

# GERMANY'S GRAND OLD MAN.

## Story of the Life Work of the Late Prince Bismarck—Ranks First Among the Statesmen of Modern Times.

Prince Bismarck is dead, and all Germany is in mourning. Germans in every land are sorrowful because he that was the founder of the great empire is no more, and people of every civilized race lament the death of the master hand that changed the map of Europe from what it was in 1863 to what it is in 1898. Even in France Bismarck is not hated. He was a worthy foe, and the French love a hero.

Bismarck's life would read like a romance were he not a Prussian. His march to fame was steady, and never for a moment retrograded.

### LIFE OF PRINCE BISMARCK.

Sketch of the Career of the "Iron Chancellor" of Germany.

Karl Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck Schoenhausen, diplomatist and statesman, prince of the German empire and field marshal-general, came of a Brandenburg family which traces its records back to the fourteenth century. The family came originally from Stendal, a district about sixty miles from Berlin. Bismarck himself was born April 1, 1815, at Schoenhausen, which for a long time was his favorite seat, and the name of which he added to his own to distinguish himself from the many other branches of his family. The family quitted Burgstall, near the town of Stendal, toward the beginning of the seventeenth century in consequence of troubles with the elector John George, and took up its residence in Schoenhausen. There have been fifteen Bismarcks in direct line from the prince who has just died back to the first whose name has been preserved, who lived nearly 600 years ago. It is a stock of powerful virility, shot through and through in all its branches with energy. Cool diplomacy, eccentricity that is full of method, intolerance of opposition, with a touch of the true Mephistophelian humor—these have been characteristics of the Bismarcks as far back as their genius has been matter for study and record.

**Prince Bismarck's Youth.**  
Prince Bismarck in youth showed no trace, according to the best of his German biographers, of the qualities that later won him the title of "the man of blood and iron." In his sixth year he was sent from the family residence on the Kniephof estate in Pomerania to an educational institute in



PRINCE BISMARCK.

Berlin, where, it is said, "the extreme severity of the treatment wounded the boy's soft nature. He had found his brother Bernhard there, but still he suffered greatly from homesickness, and could not watch the plowman plowing the fields without giving way to tears. The two boys passed from one Berlin school to another, according to their progress and ages, and later the direction of their studies was confined to private tutors." During this time Otto was a pupil of the great theologian, Schleiermacher, who also confirmed him in the Lutheran communion. The tutor who at this time had him in charge says he was a lad of singularly quick apprehension and of excellent memory. From the private instructor he passed to the university of Goettingen in 1832. It was intended that he should study jurisprudence, but he disappointed his parents and justified the observation of his early tutor in showing no especial liking or even aptitude for any study but that of

history. The history of his own country was a passion with him. As for the rest of student life, young Bismarck was ready for it all. His "soft nature" had now become so thoroughly subjugated that it is recorded that in three semesters at the university he fought no less than twenty-seven duels, in every one of which he was victorious.

**In Prussian Landtag.**  
In the early part of the year of his marriage Bismarck was elected a member of the newly constituted Prussian landtag. It was a time of popular ferment. Radicalism was on the increase. The common people were showing a disposition to question the righteousness of every time-honored prerogative, and not a ruler but felt his throne a-tremble with the premonitions of the storm that was to break in the coming year. Bismarck was now 32 years old. The day of his birth had dawned but a few years after his country had begun its feeble and seemingly hopeless struggle against dismemberment at the hands of Napoleon I. In 1807 Bismarck's discouraged countrymen had seen 150,000 French troops encamped upon soil that nourished but 4,000,000 Prussians, who had to pay Napoleon a war indemnity that amounted to \$75 for every man, woman and child. Baron von Stein, Foreign Minister under Hardenberg and War Minister Scharnhorst were laboring to kindle Prussian patriotism and solidify the remnant of the state. Three months before the banishment to St. Helena of the author of this ruin was born Bismarck, who should retrieve the wreck.

