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THE HUN IN 1870-1871

How Bismarck Humiliated the French Delegates—His Brutality—“Unconditional Surrender or Die of Starvation,” the German Chancellor’s Ultimatum—Neutral Appeals for Reconciliation and Magnanimity Were Brushed Aside by Bismarck With a Contemptuous Remark: “There is No Hurry to Answer That Rubbish”—Other Tragic Incidents of 1870-71 Are Recalled.

Written by NAZARIENE DAAN KANNIBELLE.

According to the testimony recorded in various memoirs by men who played prominent parts during the dark days for France (1870-1871, the German headquarters repeatedly received peace notes from neutral sources, emphasizing the necessity of showing an attitude of reconciliation and magnanimity towards France. In these notes these neutrals repeatedly pointed out to the German Chancellor the wisdom of not pushing things to extremes, and the good results that might accrue from a removal of grievous misunderstandings. But Bismarck, knowing that the time had not yet arrived for the ingathering of the fruits of victory, arrogantly brushed the proposals aside with the remark, typically Teuton: “There is no hurry to answer this rubbish.”

the “Man of Blood and Iron” will no doubt exploit this self-same argument to its fullest measure it is fitting that we recall the way in which the “Victorious Germany” of 1870-1871 treated the French peace delegates who sincerely wished to end the shedding of blood, a war for the “breaking out” and the “conduct” of which the French people were not one hundredth as much responsible as the German people were for the outbreak of the world carnage which has just terminated by the utter defeat of the authors. The French peace delegates to the German high command were Jules Favre and Thiers, the famous French statesman and historian.

France was not yet at the end of her ropes as much as Germany became when she finally appealed to President Wilson, accepting in toto all his peace terms, when Favre first met Bismarck at Ferrieres to-

wards the end of September, 1870. Bismarck received Favre in the most haughty manner, opened discussions in no mood for reciprocal concessions, but in the spirit rather of a conqueror come to dictate terms. There was to be no disputing with this bullying spokesman of victorious legions, whose master had resolved, it was already clear, to have a large slice of territory, as well as an immense pecuniary indemnity, and to leave France, in case of refusal, no alternative but that of the Caudine Forks. He was bent upon reducing to impotence a nation they had long described as their traditional foe, and upon the ultimate construction, as is now apparent, of a new Europe dominated by Germany.

The Annee Terrible.

Bismarck all along held out to Favre the threat to starve the French capital as a settled policy of Germany. Hunger was the weapon on which he relied. Yet during the present conflict a nation of pirates and savages has whined at the very thought of being brought to book through a stoppage of its supplies, and has tried to make the neutral world believe that such action is new to the practice of war.

Parisians of the older generation, however, have not yet forgotten their experiences of 1870. Whole families, indeed, can still recall the miseries of that Annee Terrible.

When the poor of Paris were digging from under the snow potatoes that had been left within the range of German artillery Bismarck, with Hunnish brutality, ordered his soldiers to shoot these famishing people.

The capital was girt by a ring of steel, through which for weeks, during an exceptionally severe winter, neither a scrap of food nor an ounce of medicine was permitted to pass. As the wretchedness of the two million citizens increased and the death rate, especially among the aged people and young children become worse, Bismarck was of the opinion that the sufferings of the inhabitants were not sufficiently great. He suggested that to the pangs of hunger there might be added some of the refinements of torture. He said:

If the Parisians first received a supply of provisions and then again put on half rations and once more obliged to starve that ought, I think, to work. It is like flogging. When it is administered continuously it is not felt so much. But when it is for a time and then another dose inflicted it hurts. I know that from the criminal courts where I was employed.

The “Kultur” is Old as the Hun He regretted that prisoners should be taken at all and that it was not possible to shoot them on the spot. “We have,” he said, “more than enough of them, while the Parisians have the advantage of getting rid of so many mouths to feed.”

“If, he said on another occasion, garrisons could not be supplied for every place within German occupation, we should from time to time send a flying column wherever the people showed themselves recalcitrant and shoot, hang, and burn.”

An officer having remarked that the mere appearance of a detachment of troops entrusted with the task of keeping order would be sufficient, the Chancellor replied: “I am not so sure. A little hanging would certainly have a better effect, with a few shells thrown in and a couple of houses burned down.”

The foregoing quotations are taken from the “secret pages” of the history of Bismarck by Dr. Moritz Busch. Busch had “official and private inter- course with the great chancellor” for a quarter of a century, which included the period of the Franco-Prussian war, and being a Bismarck worshipper, he may be trusted not to have set down aught in malice respecting his hero.

“The Chancellor,” says the faithful Busch, “was guided by the principle that the civil population must suffer by the war in order to render them the more disposed to peace.”

Massacre and Plunder.

