

INTERVIEWING THE AUTHORS OF THE WAR

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AS THOUGH it were only yesterday, I remember sitting on the veranda of my old home in Knoxville, Tennessee, on Friday, 24 July 1914, and reading on an inside page of the morning paper a despatch from Vienna summarizing the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia. My instant reaction, inspired by my studies of European diplomacy and Balkan politics for some years, was, "It is the great war at last." A second recollection is of Sunday, 2 August. I was awakened prematurely by the thud of the Sunday paper as it was thrown on the porch, and rushed down to get it. The front headline, in huge letters, read: "European War Is On!" Finally, on Tuesday evening, 4 August, I went into town to learn the latest news and read on the bulletins that Great Britain had, on account of the violation of Belgian neutrality, declared war on Germany. These incidents are indelibly engraved on my memory. So you will no doubt appreciate my emotions when in the course of 1928 I was able to talk personally with many of the principal

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personages who in July 1914 had plunged the old world into war.

The occasion for the great struggle was provided by the murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo on Sunday, 28 June 1914, by Gavrilo Printsip, a man of Serbian race who had been outfitted with the necessary weapons in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. In its famous ultimatum the Austro-Hungarian government charged Serbia with the moral responsibility for the crime, on the ground that the Serbian government had for years encouraged among its own people and among the Serbian population of Bosnia-Herzegovina an agitation directed against the integrity of the Habsburg Monarchy. This could not in fact be denied. But what people wished to know was whether the Serbian government had been privy to or cognizant of the conspiracy. No light was shed until 1924, when a prominent Serbian politician, M. Lyuba Yovanovich, asserted that in fact the Serbian government, of which he was a member, had learned of the plot several weeks before its execution and had made unsuccessful efforts to stop it. Since then this allegation has been the theme of acrid controversy, which is not yet determined. Unfortunately, when I attempted to make an investigation on the spot, both Yovanovich and his rival, Nikola K. Pashich, against whom he had brought the charge of knowing about the plot and who had denied it, were both dead. So also was the person who is supposed

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to have sanctioned it, Colonel Dragutin Dimitriyevich, the chief of the intelligence section of the Serbian general staff in 1914. All I could do was to speak with friends of these three Serbs. From these gentlemen I learned much about the internal politics of Serbia before the war, but either they were not informed on, or else they would not speak precisely about, the question whether the Serbian government knew of the plot.

I was not more successful, and I had not expected to be, with the king, concerning whose connection with the conspirators numerous sensational stories have been told. King Alexander, a vigorous, keen man of about forty, received me with great courtesy and talked readily about the problems of his country—this was six months before the proclamation of the dictatorship. But when I was bold enough to mention the name of Colonel Dimitriyevich, it was evident that I had touched a painful subject. His Majesty contented himself with saying that the colonel, who had been executed in 1917 for an alleged attempt to kill Alexander, had caused a great deal of trouble, and changed the subject. I had been told that the King was sometimes indiscreet and conceivably might say something; but I was disappointed. In general, my conversations with many Serbs left on me the impression that the moral indignation of the western world over the assassination of the archduke was not, perhaps could not be, comprehended by a nation which had

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lived for centuries under the Turkish yoke and had grown accustomed to violent methods as the only recourse against oppression.

According to one intriguing version, the plot against Francis Ferdinand was known to the Russian military attaché in Belgrade, and its execution had been finally determined upon only after the Russian officer had given assurances that if, in consequence, Serbia found herself at war with Austria-Hungary, she would not stand alone. As it happened, the attaché, General V. I. Artamonov, was living in Belgrade at the time of my visit, and it was not difficult to see him. Admitting his close relationship with Colonel Dimitriyevich, to whom he had supplied money for the procuring of photographic apparatus to use in getting military information from Bosnia, he denied that he had been cognizant of the Sarajevo conspiracy or that, as has been alleged by one writer, he had informed Dimitriyevich of a supposed plan of William II and Francis Ferdinand to begin an Austrian war against Serbia at the first opportunity. He said that he had received no such intelligence and adduced letters to show that his substitute—for he himself had gone on leave in the middle of June—had made no communications to the Serbian general staff. General Artamonov did not look the part of a conspirator or an accomplice in murder, and I was disposed to believe that he was telling me the truth.

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But however doubtful it may be that Russia was aware of the Sarajevo plot, certainly the Austro-Serbian dispute would have remained localized had not Russia intervened to support Serbia. Of all the *apologiae* written by the actors of July, 1914, that by Sergey Sazonov, the Russian foreign minister, is the least satisfactory, for it was composed in exile and without the aid of documents. It would, therefore, have been for me an experience of the greatest value to talk personally with the Russian statesman. Unfortunately, M. Sazonov died just before I started on my tour of investigation. I was able, however, to make the acquaintance of M. Peter Bark, the minister of finance in the Russian government, who is now a banker in London. M. Bark said frankly that after so many years, he had only a hazy recollection of details, and this proved to be the case. On one point, however, he was specific: the Russian cabinet had not been consulted about the general mobilization. That was an issue for the Tsar himself, and Nicholas II had decided after consultation with individuals without reference to the council of ministers. This prerogative of the crown in matters pertaining to the army and the navy was not peculiar to Russia, but was exercised as well in Austria-Hungary and Germany, and for this reason it is correct to describe those three states as military monarchies, in contrast with Great Britain and France, where such military decisions were taken by the civil government.

