

THE HOUSE OF HOHENZOLLERN

In the extreme southwestern corner of Germany just north of Switzerland lies the old German duchy of Suabia with its famous Black Forest. There not far from the headwaters of the Rhine the Danube takes its rise; and there also many of the great ruling families of Germany began their long careers. Toward the north is the castle of Hohenstaufen; at the south is the castle of Hapsburg. Midway between them some time in the Middle Ages another great German family built a stronghold commanding the roads through the high valleys that lead up to Switzerland. It was known as Hohenzollern—the High Tolls—and from it after the fashion of their time its masters levied tribute upon the traders who made their way between Italy and Germany. There for some generations they lived undistinguished from their fellows.

But some time about the year 1170—the year in which Thomas a Becket was murdered in England, and about the time Saladin, the great antagonist of Richard I., became Sultan of Egypt—a certain younger son of the house of Hohenzollern, Conrad by name, finding no prospect of bettering his condition at home, set out to serve with the great German emperor, the Hohenstaufen Frederick I., Barbarossa, he of the red beard, famous in history and legend. Conrad found favor with the emperor. He found still more favor with a lady of the court, the heiress of the house of Voburg, whom he married; and through her family's claims to the burgraviate, or city countship, of Nuremberg, which was one of the chief commercial centres of Germany, he became the ruler of traders upon whom his family had long levied tolls at Hohenzollern. Thus he founded the fortunes of his house; for the burgraves of Nuremberg were by their office princes of the empire; and Conrad's daughter married her cousin Frederick II. of the older Hohenzollern line and so kept the inheritance in the family.

That was the first step in the progress of the Hohenzollerns, who thenceforth played a considerable part in German affairs. They extended their lands and influence in the region round them, and fifty years later another Conrad became the guardian of the son of Emperor Frederick II. Conrad's son Frederick married Elizabeth the sister of the Duke of Meran, and on the death of that prince acquired as his share of the Meran inheritance Bayreuth and some adjacent fiefs. It was this Frederick who brought about the election of his uncle, Rudolf of Hapsburg, to the imperial throne; and it was his son, Frederick IV., who, fighting first for Albert of Hapsburg and helping to make him emperor, went over, on Albert's death, to Ludwig of Bavaria and assisted him to defeat Frederick of Hapsburg—an act that caused him to be called "the savior of the empire."

That was not his only reward; he received substantial compensation and was enabled to buy the territory of Anspach, which adjoined Nuremberg. His son bought two other territories—Culmbach and Platsenburg—and got the privilege of seizing such robber fortresses as he could and as holding them as fiefs of the empire. In such fashion during the fourteenth century the Hohenzollerns built up a little principality of two parts—the one adjacent to Nuremberg, the other farther south. It was long and narrow, and curved from their ancestral castle till it crossed the Rhine in one direction and the Danube in the other—large, if disjoined lands in the very heart of Germany. Those territories they ruled with shrewdness and ability. They were a thrifty race, as their ability to purchase land shows; and they had gained their position not only by ability and thrift and marriage but by political skill that was of great service considering the disturbed condition of Germany during the Middle Ages.

At the beginning of the fifteenth century those qualities met with a still greater reward. Frederick of Hohenzollern contributed much to the election of the Emperor Sigismund; he contributed more to his support, and Sigismund was not ungrateful. He needed men like Frederick, for it had fallen to his lot to suppress the followers of John Huss and the Hussite heresy in Bohemia. He had taken upon himself the settlement of the great schism of the church, which for the greater part of a century had divided Catholic Europe into the adherence of two and sometimes three popes. And in 1415, when the Council of Constance was held to put an end to the scandal of the church and to provide a new basis for the allegiance of the faithful, among the various results of that great conference was the bestowal of a new dignity on the house of Hohenzollern. Frederick of Nuremberg was invested with the mark of Brandenburg and with the

title of elector—which meant that he was one of the seven men who chose the emperor—and was created archchamberlain of the empire. With that circumstance the Hohenzollern dynasty entered on a new and more important stage of its career.

