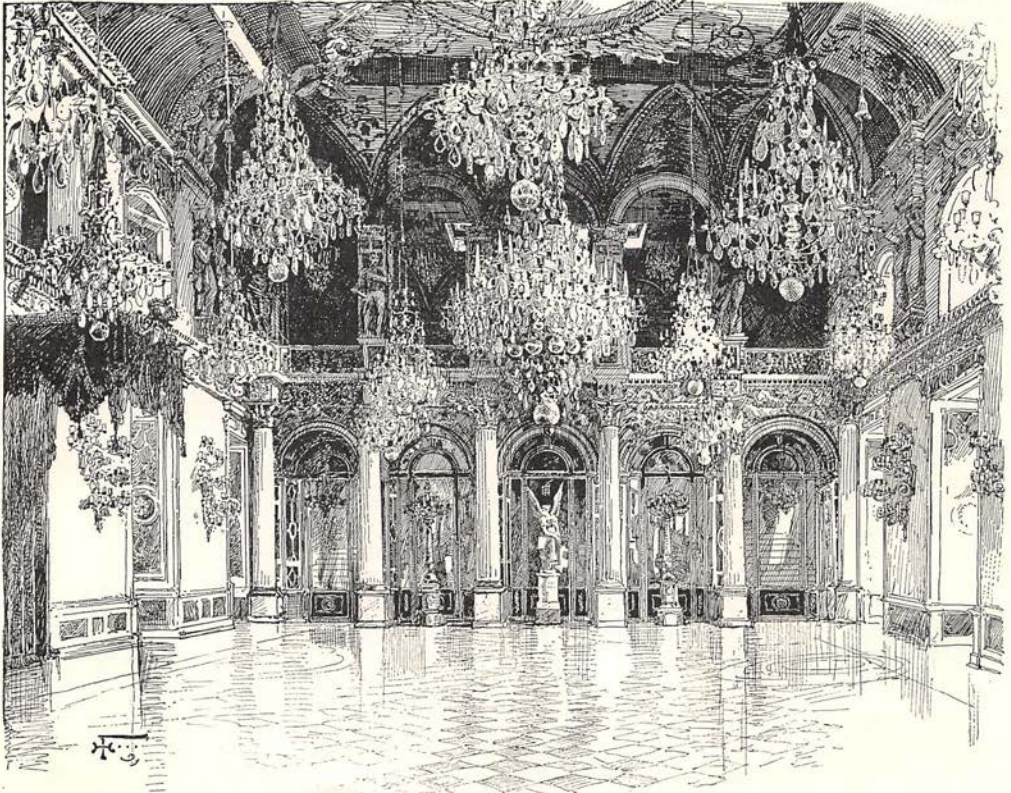
From the salons of the Faubourg St. Germain to the attics of Montmartre, there is but one feeling—France has had her vanity wounded; therefore Europe must expect no rest until she has had her revenge.

In 1890, on the 9th of August, Heligoland was added to the Empire without a blow or even an angry word. What Gibraltar is to Spain, that and much more was this little island at the mouth of her principal seaport to Germany. The peaceful accomplishment of so important an object is not so much an evidence of his desire to strengthen his coast-line as of the fact that England and Germany are today united in a friendship unknown since the year when Blücher and Wellington fought the French at Waterloo.

I have not spoken of the Emperor's travels in detail, for want of space. In general it may be said that no ruler of modern times has seen so much of the world, and made the fruit of his travels so directly profitable to his people. He has not merely traveled to distant countries, from the North Cape to the Golden Horn, and from the Thames to the Gulf of Finland. His acquaintance with his own country is no less thorough. He masters readily the industrial features of every neighborhood that he

visits, and it is rare for him to meet a man with whom he cannot talk instructively on the country or town that he represents. He does not waste time in these travels, but has a railway train fitted somewhat after the pattern of the Chicago limited vestibule. On the way he despatches state business, and discusses, as he flies along, any proposition requiring signature. His yacht serves him when afloat as conveniently as his train ashore, and both are so well used as to be always in the best working condition.

As an after-dinner speaker the Emperor has no superior in Germany. He speaks readily without notes, expresses himself with vigor, never descends to conventional commonplaces, and, above all, gives the very best assurance that his words are not prepared for him. I have heard conspicuous speakers in England and in our own country, and, if comparisons are not in this case invidious, I should say that the German Emperor need not fear to meet such an audience as even a New England society dinner assembles. One of the prettiest speeches I have listened to was delivered by the Emperor in answering the toast to his wife in the province where she was born. It was during the great combined naval and military manœuvres of 1890, at which the United States was repre-



THE WHITE SALOON, WINTER PALACE, IN WHICH PARLIAMENT IS OPENED.

sented by Commander Ward, and Great Britain by Admiral Hornby.

The Emperor's words were: "I desire to express to you, my dearest sir, the gratitude felt by the Empress and myself for the kind words we have just heard; at the same time our thanks to the whole for the day we have passed and for the reception which the province has prepared for us. This day was, however, not needed in order to assure us of the warm friendship we have found here. The bond that unites me to this province, and chains me to her in a manner different from all others of my Empire, is the jewel that sparkles at my side, her Majesty the Empress. Sprung from this soil, the type of the various virtues of a German princess, it is to her that I owe it if I am able to meet the severe labors of my office with a happy spirit, and make head against them."

The words of the Emperor were unexpected, and to no one more so than to his wife, whose face beamed with happiness at the compliment she so publicly received. Nor did any one who listened to the speaker at that dinner think to question the spontaneity and honesty of the language.

In spite of the pomp that custom demands of an imperial court, the German Emperor is a man of singularly simple and healthy tastes. When he is out of office-hours his recreation is largely taken with his children in their nursery, or dropping in at the house of a personal

friend and begging a cup of tea and a cozy chat. He knows the value of knowledge, and while the machinery of his Government provides him with elaborate reports on every subject and from every corner of the world, he still prefers to study his people at first hand, and never loses an opportunity of seeing for himself what is going on about him. He reads, of course, all the new books of importance; sees the good plays, and assists in bringing forward such as have merit; he takes pleasure in running into artists' workshops at unexpected hours; is ready to meet any one who has an idea of interest.

When I think of him as the business manager of a practical political corporation, I am constantly inclined to look for the key to his success and popularity in Germany by quoting the laconic opinion of him expressed by an American officer who was presented to him for the first time at the Baltic manœuvres in 1890. He came away from his audience flushed with excitement, and I expected a vigorous report from the fact that this officer had been drawing his impressions of Germany principally from Paris and St. Petersburg.

"What do you think of him now?" I said.

"Immense; he has a genuine Yankee head on him."

It only need be added that this compliment was the highest in the court vocabulary of my fellow countryman.

Poultney Bigelow.



THOU REIGNEST STILL.

QUEEN JUANA OF SPAIN, TO HER LONG-DEAD LORD, PHILIPPE LE BEL.

THOU liv'st and reignest in my memory,
 Discrowned of earth, but crowned still in the soul
 Subject to thee from pole to utmost pole:
 This is the kingdom thou hast still in fee,
 Though silence and the night have hidden thee—
 King, crowned in joy, and crowned again in dole,
 Sovereign and master of my being's whole,
 My heart and life and all there is of me.
 It is thy breath I breathe upon the air;
 Thou shinest on me with the stars of night;
 Thou risest for me with the morning sun;
 And if I sleep and dream I find thee there,
 And, finding, quiver with the old delight:
 Monarch, yet lover, to thine arms I run.

Louise Chandler Moulton.