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I was also able to see, in Paris, Baron M. Schilling, who was Sazonov's *chef de cabinet*. Like Bark, Schilling declared that his recollections were no longer clear; and he referred me to the *Diary* which he had kept during the crisis and which was published some years ago by the Soviet government. I was thoroughly familiar with the *Diary*, but some of its entries are difficult to reconcile with contemporary documents. When I pointed out some of these discrepancies, the baron replied that what he wrote down day by day was what was told him by his chief, Sazonov, or what he learned in the Russian foreign office. He admitted that Sazonov or other persons might have concealed things from him or that the information received in the foreign office might have been incorrect. But he insisted, and one could only agree with him, that his *Diary* described the situation as it was understood at the time, and that as a strictly contemporary document, it was to be valued far higher as a historical source than the post-war recollections of Russian generals and statesmen. Naturally, Baron Schilling asserted that Russia had not planned nor desired war; he emphasized the point that at the beginning of the crisis, M. Sazonov, recalling what had happened in the winter of 1912-13, had proceeded on the assumption that Germany would restrain her impetuous ally in Vienna. The Austrian declaration of war against Serbia, however, convinced him [Sazonov] that Germany not only stood

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behind Austria-Hungary but actually 'herself' desired and contemplated war: wherefore Russia had no alternative but to prepare for this eventuality as fully and as promptly as possible. Schilling also maintained the accuracy of the notation in his *Diary* that the French ambassador, Maurice Paléologue, had given the most unqualified assurances that France would support her ally, an assurance given before the Austrian declaration of war had rendered the situation hopeless.

There is no trace of any such incident in M. Paléologue's own memoirs. Consequently, I endeavored to see him. But it was midsummer, and the former ambassador left Paris on the very day that my letter of introduction reached him. What the French documents may have to reveal on this point, when they are published, will be studied with particular attention.

Not seeing M. Paléologue was, however, more than compensated for by a long conversation with M. Raymond Poincaré, who is represented by German writers as being, with the late A. P. Izvolsky, former Russian ambassador in Paris, the principal author of the war. At the time of my visit M. Poincaré was president of the council and minister of finances, so that he received in one of the *pavillons* in the Louvre instead of at the Quai d'Orsay. He is not an impressive person in appearance. Small, dressed without style—he was wearing the kind of cuff in vogue a generation ago—he

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looked, as someone has rather disrespectfully put it, more like an *épicier* than a great statesman. But the moment he began to speak, one was aware of a remarkable intelligence which commanded all the pertinent facts and reached conclusions intuitively and instantly. On all the minute points of the controversy concerning the responsibility for the war, he seemed as well informed as myself, and he answered my questions without hesitation or embarrassment. I will select three episodes.

1. When the crisis broke in July 1914, M. Poincaré was on a visit to the Tsar. As it happened, the British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, had suggested that it might be desirable and possible for Russia and Austria-Hungary, the two Powers directly interested in Serbia, to hold conversations *à deux*, with the object of forestalling trouble between them when Austria demanded satisfaction from Serbia for the Sarajevo murder. When this suggestion was conveyed to M. Poincaré by the British ambassador in St. Petersburg, he had promptly rejected it as "dangerous." Why?—many commentators have asked. Does this not show, it has been argued, that the French statesman secretly desired an Austro-Russian quarrel? I put the question to him directly. Not at all, he replied. Such a procedure would be dangerous, he thought, because Austria and Russia would be likely to take stiff attitudes at once, and the difficulty of mediation would be greatly increased. What he wished

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to do was to organize the concert of Europe, as he had successfully done in 1912, and try to keep the peace by the mediation of all the Powers.

2. In the fourth volume of his memoirs, M. Poincaré published a telegram sent from Paris to St. Petersburg on Thursday, 30 July 1914. As there given it asked the Russian government to refrain from either general or partial mobilization. But the telegram had already been published in the *British Documents on the Origins of the War* (for a copy had been sent to London), and German writers had noticed that the version given by M. Poincaré was inaccurate: by omitting the words, "which would give Germany the pretext for," he had, so they claimed, tried to make it appear that he had advised Russia not to mobilize, whereas in fact he had merely urged her not to give Germany a pretext for such action. The omission of the six words had been explained as a printer's error. Without indicating that I was aware of this explanation, I simply stated that I had noted the incorrect version given in his book. M. Poincaré repeated to me that the error was "une faute d'impression," which I had expected. But he went on to say that the subsequent pages of his narrative, in which he referred several times to the telegram, proved that he had not been guilty of deliberate editing, for what he had written made clear that he supposed he had quoted the telegram correctly in his first reference. This statement was true, as

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I had noted when reading his book. But, not content with that, he asserted that when the error had been discovered, he had taken pains to see that the correct text was printed in the English translation of his book; and with that, he opened a drawer of his desk, took out a copy of the English translation, and leafed through it till he found the passage in question, which he showed to me. Later in the day, he sent me an autographed copy of the English translation.