The Acquisition of Prussia.

The mark of Brandenburg lay in what was then the extreme northeastern corner of Germany. The Wends, one of the many heathen tribes that lived in the Baltic lands and along the eastern border of Germany, had originally inhabited it; but as the German people began to expand during the Middle Ages they set up on their eastern border what were known as "marks", or marches, to protect themselves from the barbarians. The mark of the Billungs was on the north; the North Mark was just south of it; and the East Mark and the mark of Thuringia were still further south; the Bavarian East Mark, which became the Duchy of Austria, was farthest south of all. The marks of Carinthia, of Carniola and of Istria, which had come into the hands of the house of Hapsburg, completed a long chain of border states, which were granted to various leaders with the privilege of holding all the land that they could conquer. Little by little as the adjoining lands were subdued and colonized they were added to the empire.

Among them was the mark of Brandenburg, the so-called Middle Mark, which had been granted to a Thuringian family of the house of Ballenstedt. Its greatest figure had been a certain Albert the Bear, who had finally subdued the Wends and had added their territory to the lands that owned the authority of the empire. He had died at almost precisely the same moment that Conrad of Hohenzollern had set out on his adventure that led his family to Albert's inheritance; and when the house of Ballenstedt became extinct that important outpost of the empire, the mark of Brandenburg, which had passed through various hands, was finally granted, or, as some ill-natured people suggest, sold to the house of Hohenzollern.

It was a great acquisition for them not only in itself but because of its possibilities of expansion. But at first it had a curious result. Like most other German houses, the Hohenzollerns possessed extraordinarily divided territories—Hohenzollern proper, Nuremberg, and now Brandenburg, widely separated from one another and not always continuous even in themselves. And it was truly said of the great state that they came to rule in later years that, whereas most states began with a centre or core and expanded outward, Prussia began with frontiers and filled them in. For that method of expansion the whole history of the Hohenzollern family had prepared them, and with the acquisition of Brandenburg they continued it on a much greater scale. For the time being, however, the first result was to divide the family into two branches, that of Franconia and that of Brandenburg. The successive partition of its lands among the children according to the older German custom weakened the Franconian branch; its territories, increasing somewhat through the years, fell partly into the hands of the Brandenburg branch and partly into the hands of its own three main divisions until by the middle of the nineteenth century all except one division had disappeared.

The great fortunes of the family lay with the Brandenburg branch. Unlike their kinsmen, the heads of it did not divide their lands among their children but adopted the law of primogeniture, which gave the whole to the eldest son and so preserved the lands intact. By war and specially by marriage they increased their inheritance, and at the beginning of the sixteenth century an extraordinary circumstance gave them a substantial addition to their territory.

It happened that some three hundred years before, at the same time that the Hohenzollerns were becoming burgraves of Nuremberg, a crusading order known as the Teutonic Knights had been founded after the fashion of the time. At first it was confined to Palestine and the wars against the Saracens; but early in the thirteenth century a band of the knights moved to a region then outside Germany, known as Prussia, which heathen peoples like the Wends then occupied, and in conjunction with similar orders—especially the Knights of the Sword and the like—conquered the district.

Those orders gradually declined in numbers and especially in purpose; and when the Reformation came the Order of the Teutonic Knights took advantage of the situation to become secularized, and to divide their lands among themselves. It happened that at that time, 1525,

the grand master was a Hohenzollern, so that when he died without issue the Prussian territory that he had possessed reverted to the Brandenburg branch. Thus in that curious fashion the house of Hohenzollern became possessed of the territory from which it later took its title and with which it has become identified.