**Opposes Constitutional Reform.**  
The young member of the house of burgesses was unmoved by the mutterings of democracy. He scorned the movement of the people, believing soulfully in the ability of the aristocracy to maintain what he believed to be its divine prerogative—that of governing. The broken pledges of King Frederick William III. to give his people a written constitution had received new sanction from Frederick William IV., who was no more willing than his predecessor had been to fulfill his promises. In the speech from the throne he declared to the united diet that he would suffer nothing to change the natural relation between sovereign and people; no conventional, constitutional regime should intervene; never would he consent that a written document should intrude between the Lord God in heaven and his country in place of the ancient faith. Such royal tenacity promised ill for constitutional reforms. Bismarck wanted no constitutional reforms. He bluntly told the united diet it had no excuse for convening. Those who had suspected the young man of "liberalism" saw their mistake. When an assault on the Hohenzollerns woke him up it awoke the most ardent of royalists—one who saw no place in the human order for democracy; one who saw even in constitutionalism only a temporizing expedient for use in critical situations. Bismarck saw in the contest a struggle between the principles of order and the principles of disorder—a contest which was not to be decided by debates and majorities. "Sooner or later the God of battles must cast the die."

**Leader of the Conservatives.**  
In the second session of the Prussian landtag (1850-1) Bismarck was recognized as the leader of the conservatives. At its close he was appointed Prussian minister plenipotentiary in the Frankfurt diet. Here he showed himself the firm opponent of Austrian pretensions. But a brief experience at Frankfurt convinced him that little was to be hoped for under the existing constitution. Already he had come to believe that the malady of the country could be healed only "by fire and sword." The tedium of his post at Frankfurt was interrupted by diplomatic missions to Vienna and Pesth (1862), to some of the South German courts, and (1855) to the Emperor Napoleon at Paris.

In January, 1859, he was appointed ambassador at St. Petersburg. Here he remained three years, and ingratiated himself with many leading personages in Russian society. In May, 1862, he went to Paris as ambassador, from which post he was recalled in September to become Prussian minister-president and chief adviser to the king. Both as regards domestic and foreign affairs his position at first was one of extreme difficulty. At home he found himself engaged in constant conflict with the liberal majority of the landtag on developing the constitutional system and assuming control over the military budget, which Bismarck was determined to retain in the hands of the crown. Abroad he found himself menaced by Austria, which was striving to obtain the hegemony of Germany, and by Emperor Napoleon, whose eyes were fixed on Belgium and the Rhine provinces. The skillful diplomacy by which he averted the latter dangers was unknown to the public, and his open defiance of the parliamentary majority made him extremely unpopular in Prussia.

**Schleswig-Holstein Question.**  
The tide began to turn when he brought the Schleswig-Holstein question (1863-4) to a successful conclusion. By extraordinary firmness and adroit diplomacy he succeeded in excluding the interference of neutral powers and in securing the duchies for Germany. After the Danes had been driven from these states he asserted that they must be annexed to Prussia, and refused to allow the creation of a new semi-independent principality on the northern frontier of the kingdom. The dispute with Austria over this question became so violent that it was plain it must eventually end in war. Bismarck's greatest anxiety during this period was to secure the neutrality of France without buying it by the cession of German territory. In this he was completely successful, chiefly owing to Napoleon's mistaken belief that the war would end in the defeat and humiliation of Prussia.



FRIEDRICHSRUH, BISMARCK'S LATE HOME.

**Attempt on His Life.**  
On May 7, 1858, an attempt was made on Bismarck's life by a youth named Lionel Cohen, who hoped to avert the coming struggle in Germany by the assassination of the unpopular minister. Bismarck escaped with a trifling wound. On June 14 the federal council, by a majority of nine votes to six, declared war against Prussia. Among the states which supported Austria were Hanover, Saxony and Hesse. Within the next few days the three states were overrun and disbanded by Prussia. Before the end of June the Prussian armies had crossed into Bohemia; July 3 the Austrians were defeated in one of the decisive battles of the world—that of Sadowa or Koniggratz. Bismarck was by King William's side throughout the combat. At its close the resistance of Austria was over; but all Bismarck's diplomatic skill was required to prevent the fruits of victory being snatched from his grasp by Emperor Napoleon.

**Treaty of Peace.**  
After prolonged conferences at Nikolsburg, the definite treaty of peace was concluded at Prague, August, 1866. By this treaty the German bund was dissolved, a North German confederation under the presidency of Prussia was erected, and Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein, Hesse and a large part of Saxony was annexed to Prussia. The supremacy of Austria in Germany was at an end, and that of Prussia established. The war of 1866 left Bismarck the most popular man next to the king in Prussia. But he still had his difficulties with the parliament, for the liberals and the radicals continued their efforts to establish a constitutional regime on the English model, and Bismarck was equally determined not to weaken the position of the crown or to resign its control over the military organization. He well knew that a greater conflict than that of 1866 lay before the country.