3. On the evening of Friday, 31 July, the Swiss minister in Paris called at the Quai d'Orsay to say that he had learned that the Austro-Hungarian ambassador had confided to their Rumanian colleague that if Serbia were to address herself to Austria-Hungary, either directly or through friendly Powers, perhaps the Cabinet of Vienna would be willing to indicate certain "additional demands" which it intended to put forward as the price of peace with Serbia. It had been charged that M. Poincaré, in his eagerness for war, did not follow up this overture. He himself claimed in his memoirs that he had not heard of the incident until 1920. I pointed out to my host that the overture was mentioned in one of the documents in the French *Yellow Book* of 1914. - The inconsistency did not phase M. Poincaré in the least. Of course, he said, he had heard of the suggestion, which had been communicated to the French Government by the Austro-Hungarian ambassador himself as

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a personal opinion: but he insisted that he had not known of the action of the Swiss minister, and a reference to his book would show that this was all he had said.

Our conversation lasted an hour, and many other points were touched upon. As I rose to go, he asked me about Harry Elmer Barnes, who has been his chief traducer in this country. Poincaré expressed his indignation that Barnes had had the bad taste to request an interview with him. Fortunately, he said, he had another engagement at the time which Barnes had proposed, and there the matter had ended. Altogether M. Poincaré left the impression on me of a man absolutely convinced of the rightness of his conduct and prepared to defend it unreservedly.

The same thing could hardly be said of Sir Edward (now Viscount) Grey, the British secretary for foreign affairs. At any rate Lord Grey was prepared to discuss the hypothesis that he had made mistakes. Thus he spontaneously remarked that perhaps there was point to the criticism that during the July crisis he had tried to negotiate with Vienna through the medium of Berlin instead of turning directly to the Austro-Hungarian government. He had followed this course because he assumed that Austria would and could not move without the approval of Germany and because these tactics had been eminently successful during the Balkan wars of 1912-13; but he said he under-

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stood that Count Berchtold had in fact been annoyed by his [Grey's] procedure.

Of all my interviews that with Lord Grey was the most agreeable. The British statesman did not look his sixty-eight years, and although his eyesight is so poor that he does much reading in Braille, he gave the appearance of a man very vigorous physically and intellectually most alert. His handsome, clear-cut face, a rich voice, fine command of language, and perfect courtesy are perhaps only outward symbols of character. Yet one did not have to speak long with him to be aware that here was a deeply sensitive person devoted to the finer things of life, who hated war and the thought of it and was as likely to have worked for it as to have murdered his wife or sovereign. Grey was not, in my judgment, a diplomatist of the first water, for he understood little of the problems and peculiarities of other nations; but he was, I think, from the moment he assumed office entirely sincere in his efforts to adjust the differences of Great Britain with other countries and to preserve the peace of Europe. If he failed, it was assuredly not for lack of good will.

On two points he was most emphatic. In the first place, he insisted that he could not have determined the attitude of Great Britain at an early stage of the crisis. If, he explained, he had proposed to announce that Great Britain would remain neutral, as the German government desired

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and expected, one-half of the cabinet would have resigned. On the other hand, it was equally impossible to say that Great Britain would join in, as both Russian and French diplomacy urged, for then the other half would have resigned. He himself did not doubt that British interests required support of France, but he could not commit himself in advance, and I gathered that he thought such a course would have been unwise, for it would probably have aroused intense indignation in Germany and have aggravated rather than steadied the situation.

His second point was that Germany's refusal of a conference deprived him of any lever for bringing pressure to bear in St. Petersburg. Russia considered her interests threatened by the Austrian action against Serbia: if he was to ask Russia to take no action to protect those interests, he must be able to hold out some hope of a diplomatic compromise. This Germany had forestalled by the abrupt rejection of his proposal.

I ventured to broach one delicate matter to him. On 29 July he gave his famous "warning" to Prince Lichnowsky to the effect that Germany must not count on Great Britain standing aside in all circumstances, a warning which had a devastating effect in Berlin. I asked Lord Grey why he had told the French ambassador of this warning. Would it not encourage France to believe that she could count on Great Britain? He replied, "No," for M.

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Cambon kept begging him for days for assurances that Great Britain would come in: an argument fully justified, I think, by the facts as we now know them.