But with another detached territory their position had its dangers and its difficulties. The Prussian lands were held as fiefs of the King of Poland, who desired to possess them himself. Between Poland and the rising power of Sweden under the house of Vasa there was great rivalry; and between Sweden and Poland lay most of the territories of the house of Hohenzollern. Thus during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries the rulers of Brandenburg and Prussia were forced to walk warily. It was their great ambition to throw off the Polish yoke and to extend their possessions to the sea, from which Mecklenburg and Pomerania cut them off. But they were not strong enough to defy Poland, and Sweden was as ambitious as they to extend her power on all the shores of the Baltic Sea, which she aspired to turn into a Swedish lake.

"The Great Elector."

The situation came to a head in the Thirty Years' War, 1618-48, which so profoundly affected most of the ruling houses of Germany and wrought such devastation in Central Europe. In that long conflict the Hohenzollerns with skill and shrewdness, if not with much heroism or high-mindedness, played a difficult and dangerous part. The Elector George William, though a Protestant, and a brother-in-law of Gustavus Adolphus, fearing the check of his ambitions that Swedish success would bring, gave but little support to the Swedish king's attempt to rescue the German Protestants. He and his son after him shifted and negotiated and, when they could not avoid it, fought their way into such a position that when the settlement of Germany came with the Peace of Westphalia the Hohenzollerns acquired as their share of the spoil the larger part of farther Pomerania—the whole of which they had claimed—and four bishoprics in central Germany, including Magdeburg.

Such was the first achievement of the Elector Frederick William,—"the Great Elector" as he was called,—the second founder of the fortunes of his house. The achievement of another great Hohenzollern ambition soon followed it—the release of Prussia from Polish overlordship. Taking advantage of the great war between Sweden and Poland that followed the Thirty Years' War, Frederick William received for his timely aid to the Swedes the recognition of his unlimited sovereignty of Prussia. To that he added the settlement of a long-standing claim to territories in Western Germany.

Nor was that the whole of the Great Elector's contribution to the greatness of his house. Within his enlarged territories he began with his own officials to build up a new system of administration that in later times became famous as the origin of the Prussian bureaucracy. He increased his army and enlarged his diplomatic service; he encouraged agriculture and manufacturing and gave protection and encouragement to Huguenots fleeing from the persecution of Louis XIV. of France; and by so doing he began to make Brandenburg recognized as a factor to be reckoned with, not only in German but in European affairs.

Frederick the Great.

The new position of the Hohenzollern state was soon confirmed. With the death of the last of the Spanish Hapsburgs, Charles II., and the on-coming War of the Spanish Succession to determine the disposition of his dominions the emperor, looking for allies against Louis XIV., who had accepted the Spanish throne for his grandson Philip V., turned to Brandenburg for assistance. And in return for a promise of aid he permitted the elector to take the title of King of Prussia in the first year of the eighteenth century. With that event the long growth of the house of Hohenzollern proved successful beyond perhaps even the dreams of its earlier members; and it advanced toward another great turning point in its career.

The son and successor of the first King of Prussia—Frederick William I.—was not a warlike prince, but he devoted himself to two objects each of which was related to war. The first was to accumulate a great treasure; the second was to have an army out of all proportion to the size of his country. He believed that if the small state of Prussia, which had two and a half million people, was to play a considerable part in European affairs, it should be "all sting." He was especially fond of soldiers and among other things de-

cid to have a regiment of giants. His agents scoured all Europe for recruits for the organization, which soon became famous, and no man above six feet six inches was safe from them. The agents hired or even kidnapped the men they wanted wherever they found them, and the Potsdam Giant Regiment of Grenadiers with some two thousand four hundred men was one of the sights of Europe.