**Chancellor of the North German Confederation.**  
In 1867 he became chancellor of the North German confederation. For three years he was engaged in preparing for the struggle with France, which as he foresaw, was inevitable. Deeply mortified by the results of the Sadowa campaign and the Nikolsburg conference, and knowing that his position in France was becoming daily more uncertain, Napoleon was only awaiting an opportunity to attack Prussia, relying on the assistance of Austria, or at least of the south German states. After ineffectual attempts to make an excuse for war out of the Luxemburg question, and even of that of the St. Gothard railway, Louis Napoleon found one in the candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern for the throne of Spain. In Berlin there was little reluctance toward a war, for which Prussia was infinitely better prepared than France, but Bismarck's astute diplomacy put Napoleon III completely in the wrong, and compelled him to force on hostilities by a series of insults to the Prussian nation and its popular sovereign.

**Bismarck's Shrewd Stroke.**  
The wanton and apparently unprovoked aggression of the French emperor roused the spirit of the whole German people, and Bavaria and Wurtemberg entered into the war with alacrity. A master stroke of Bismarck's policy diverted the sympathy of the neutral powers, and especially that of England, from the French. On July 25 he published in the Times a draft treaty drawn up by the French ambassador, Benedetti, according to which Prussia and France were to arrange for the annexation of Belgium by the latter power. Bismarck had received the draft in Benedetti's handwriting as far back as 1867, but had adroitly contrived to avoid committing himself to a decisive reply. The effect on European and English public opinion was instantaneous. On July 19 Bismarck announced in the reichstag that France had declared war. On July 31 Bismarck left Berlin with the king and the headquarters staff of the German army. He was present in the earlier battles of the eventual campaign that followed. On the night of Sept. 2 he arranged with the Emperor Napoleon the preliminaries which led to the capitulation of Sedan. In October he moved with the king to Versailles and took up his quarters in a house in the Rue de Provence, whence he directed the foreign policy of the federation and received and repulsed the attacks of the French provisional government to make peace on easy terms, and the efforts of the neutral states at mediation.

**Work for the German Empire.**  
At the same time that he was dictating terms of peace which compelled France to restore to Germany the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which Louis XIV. had taken, and to pay a war indemnity of nearly \$1,000,000,000—or three times the amount exacted from Prussia by Napoleon I.—Bismarck was not losing sight of his ambitions for the house of Hohenzollern. He now concerned himself with the transformation of the North German bund into the German empire. The free town of Frankfurt had received a Prussian garrison, in spite of indignant protests, immediately after the war with Austria; Hanover was incorporated with the Germanic confederation, and at the close of 1866 Bismarck had concluded with Bavaria, Baden and Wurtemberg treaties of peace and alliances offensive and defensive, with a proviso that in the event of war Prussia should have the chief military command. The North German confederation, organized in 1867, which comprised twenty-two states, represented a population of 22,000,000. The king of Prussia was at the head of this powerful combination, and a federal council, composed of delegates of the different states, was established, together with a diet or common parliament, the members of which were elected by universal suffrage. The great work of making all the states of this confederation acknowledge the sovereignty of Prussia and the overlordship of the Hohenzollerns—Bismarck's life work—he accomplished Jan. 18, 1871. At noon on that day the assembled German princes, with the king of Bavaria at their head, acclaimed King William as "Deutscher Kaiser," and the chancellor read the solemn proclamation which the emperor addressed to the united peoples of Germany. Ten days later, after several conferences between Bismarck and the French foreign minister, Jules Favre, a truce was concluded, and the Parisian forts were handed over to the Prussians. On Feb. 21 the negotiations were resumed by M. Thiers on the part of France, and on the 26th the French statesman was forced to agree to the hard conditions laid down by the conquerors. These included the cession of Alsace and German-Lorraine and the payment of a war indemnity of 5,000,000,000 francs. On the first day of the following month Bismarck accompanied the German detachment which marched into Paris. On the 21st he was created a first of the empire. This is an untranslatable title, rendered into English "prince," although the German word for "prince" is "prinz." His creation as count dates from 1865.