Grey's colleague, Lord Haldane, whom death removed before I could see him, used to say to my friend, G. P. Gooch, one of the editors of the *British Documents on the Origins of the War*, that Grey was not anti-German, but the foreign office was. There is a great deal of evidence in the *British Documents*, in the form of departmental "minutes," to support this thesis. Consequently when I went to see Lord Carnock, who as Sir Arthur Nicolson had been the permanent under-secretary of the foreign office from 1910 to 1916, I expected to find what the Germans would call a *Deutschfresser*.¹ He proved in fact to be a very mild gentleman with very little rancor toward the Germans. Indeed he went so far as to say that in his judgment Anglo-German rivalry, which seemed the dominant factor in pre-war politics, would not *per se* have led to war. He argued, and I believe that historians are coming more and more to agree, that the *fons et origo malorum* was the Austro-Russian antagonism in the Balkans. The friends and allies of the two Eastern empires could restrain them perhaps at a given moment, but in the long run they were bound to escape control. The Great War in short was an Eastern war, not a Western one.

¹ This interview occurred some years earlier.

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Lord Oxford and Asquith also died before I had arranged to see him. Mr. Winston Churchill was so busy with making a budget that he begged off; nor did I see Mr. Lloyd George, though had I known then some things I later learned, I should have made an effort to talk with him. I learned much from long and intimate talks with the editors of the *British Documents*, who, I am convinced, know much more about British policy, from having read all the materials, than do Grey and the other statesmen who directed it during the pre-war years.

But you are probably more interested in hearing what our former enemies had to say for themselves, and my experiences in Austria and Germany were in fact highly interesting. They began in Budapest, where I sought information about Count Tisza, who was Hungarian premier in 1914 and had been assassinated in October, 1918, because he was held primarily responsible for the war. Actually, Tisza at the beginning of July, 1914, had opposed making the murder at Sarajevo an excuse for war against Serbia, but later he changed his mind and sanctioned that course. Why? Various reasons have been suggested: personal indignation at the conduct of Serbia in not proceeding to an investigation of the crime and at the language of the Serbian press, the excitement of Hungarian public opinion, pressure from Germany, Tisza's love of office and his inability to dissuade Francis Joseph from the

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warlike policy. I spoke with a number of persons who had known Tisza, who had discussed this very problem with him, and from each I received a different explanation. Nevertheless, in spite of their admissions that Tisza could have prevented the war had he stood up for his original position, these same Hungarians contended that the war had been Austria's and not Hungary's war, and that Hungary had been most unfairly punished in the peace settlements.

It is true, however, to say that the driving force for war had come from Vienna and not from Budapest. Foremost in the advocacy of this policy had been the chief of the general staff, General Conrad von Hötzendorf, as his memoirs abundantly prove, and he died in the conviction that this had been the only possible policy. I was anxious to ascertain if the civil authorities also remained similarly convinced. The first of such persons whom I saw, Dr. Friedrich Ritter von Wiesner, had not changed his opinion. Wiesner is rather a tragic figure. In July 1914, he was sent to Sarajevo by the Austro-Hungarian foreign office to report on the investigation being conducted there into the circumstances of the murder. He was expected to find, if possible, proofs of the complicity of the Serbian government. He had not found them, at least he had found no evidence that clearly established the point, and had so reported to Vienna. After the war his telegram was published. Furthermore, it seemed that, in

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spite of this telegram, the Austro-Hungarian government had gone ahead with its deliberate aim of seeking war with Serbia. Thus Herr von Wiesner's position had not been an enviable one. In speaking with me, he said that his telegram had been misunderstood. Personally he was at the time quite convinced, by the evidence secured at the investigation, of the moral culpability of the Serbian government for the Sarajevo crime, but as the evidence was not of the kind which a court of law would accept, he had been unwilling to have it used in the formal case against Serbia. He had, he said, made this clear on his return to Vienna, and the charge that the government had deliberately disregarded his exculpation of the Serbian government was, he argued, unjustified. Wiesner was the most bitter of all the people in either camp with whom I spoke.

On the other hand, Count Alexander Hoyos, who was the *chef de cabinet* of Count Berchtold, took a rather philosophical view of the problem. Hoyos intrigued me more than any other figure. After the murder he had been sent to Berlin as the special emissary of the Austrian government, bearing documents the consideration of which took place at Potsdam on 5 July. On his return to Vienna, Hoyos made a report of his mission in the presence of Berchtold, Tisza, and the German ambassador in Vienna. According to the latter's account of the conference, Hoyos had read a memorandum, which

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appeared to be a document rather compromising for Germany. But it was not contained in either the German or Austrian collections published after the war. I was unusually keen, therefore, to see Hoyos and secure positive information about this document. To my disgust I was told in Vienna that he was in the country for the summer. At the suggestion of the American minister, whose personal friend he was, I rang him up on the long-distance telephone. In my best German I announced myself as a professor in the University of Chicago and the bearer of a letter of introduction from his Excellency the American minister. Count Hoyos answered in perfect English. (I later learned that his mother was an English lady, Miss Whitehead, a member of the family which manufactured torpedoes for the Austro-Hungarian navy at Pola.) The count readily agreed to see me in the country and the next day I traveled to Schloss Schwertberg in the Danube Valley, where I spent a delightful afternoon with the Hoyos family. Hoyos, I might add, is not a Magyar noble, as his name seemed to imply, but of Spanish descent, the family having come to Austria during the Thirty Years' War.