Of course the soldiers were too splendid and too expensive to fight; and as a matter of fact Frederick William I. engaged in only one war and that was a minor conflict. He died in 1740, the same year in which the Czarina Anna and the Emperor Charles VI. died. His son, Frederick II., called in later years Frederick the Great, succeeded him. The new king was twenty-eight years old and had spent his youth in the pursuit of literature and music—writing bad poetry and playing still worse on the flute—and in quarrelling with his stern father after the Hohenzollern manner. He had shown little aptitude or taste either for war or for politics. But scarcely was he on the throne when, taking advantage of the weakness of the Hapsburg monarchy under the Archduchess Maria Theresa, he mobilized his army and, invading the province of Silesia, which joined his territories on the south, began the so-called Wars of the Austrian Succession, or the Silesian Wars, which lasted more than twenty years, and raised the little kingdom of Prussia to the rank of a first-rate European power.

In that unscrupulous design, entered upon, as he declared, from desire to increase his dominions and to make himself famous, he was at first successful. France, Bavaria and Spain declared war against Austria and so contributed to his plans. The first Silesian War, which lasted two years, left him in possession of the territory that he had seized. But he had invoked a spirit that he could not control. All Europe and presently America were drawn into the conflict; and in the third Silesian War, or the so-called Seven Years' War, Frederick almost met destruction. The intervention of England, when was then fighting France for the control of America, saved him, and the peace of 1763 left him Silesia and a reputation for military skill and diplomatic shrewdness unmatched in Europe.

Though the war left Prussia among the first-rate powers of the continent, it was weak and impoverished from the long strain. Frederick devoted his later years to restoring his country to prosperity and he became eminent among those "enlightened despots" who spent their energies for the good of their people. He established banks, set up a "maritime company" to promote commerce, drained the marshes, codified the laws and provided an efficient if stern administration. But the tradition of greatness founded on a powerful army and on unscrupulous diplomacy remained. The partition of Poland, which began during his reign and gave Prussia the district of Posen and the lands that separated Prussia from Brandenburg, strengthened the tradition. The eastern boundaries were now filled in.

Three years after the death of Frederick the Great the French Revolution broke out. Like all absolutist monarchs, the Hohenzollerns naturally were opposed to the movement and joined Austria in sending an army against the revolutionaries. That army was defeated in the Battle of Valmy; and thereafter Prussia looked on with indifference while the French under Napoleon's leadership overran the rest of Europe. Following the tradition of the great days of Frederick the Great, Prussia was confident in the ability of its diplomacy and of its army. That confidence was shaken in 1806 when by his diplomacy Napoleon isolated Prussia and then overthrew its army in four hours at the Battle of Jena. Thereafter the Hohenzollerns were punished for their weak and selfish policy. In fact they were almost eliminated as a European power.

But the ability of three great ministers, none of whom were Prussians—Stein, Scharnhorst and Hardenberg—saved the country. The whole Prussian system was reorganized; serfdom was abolished; a national spirit was roused, and, most important for the future, a new system of military training was introduced. It was the universal, compulsory, short term service by which all able-bodied men were passed through the army. In later years all Europe adopted the system, which became the main characteristic of Prussia. When Napoleon's Russian expedition failed the Prussians were the first to desert his cause. Hohenzollern, Hapsburg and Romanov joined with England to overthrow his power; and when they had succeeded Prussia received its reward. It gained Swedish Pomerania, the greater part of Saxony and territories along the

Rhine—so-called Rhenish Prussia—that brought it to the borders of France, though the north German states separated the territories from Brandenburg. But in all of those events the weak and vacillating Hohenzollern king, Frederick William III., played little part; nor were his successors of much more account than he.

The greatness of Prussia thereafter depended chiefly upon its ministers, its officials and its army. In them it was fortunate; under their lead it began to make itself the dominant power in north Germany. It established a customs union that bound the lesser states to it; it undermined the power of its rival Austria and began the unification of Germany under the house of Hohenzollern rather than under the Hapsburgs or the German Liberals. When the Revolution of 1848 broke out Frederick William IV. was obliged to grant a constitution to his people; but it was his troops that finally crushed the Liberal movement.

"The Policy of Blood and Iron."