The haughtiness of Bismarck towards Favre was due in no small measure to a knowledge that France was without the support, moral or physical, of any powerful contemporary nation. While the Germans were approaching Paris Thiers made a tour of the Courts of Europe in the hope of securing some sort of mediation by neutrals. But, while all were sympathetic, none would interfere, an attitude which isolated France. Of that the Chancellor took the most merciless advantage and made the peace terms nothing short of an abuse of victory. Though it was apparent that the triumph of Germany was jeopardizing the balance of power in Europe, it was impossible to enlist the interest of the Liberal government, which was then in power, against the despots who were menacing the very existence of France. The policy of the British government, indeed, was applauded by a few Teutonized Englishmen of letters headed by Carlyle. They praised German methods, German organizations, German culture, and German universities, making with these at the same time a depreciatory comparison of the intellectual and other activities of their own country.

The gospel of Kultur was also preached to the detriment of France, whose learning was represented as superficial, its literature corrupt, and its society debased. But everything—learning, literature, society—was otherwise in Prussia, whose sovereign claimed to reign “by the favor of God and no one else.” That aged hypocrite was not revealed to Europe in his true colors until he disclosed through Bismarck the humiliating conditions on which his enemy might obtain peace.

The refusal, however, to end hostilities except on unreasonable terms put Germany in the wrong, and popular feeling in England turned largely in favor of France. The conflict after Sedan had been waged on the part of Prussia with that diabolical frightfulness which has been recalled during the present war by the martyrdom of Belgium. The inherent baseness of the Huns and their contempt for “scraps of paper” were in all quarters in 1870 painfully manifest.

Same Old Profession.

Every village through which they passed became a scene of organized pillage. Works of art and other treasures were stolen or wantonly destroyed if they could not be conveniently removed. The civil population was outraged, imprisoned and massacred in open defiance of every convention by which civilization had sought to prevent excesses in war. The words of Milton were applicable.

What do these worthies But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter and enslave. . . . Who leave behind Nothing but ruin whereso’er they rove?

The traditions of soldierly honor were disgracefully flouted. The troops round Paris were in their ruthlessness worse than the marauding hordes with which Slavic invad-

ed Rome. If the American public had been only a little more conversant with the vandalism of 1870-1871 they would not have been quite so surprised when in 1914 the apostles of Kultur opened their rampart at Louvain, the Athens of Belgium, where the monuments of piety and learning were devastated in a manner worthy of the blackest annals in the history of barbarism. The atrocities of the bandits were supposed not only to crush those with whom they were at war, but to terrify those with whom they were at present peace. Belgium was thus in the present war at once a victim and an example. Neutrals were intended to note the outrages that accompanied its conquest, the reign of terror that followed its occupation, the deportation of a section of its people, and the cruel oppression of those who remained.

Alsace-Lorraine Annexation.

The opening meeting of the two diplomats having closed with a statement by the chancellor that he was going to consult the king on some of the points raised, Favre resumed proceedings next day with the remark: “You have spoken to the king and I have come to ascertain the result of that interview.”

“The king,” responded Bismarck, “accepts an armistice under the conditions and with the object agreed between us. As I told you, we demand the occupation of all the fortresses besieged in the Vosges and that of Strasburg, with its garrison as prisoners of war.”

At these words Favre could hardly restrain himself and interrupted the chancellor almost impetuously: “Monsieur le Comte,” he said, “I have promised to report to my government all my conversation with your excellency. I do not know, however, that I shall have the courage to convey to the what you have just told me. The garrison of Strasburg have evoked the admiration of the world by their heroism. To surrender the garrison voluntarily as prisoners of war would be an act of cowardice which no man of spirit would in present circumstances advise.”

(Continued on Page 3.)

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STATEMENT OF THE BANK OF COMMERCE

HIGH POINT, N. C.

NOVEMBER 1st, 1918.

Condensed from report to State Banking Commission.

RESOURCES	
Loans and discounts	\$465,991.19
Stocks and bonds	4,600.00
United States Liberty Bonds, Treasury Certificates and War Savings Stamps	93,230.11
Due from banks	193,286.28
Cash in vaults, checks for clearing	47,534.27
Building, furniture and fixtures	61,178.15
Total	\$865,820.00
LIABILITIES	
Capital stock	\$100,000.00
Surplus fund	12,000.00
Dividend account	60.00
Undivided profits	7,413.00
Bills payable	75,000.00
Deposits	666,422.31
Unearned and accrued interest	4,924.69
Total	\$865,820.00

We beg to call attention to the above financial statement, which indicates the confidence the public has in this bank, and desire to express our thanks to the people for their patronage and co-operation. We invite all those who desire new or additional banking relations to see or write us. This Bank is able and willing to grant liberal accommodations and facilities.

THE BANK OF COMMERCE
THE WELCOME BANK
O. E. KEARNS, Pres. A. M. RANKIN, Vice-Pres.
J. H. ADAMS, Vice-Pres. G. A. POLLOCK, Asst. Cashier
H. A. MILLIS, Cashier.

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