When I mentioned the memorandum, Hoyos laughed. It had never existed! At the conference he had read from some hastily-made notes. He had intended to prepare a formal record of his conversations in Berlin, but in the crowded days which fol-

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lowed, never did so, and ultimately his notes had been lost. So my brilliant hypothesis was exploded, and one had a new illustration of the danger of trying to reconstruct history solely from documents. Count Hoyos admitted, however, what I had deduced from other documents and which has been generally overlooked by most writers: that he had explained to the German government that Austria-Hungary desired war with Serbia and that Germany, in agreeing to support her ally, did not do so in ignorance of what was planned. The count also said that a mistake had been made when the Austro-Hungarian minister in Belgrade was instructed to break off diplomatic relations in case the Serbian reply did not follow the Austrian ultimatum word for word; and when I suggested that if Austria-Hungary, instead of rejecting the Serbian reply as unsatisfactory, had put Serbia to the test of living up to it, the Habsburg Monarchy would have taken an unassailable diplomatic position which the other Powers would have been compelled to support, Hoyos said that perhaps I was right.

After my visit to Count Hoyos, I proceeded to Paris. While there I received a letter from a lady whom I had met in Budapest. She said that she had talked with her friend, Count Berchtold, about me, and the count had expressed a desire to meet me; indeed, if it would be convenient for me, he would be pleased to entertain me at his castle in

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Moravia. As it happened, I was going to Berlin later in the summer, so I at once intimated that I should be happy to accept an invitation from Count Berchtold. The invitation was awaiting me when I reached Berlin.

Buchlau, the seat of the Berchtold family, is extraordinarily interesting. There are two castles. One, built on a high hill eight hundred years ago, was never captured even in the palmiest days of feudal warfare, and has been uninterruptedly occupied by a Berchtold throughout the centuries. It is a veritable museum of costume and household goods actually possessed by the family and carefully preserved from generation to generation. Count Berchtold personally conducted me through the countless rooms and recited the history of each piece. I never spent a more interesting morning. The newer castle, now used as the residence of the main branch of the family, was built at the beginning of the eighteenth century by a famous Italian architect. The salon is a magnificent oval-shaped room two stories in height, with a gallery about half way up the sides, and overlooks a charming formal garden. On either side are the living quarters, and in the rear a handsome building once a stable but since the coming of the motor car converted into guestrooms. Count Berchtold has allowed the servants' quarters to be fitted up with electric light, but in the dining-room candles are still used and elsewhere kerosene lamps—which fit

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very well with the exquisite eighteenth-century furniture and the long line of ancestral portraits. Buchlau, I may remark, has long been famous for the meeting between Baron Aehrenthal and M. Izvolsky, Austrian and Russian foreign ministers respectively, in September, 1908, where they discussed the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the opening of the Straits. There has been endless controversy as to what was said. Count Berchtold gave me his version, as he had received it from each of his guests—but that is too long a story. He has placed a tablet on the wall of the room in which the conferences took place.

My host was as charming a gentleman as I ever met. Elegantly attired, lively of speech, full of art and literature and horse-breeding—which interested him far more than politics—wearing his sixty-five years with grace and ease, properly attentive to each of his dozen guests, to whom he spoke in German, French, Magyar, or English (he also knew Czech and Italian), he made one feel welcome; and to me, a complete stranger to him, he was courtesy personified. Although I disagreed with many of his political views, I was warmly attracted by the man and understood his popularity in the elegant world of pre-war days. Nor should I fail to mention the Countess Berchtold, a gracious lady much interested in the poor children of Vienna, or the elder son, Count Louis, whom his father was thinking of sending to the United States

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to complete his education. The family estates in Czechoslovakia had been largely lost as a result of the agrarian reform in that country, but those in Hungary had been saved, so that there was still, so one had to conclude, an ample fortune for maintaining the old manner of life. It was interesting to learn that the Czechoslovak government had for some years been very suspicious of Count Berchtold and refused to let him live at Buchlau. But he had so fully demonstrated his complete retirement from politics that in 1928 he was given permission to spend four months there.

Off and on for two days, I discussed with Count Berchtold various phases of his policy as Austro-Hungarian foreign minister. It was not always an easy task, for he was prone to go off on a tangent and a conversation which began with politics might end with architecture. But I finally wrote out a little memorandum which I read to him and corrected in accordance with his suggestions. The document is too long to read here, so I state briefly only the essential points.