With the conclusion of the Revolution of 1848 there came to the front the great German statesman Bismarck, who entered on his policy of "blood and iron" to unify Germany under the Hohenzollern dynasty. First, in defiance of the people's will he increased the size of his army; then he carried on a joint war with Austria against Denmark by which Prussia occupied Schleswig; then he picked a quarrel with Austria in 1866 and defeated it and the German states that were allied with it. Then he established the North German Confederation with Prussia at the head; it was composed of states that Prussia had conquered, including Schleswig and Holstein, Hanover, Hesse, Nassau and Frankfurt. Thus Prussia filled in its boundaries on the west. Finally Bismarck found grounds for a war with France and with the aid of the south German states defeated it in 1870-71. He persuaded the German princes to offer the imperial title to William I. of Prussia, who was crowned Emperor of Germany in the Palace of Versailles on January 18, 1871. An imperial parliament at Frankfurt adopted a constitution for the new empire and the long career of the Hohenzollern family thus came to a climax.

It is apparent that this final success was owing less to the head of the house than it was to Bismarck, Moltke and Roon, who directed its military and diplomatic destinies, William I. and his son Frederick III. with all their excellent qualities were not men of great ability or of aggressive character; and it was not until the accession of William II. in 1888 that a Hohenzollern of dominating personality came to the throne. The result of his accession was soon apparent. Within five months Moltke resigned as chief of staff; and two years to a day from William II.'s succession Bismarck resigned as Chancellor of the Empire. Then the young emperor entered on what he called "the new course." He aspired to revive in his person the Great Elector and Frederick the Great, and he devoted himself to enlarging the place of Germany in European and in world politics. He turned his attention to creating a navy that should rival England's; he increased the size of the army; he encouraged commerce. While striving at home to suppress the Socialist movement, which had begun with the growth of industry in Germany, he "rattled the sword" and "shook the mailed fist" in the face of Europe. In 1914, driven on partly by circumstances and partly by the military party, he

plunged the world into war; and that great adventure brought first defeat, then revolution and his abdication.

Thus ended the greatness of the house of Hohenzollern. Its history differs in many ways from the history of the house of the Hapsburgs. It came later on the stage; it produced few men of eminence in modern times; it was fortunate in its ministers, who combined capacity for administration with aggressive ambition. But the persistence in the policy of the so-called "Hohenzollern Testament," which embodied the principles and the aims of its dynastic ambitions from generation to generation, was unsuited to an age that no longer recognized divine right; and the house fell at the moment of its greatest success and dragged with it the two other great dynasties of Hapsburg and Romanov.

HITS THE HOME

(Toronto Globe.)

A petition against betting on horse races from over 400 women of Essex County shows how this evil hits the home.

ELECTION CARDS

To the Electors of the Township of Bentinck:

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year and thank you very kindly for the generous way in which you supported by election to the position of Councillor for the Township for the year 1923. I trust to be able to serve you so well as to merit a continuance of your support.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT GRITSON.

To the Electors of the Township of Bentinck:

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I thank you for the generous support you gave me last Monday at the poll. Allow me to assure you that I shall do all in my power to merit the confidence you have placed in me.

Yours respectfully,

D. J. McDONALD.

To the Electors of the Township of Glenelg:

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I desire to thank you all sincerely for the confidence you have shown by electing me as Councillor. I hope I may be able to merit that confidence by serving you faithfully and well. The uppermost thought in my mind will be the best interests of the municipality.

Wishing you all a happy and prosperous New Year, I am,

Yours very truly,

ALEX. A. ALJOE.

COW STRAYED

Strayed to the premises of the undersigned on Tuesday, January 2, a black Polled Angus cow. Owner may have same by paying property and paying expenses. H. B. Greenwood, Durham.

Durham Machine Shop
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F. W. MOON
Machinist, Etc.
Nearly opposite Post Office

To Our Customers and the General Public:

We Wish All
A
Happy and Prosperous
New Year

HENDERSON'S BAKERY
Makers of GOOD BREAD