



KAISERLY CONTEMPLATION.  
—De Notenkraker (Amsterdam).



NOT A PALMY FUTURE.  
—The Passing Show (London).

“I MUST HAVE BEEN CRAZY.”

**T**HAT will soon be the call of the Clerk of the Court of Nations, say some editorial observers who wonder whether the jury will hold him guilty of the war and its barbarities, or whether they will be impressed by the arguments of some of his German defenders that his case is a matter for the alienists. Then, too, there is the question whether as the head of a sovereign state he can be charged and tried as a common criminal. From certain Berlin dispatches we learn that the indictment of the ex-Kaiser by the Entente in the report of the Commission on the Responsibility of the Authors of the War and on the Enforcement of Penalties “created little excitement among the people.” The explanation given is that whatever level-headed Germans remain are so much in terror of “Spartacus and his Independent and Communist friends” that they have no time to think of anything else. By the majority of the German people, we are told, the ex-Kaiser is regarded as “a theatrical villain whose vainglorious all-mightiness led to Germany’s downfall. They blame him for not dying on the battle-field instead of fleeing, coward-like, from the consequences of his own misdeeds.” They are so sore over the fact that such a man should have ruled them for thirty years, Berlin dispatches further advise us, that if a plebiscite were taken, they would surrender him to the Allies by an overwhelming majority.

We find the ex-Kaiser pleasantly nicknamed the “grave-digger of Germany” by Count Hoensbroech, an avowed monarchist, who says in his book, “The Abdication and Flight of William II.,” that—

“The rotten branch on the Hohenzollern tree must be broken off, so that the tree may once more bloom and flourish. William II. is superficial, frivolous, vain, and autocratic; a lover of pomp; proud of his money; void of seriousness; a petty worshiper of his own petty self; without one trait of greatness, a *poseur*, an actor, and, worst of all for a ruler, a coward.”

The Berlin *Deutsche Zeitung* calls attention to the unpublished third volume of Bismarck’s “Reflections and Reminiscences,”

in which the ex-Chancellor indicated that William II. suffered from incipient insanity, due to an affection of the ear, which caused him suffering throughout his life. We are told that with the ex-Kaiser's permission Bismarck called medical experts before his break with William II., and their judgment indicated the influence this affection would probably have on the mind of the Imperial patient. Certificates to this effect given by these physicians are said to be included in the volume. Lately a famous German physician completely nonplussed a number of sentimental adherents of various classes, most of whom were women, who wished to arrange an indignation mass-meeting to protest against the trial of the ex-Kaiser. This medical man said to them coldly: "Place him under the observation of specialists in mental diseases and he probably will never be tried." Of entirely different temper is Prof. Theodor Schiemann, who, in the Berlin *Tägliche Rundschau*, says that the trial of the ex-Kaiser would be "a most shocking disregard of international and moral laws beautified by tradition," and he adds that "only the bad conscience of the Five Powers—America, England, France, Italy, and Japan—which would be his judges, can make us comprehend this demand."

But that the attitude of the Commission on the Responsibility of the Authors of the War and on the Enforcement of Penalties is not sufficiently strict to satisfy certain sections of the British press may be gathered from the observation of the London *Pall Mall Gazette* that—

"The men who wantonly made war were the wilful authors of butchery upon a scale never dreamed of, and in the sole interests of a vile ambition. Yet the Commission propose that upon this count there shall be no prosecution and no punishment. The man who takes one life may be hanged; the potentate who for no worthier motive wipes out millions is to undergo nothing worse than 'a formal condemnation by the Conference.' We should hope there is enough imagination in the Conference itself to save it from the adoption of so futile and self-stultifying a judgment. There can be little confidence reposed in a League of Nations if the Powers which are to compose it can find no sterner recompense for the blackest of all deeds than a verbal expression of their own pious horror."

*The Literary Digest for May 31, 1919*

OldMagazineArticles.com