1. Immediately after the murder at Sarajevo he would have liked to take military action against Serbia, without waiting for mobilization—a procedure blocked by the opposition of General Conrad on military grounds and by Count Tisza for political reasons.

2. In the days following he was repeatedly urged to military action by Germany—of which, it may

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be remarked in passing, there is abundant documentary evidence.

3. He had desired Serbia to accept the ultimatum. This statement I challenged, citing the remarks of the German ambassador in Vienna to the effect that the ultimatum had been so drafted as to make its acceptance out of the question; to which Count Berchtold replied that he had not read the German documents to which I referred! I did not believe that Berchtold was deliberately trying to deceive me: rather after so many years he had simply convinced himself that he had not deliberately provoked war with Serbia.

4. He admitted that his plan had been to partition Serbia among her neighbors, without, however, taking any part of her territory for Austria.

5. He thought it a great pity that Sir Edward Grey had made his successive proposals for mediation to Berlin instead of at Vienna. He himself, he contended, had accepted the German view that Great Britain would keep out of the war, and he was the more inclined to believe this because the British ambassador in Vienna, who was personally sympathetic with Austria, was not instructed by Grey to make representations which would have caused him [Berchtold] to take another view of British policy. Personally, I doubt if the situation in 1914 was what Berchtold described it to be in 1928; but there may be something in his argument.

6. He insisted that he had accepted Grey's final proposal of mediation, which had been overtaken

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by the Russian mobilization. What the contemporary documents show is that Berchtold sent a note to London accepting British mediation on paper, but he attached to it conditions which would render that mediation illusory: for the Austrian advance against Serbia was to continue and Russia was to stop all her military preparations.

Count Berchtold expressed to me his lively desire to meet Sir Edward Grey, and said that he had intended to invite his great antagonist, M. Sazonov, to visit him; but unfortunately the latter had died. In my room I discovered a copy of the memoirs of Prince Lichnowsky, the German ambassador in London, with many highly interesting annotations by Berchtold. He told me that he was writing his memoirs—when he had nothing else to do! Recently their completion has been announced, and they promise to offer instructive reading. Unlike his subordinate, Count Hoyos, Count Berchtold could not appreciate the objections raised elsewhere to his policy; he embodied in his person the essence of the Habsburg Monarchy which went blindly to its doom.

Turning at last to my adventures among the Germans, I may say that although I spoke with very many scholars and propagandists, I was less successful in seeing the men of 1914 than I had hoped. Thus I was not able to meet Herr von Jagow, the foreign minister of 1914, Dr. Zimmermann, the under-secretary, or Admiral von Tirpitz. In

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part, this was due to the fact that I reached Berlin in midsummer, and I was told that these gentlemen were away on their holidays. In the case of Herr von Jagow, however, I have some reason for suspecting that he was unwilling to talk with me, for I had published in *Current History* a sharp reply to an article by himself, in which article I had, in polite language, accused him of lying; so that I was really not surprised when he evaded an interview. I suppose I was as indiscreet as Mr. Barnes!

But one very interesting conversation I did have—with General von Haeften, who in 1914 had been the adjutant of General von Moltke, the chief of the general staff. Most writers have condemned Moltke for his effort to bring about an early German mobilization, in opposition to the policy of the chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, who wished to delay that step in order to saddle Russia with responsibility for the war. Haeften denied that the chief of staff favored a preventive war and had tried to bring it about. But he [Haeften] became excited and overeloquent, and said, I fancy, rather more than he realized. For he practically admitted that Moltke believed a general war unavoidable and therefore demanded the military measures which the political situation required. What I could not ascertain was whether Moltke had, as is usually charged, gone behind the back of Bethmann in inciting the Austrians to action and refusal of the British proposals of mediation. The state-

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ment which interested me most was that Moltke was quite terror-stricken on learning that England was coming into the war, raising his hands toward heaven and exclaiming, "England will attack us, England will attack us!" The point of the story is that while Moltke, according to the available evidence, expected England to take the side of France, he did not believe that she would be able to make up her mind promptly and would arrive on the scene of action too late, that is, not until the German armies sweeping through Belgium had rolled up their adversaries and rendered France *hors de combat*. Throughout our conversation General von Haeften denounced the incompetent Bethmann-Hollweg in vigorous language, and I must confess to considerable sympathy with his point of view.