**Chancellor of the Empire.**  
Prince Bismarck had already been nominated, Jan. 19, 1871, chancellor of the reconstituted empire. May 10 he signed the definite treaty with France at Frankfurt. On June 16, arrayed in the uniform of his regiment, the Magdeburg cuirassiers, he rode in the grand procession which celebrated the return of the victorious troops to Berlin. On either side of him rode Count von Moltke and the war minister, Von Roon, and close behind them came the Emperor William.

After the Franco-Prussian war, and up to the time of his disagreement

with Emperor William II. and retirement, Prince Bismarck held a position almost unique among the European statesmen. He was the controlling force in international politics and the arbiter of peace and war. His chief aim was to avoid conflicts between the great powers which more than once threatened, and to preserve the peace of Europe. With this object he exerted himself to prevent war between England and Russia, which seemed likely to arise out of the events in the Balkan peninsula in 1877. It was chiefly through his efforts that the great congress of Berlin (June, 1878), for the settlement of the eastern question was held and brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the treaty which settled, for the time at least, the relations of the states of southeastern Europe to Turkey and each other.

As chancellor of the empire Bismarck made it his task to consolidate it with authoritative and stable institutions within, while forming alliances and political combinations which would secure it from attack from without. Fearing the influence of the church of Rome as rivaling the power of the state with its doctrine of papal infallibility, he was led—many observers deem unfortunately—into the long and bitter struggle with the Vatican known as the Kulturkampf. Under his lead laws of great severity, known as the Falk laws or May laws, were passed by parliament, beginning in 1873, by which many hundred Jesuits were banished and several Roman Catholic bishops were imprisoned for refusal of obedience, and many schools and churches were closed.

**Quarrel with Wilhelm II.**  
It is no easy task for any man to govern in the nineteenth century on feudal principles, especially one whose nature is imperious, whose will is unbending and whose realm is not yet thoroughly welded together. Annoyance at the balking of his plans at certain points joined with herculean labors and vast responsibilities and with the burden of advancing age to reduce his strength. The young emperor wished no instruction from any one, and he may well have seemed to the astute but wearied Bismarck a problem the solution of which he would prefer to leave to time and to other investigators rather than to hasten it actively in his own person. The aged statesman found his young sovereign eager to assume the personal control of all matters relating to the empire, and when the emperor, restive under the restraint of the veteran, announced his determination to assume absolute control of all public affairs and declared further that Bismarck was assuming rights as chancellor which were the prerogatives of the emperor, it was impossible for the prince to continue in the service of the state. For a long time there was a breach between the independent old chancellor and his former master, but the German people were loyal to Bismarck, on whom they fancied the emperor had put numerous slights. In 1894 came an urgent invitation to the ex-chancellor to visit his sovereign at Berlin. Bismarck accepted the offer of reconciliation, and the whole city rose to meet him in an expression of intense popular regard.

**Bereavement Hastened the End.**  
More than any other cause, the death of Prince Bismarck's wife hastened his end. It is said the ex-chancellor was never the same after he buried the princess in Varin in November, 1894. The princess left three children—Countess Marie, born in Sadowa Aug. 21, 1848, and now Countess von Ratzen; Herbert, born in Berlin Dec. 28, 1849, and married to Marguerite, Countess Hoyes; and William, born in Frankfurt-on-the-Main Aug. 1, 1852, and married to Sybille von Kroehlendorff. The marriage of Bismarck's daughter is childless; Herbert is the father of three and William of four children. Herbert, the eldest son, succeeds to his great father's estate. It was therefore very much to Bismarck's chagrin that he did not marry into the German nobility, but chose an Austrian wife of Hungarian extraction. This marriage was so much the more painful to the old man because it happened only two years after the forced resignation of the Iron chancellor. It was only very gradually that Bismarck became reconciled to this "Austrian alliance," as he was wont to call the marriage.

**A Scared Veteran.**  
"Mej. Duffiek is making a great war record, isn't he?"  
"I'd like to know how you make that out. He's still here."  
"I know, but he's making all the flag presentation speeches as the various companies are being sent away to the front."

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Despite the circumstantial story credited to the lady herself, that Lieutenant Hobson and Miss Lelia Cook, of Oswego, are engaged to be married, the gentleman says he has not the honor of Miss Cook's acquaintance.

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THE MEETING OF BISMARCK AND NAPOLEON AFTER SEDAN.