While in Berlin I was the guest of honor at a luncheon given by one of the numerous societies interested in relieving Germany of responsibility for the war. In a brief speech, I remarked that I was making the rounds of the different countries involved in the war, and stated that I had seen Grey, Poincaré, etc. After the luncheon, a former general asked if I was going to visit the Kaiser. I replied that I did not have the entrée to His Majesty. The general, who, I learned later, is a personal friend of the fallen monarch, said that he could arrange it, and took my address. About three weeks later I received, in London, a letter from

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the Hofmarschall at Haus Doorn, saying that His Majesty would be pleased to receive me and that if I would telegraph the hour of my arrival at Utrecht, the nearest station, "ein kaiserliches Auto" would be sent to fetch me to Haus Doorn. So on Tuesday, 28 August 1928, I arrived at Utrecht, and there, sure enough, I found a handsome gray limousine awaiting me. It bore no coat of arms and the chauffeur did not wear livery; a quiet turn-out such as any successful American might maintain. A half-hour's drive brought us to the porter's lodge of Haus Doorn. This is a new structure built by the exile to house the officials of his tiny court and his guests, who are seemingly rather numerous. Only the presence of a Dutch policeman suggested that it was not the property of a private person. I was ushered into a suite of rooms decorated with paintings, photographs, and other memorials of the old régime, and was served the usual Dutch breakfast. After an hour the adjutant on duty appeared, in plus fours, to notify me of the arrangements for the day. I would be received by the Empress at eleven and by the Emperor at noon, after which luncheon would be served, and for the rest, whatever circumstances might suggest; I was asked to wear a dark suit.

Shortly before eleven the house doctor came to escort me to the imperial residence, which is a house of fourteen rooms built something more than a century ago by a prosperous merchant. Since the

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Empress's five children have to be accommodated, the house is none too large; it impressed me as being more comfortable than the palaces inhabited in the days of power. The fittings were elegant, most of them brought from Germany, but in keeping with an unpretentious establishment. The servants wore dark blue uniforms, and there were no guards about.

The Empress—as she is called, though she has no right to the title—received me in her sitting-room. She is rather a plump woman, motherly and devoted to her present husband. She talked first of Woodrow Wilson, toward whom she seemed to feel rather bitter and about whom she believed the scandals which were once current. She then denounced the Dawes Plan which, she insisted, was driving Germany toward Bolshevism and ruin. Finally she came to speak of the Emperor. She explained that he kept himself from growing morose and despondent by omnivorous reading and that, in talking with him, I should find him prone to discourse on many topics. But since I had come to speak of particular things, I should not hesitate to interrupt and bring him back to what I wished to know. By this time an hour had passed, and the servant entered to say that His Majesty was now ready to see me. So I withdrew, descended to the ground floor, and was taken into the Emperor's study by the adjutant.

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It was hard to believe that I was about to face the person who has probably been the most ex-coriated man of our time. But before I could give myself over to meditation, the door opened and in walked William II of Hohenzollern, once German Emperor and King of Prussia. Dressed in a gray suit with a pink tie adorned with a pin of the Prussian order *pour le Mérite*, brown shoes, white spats, and a straw hat, his eyes flashed as he came forward with outstretched hand to say, "How do you do, professor? I am very glad to see you." I bowed slightly, and he invited me to be seated. Then, "What can I do for you?" I explained that I was investigating the origins of the war and had talked with many of the survivors of 1914.

"Well," he said, "the answer is very simple. Cecil Rhodes made the war." Whereupon he descanted for a quarter of an hour on the iniquity of Rhodes, who as far back as 1895—the time of the Jameson raid—had planned to destroy Germany, because Germany stood in the way of his African ambitions. Whether His Majesty knew that I had been a Rhodes Scholar did not come out. He declared that Edward VII (his own uncle) and Edward Grey were merely the instruments of Rhodes, and when I remarked that most German writers were now disposed to absolve England of deliberately plotting the war and laid the blame on Poincaré and Izvolsky, he waived these suggestions airily aside and repeated his original proposi-

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tion. He seemed also to attach credence to the tale circulated years ago by R. G. Usher of an Anglo-Franco-American alliance directed against Germany; to prove this he produced a sensational pamphlet by an American woman whose name I have forgotten. To these astonishing theories I really had no answer. But when I remembered that several years ago, in speaking with another American, he was said to have laid the blame for the war on the Jews, I realized that William II possessed the capacity to believe at any moment what pleased or suited him, that he was a highly emotional personality whose reflexes could not be gauged by ordinary standards, and that I was not likely to secure from him any positive or satisfactory information. I also appreciated that he must have been an exceedingly difficult problem for his ministers and advisers, who, it is well known, were sometimes greatly inconvenienced by his sudden actions and consequently did not scruple to conceal from him information the effect of which on him might be disconcerting. Later His Majesty essayed to prove that the Russians had been secretly mobilizing for months before the July crisis and that the British army had secret stores of supplies in Belgium. But I should add that there was no bitterness in what he said. Finally, he presented me with an autographed picture, on which is written: "Nothing is too improbable to be true. Every once in a while all the circumstantial evidence in

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the world seems to get mobilized to down an innocent man." I supposed then that the inscription was his own composition, but I have since learned that it is taken from a book by the late C. E. Montague.

It was now one o'clock, and luncheon was announced. The company was assembled when the Emperor and myself came out of his study—about twenty persons in all. The Empress and her five children, a couple of tutors, the court officials—that is, the marshal, the adjutant, and the doctor—three generals of the old army who had come to present His Majesty with a silver cup from members of the regiment in which he had performed his first military service and two or three others whom I can no longer identify. All were somewhat dressed up, the generals in morning coats to which they did not seem accustomed. The Emperor made the round of the company and presented me to each, after which we went to table. The two royalties sat at the center of a long table facing each other; one general was on the Emperor's right, myself on his left, and he conversed alternately with us. The glassware bore the monogram of Frederick II and dated from his time, so the Emperor said. The meal was simple: soup, main course, dessert, followed by coffee in the Emperor's study. There seemed to be no constraint, and I had ample time to observe two large portraits of William and Hermine at either end of the dining-room. The

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Emperor's portrait was evidently made at Doorn, for he is represented with the Van Dyck beard he has affected since the war; none the less, he is painted in the full uniform of a field-marshal of the German army. I may say that this was the only visible sign of unrepentance anywhere about the place. As we were taking our coffee, the Emperor came up to me and asked if I would care to walk with him in the late afternoon, to which, as they say in the House of Commons, the answer was in the affirmative.

Before this little expedition, the Emperor's doctor took me over the estate, which consists of only twenty-two acres, and talked about his patient, if one may so describe a man of nearly seventy whose health was obviously excellent. By dint of wood-sawing and work in his garden, His Majesty has really kept himself quite fit, and by entertaining a constant stream of guests avoided being utterly bored. There are no legal restrictions on his movements, and he does a certain amount of motoring; but, said the doctor, in order not to arouse excitement, he does not often visit the larger towns and avoids going toward the German frontier. The marshal, the doctor, and the adjutant are all friends of the old days; they change every few months, so that the exile need not have to see the same faces for too long a period. The settlement with the Prussian government has left the Emperor in comfortable financial circumstances, though for

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a while just after the war there was a real shortage of cash. But when all was said, one could not doubt that life at Haus Doorn was rather dull, and that the punishment thus meted out to William II was far more effective than anything which the Allied and Associated Powers might have decreed if they had succeeded in bringing him to trial "for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties," as they were pleased to express it in Article 227 of the Treaty of Versailles.

At 5:30 P.M. I joined the Emperor again for our walk. He showed me the beautiful rose garden which he has presented to the town of Doorn, and then we strolled along some country lanes. Passers-by saluted him respectfully, and their greetings were scrupulously returned. I endeavored to interrogate His Majesty, whom I addressed as "You," about the war. He said that he had been most unwilling to go to Norway, but that the chancellor had insisted on it, in order not to disturb the European bourses. As to the famous conferences at Potsdam, he declared that he had understood that "the Austrians intended to give the Serbs a good hiding," and that they would do so promptly; but I could not pin him down to a more exact statement. And when I tried to speak of mobilization and the details of the July crisis, he referred me to his books, copies of which he had sent around to my room. So I came to the conclusion that I was not likely to get much information from him,

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partly because he could not remember specific points, partly because he had formed his own picture of events. I therefore let him talk his own line.

He proceeded to talk with great animation about the politics of the moment—Russia, China, the League of Nations, and his own beloved Germany. In his opinion, there was no prospect of overthrowing the Bolshevik régime by force, and the situation would have to work itself out. As for China, he was greatly pleased by the American treaty just negotiated, which had put a spoke in the wheel of the British—whom he dislikes as much as ever. For the League of Nations, he showed a rather amused contempt. But most of his talk had to do with Germany. The Germans, he argued, are not a western but an eastern people: that is to say, they require an autocracy or a dictatorship. The present rulers were all reds, or at least pinks, and were ruining the country, driving it steadily toward Bolshevism. I ventured to ask if he did not think that Dr. Stresemann had been conspicuously successful in the conduct of German foreign policy. “Stresemann,” he exclaimed, “Stresemann! He’s the greatest scoundrel unhung!” In his opinion, the time would come when the United States would appreciate the help of Germany against Great Britain, and if he were back in Berlin, he would see to it that this support was given. We would yet regret the day when we insisted on his abdication. For, he said, shaking his fist in my face, “You—

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meaning the United States—are responsible for my being here; and it is your duty to see that justice is done.” To which there was nothing I could say.

The Emperor speaks excellent English, with a keen appreciation of idiom, and his language is always vigorous, not to say picturesque. In spite of everything, I could understand how it was that for thirty years he captivated all who knew him. Convinced as he is of the rightness of his course and conduct, he will go to his grave thoroughly unable to understand why, after long years of hate, he has been repudiated by his own people and forgotten by the rest of the world.

The hour drew near for my departure. His Majesty graciously accompanied me to the lodge, where the gray limousine was waiting. My bags had already been loaded. The Emperor asked for my address, so that he might send me any subsequent writings of his about the war, and I gave the adjutant my card. The Emperor himself opened the door. I took my seat. The great car got slowly under way, and as it rolled under the gateway, I beheld William II, hat in hand, bowing low to a citizen of the country which he had declared was chiefly responsible for his presence there that day.

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