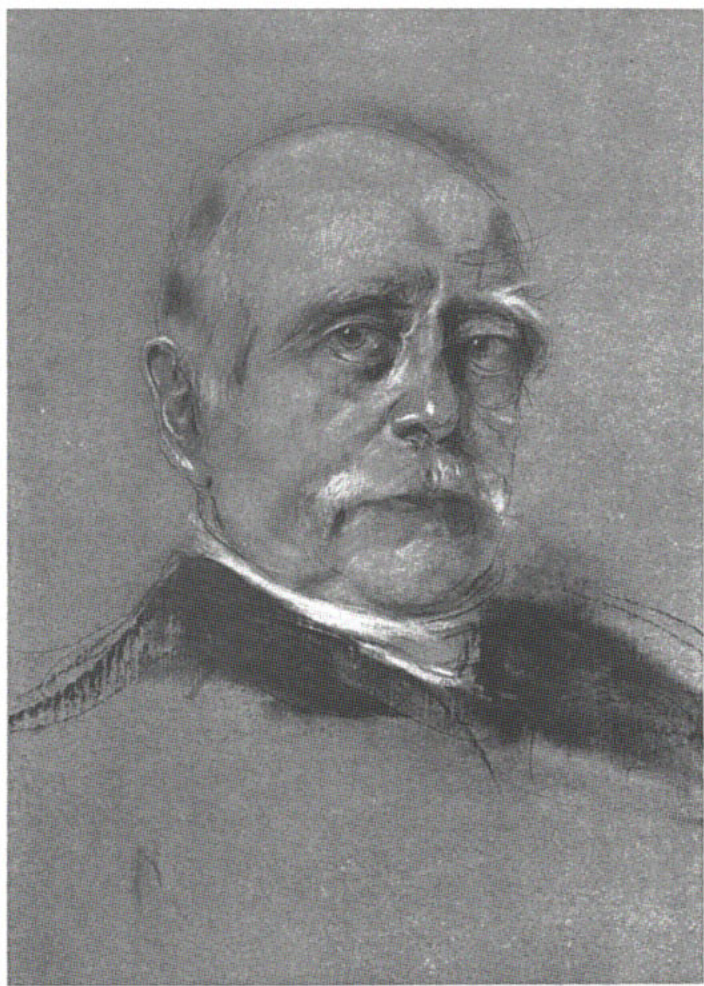


A GUIDE THROUGH
BISMARCK'S "REFLECTIONS AND
REMINISCENCES"



C. T. Wiskott Breslau.

BISMARCK'S "REFLECTIONS

AND

REMINISCENCES"

BY

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Translated from the German by

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LONDON

J. M. DENT & CO.

BEDFORD STREET, COVENT GARDEN

1899

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED,
STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

PRINCE BISMARCK'S book, to which this is supplementary, has been translated "under the supervision of A. J. Butler, late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge," with the title: "Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman, being the Reflections and Reminiscences of Otto Prince von Bismarck."

I have to acknowledge some valuable help from this version. By the courtesy of the publishers, Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., I have been allowed to quote the words of the translation, and have in such cases added the initials A. J. B.

To them and to Mr. Butler I beg to express my thanks.

PREFACE

THIS Guide through the "Reflections and Reminiscences of Prince Otto von Bismarck"* owes its origin to a suggestion that reached me from the editor's office of the *Leipziger Tageblatt*. I was requested to give the readers of that paper an *aperçu* of the contents of that important work, and I wrote a considerable number of articles as introductory to its study. They met with more approval than I had looked for; from many sides, and by men whose opinion I especially valued, I was urged to expand the essays, to collect them into book form, and to give those readers of the "Reminiscences" who, for lack of previous knowledge of the historical developments, should fail completely to understand the illustrious author, such a clue as would enable

* Translated and published under the title "Bismarck, the Man and the Statesman, being the Reflections and Reminiscences of Otto Prince von Bismarck." Smith, Elder & Co., 1898.

them to read them with all the benefit they are calculated to confer on the historical and political training of the German people.

This volume is to be regarded in that light. It presents in a condensed form the most important facts of the greater work, bridges over with historic narrative certain gaps which Prince Bismarck had consciously left because he was not writing the history of his own times, defends the Prince's work against the endless odious attacks to which it was subjected by his enemies, and supports the Prince's statements by documentary evidence when their historical accuracy has been impugned.

Including, as it does, so much that is original, it will be a valuable supplement to the "Reflections and Reminiscences." At the same time, the large majority of readers, unable probably to acquire the Prince's great work, will find in this "Guide" an epitome of the political wisdom which is enshrined in the "Reflections and Reminiscences." I have written with a view more especially to the youths of high schools and colleges, and the large body of young men employed in business, who, at the end of a day's work, are often happy to recreate their mind with some serious reading, when it comes before

them in a form adapted to their previous mental training.

Thus I hope that my book may fulfil many ends ; but the greatest end of all would be that it might incite many Germans who are not possessed of Bismarck's work to study it profoundly and master the riches of its contents. In that way the German nation can best show itself worthy of the great Statesman who left it such a record as an inheritance.

HORST KOHL.

CHEMNITZ,

February 15, 1899.

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A GUIDE THROUGH BISMARCK'S "REFLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES."

CHAPTER I.

A DEFENCE.

AN article, written in a semi-official vein, appeared in the *Leipziger Zeitung* of November 7, 1898, under the title, "The Reflections and Reminiscences of Prince Bismarck, from a French point of view." The writer pronounced judgment in a tone of considerable contempt on a work which he himself had not yet seen, judging it from a paper in the *Revue des Revues*, by a French author who asserted that he had read the documents left by the Prince, and who spoke of it as a sort of practical joke.

It is lamentable that a German should have lent himself to the further diffusion of French malignity; and still more lamentable that he should not have hesitated to lend weight to the Frenchman's verdict, by bringing forward a variety of specious arguments

discrediting Prince Bismarck's work even before it was published. To meet such an attack I regard it as a duty to throw off the reserve I have till now maintained; and as I have known the "Reflections and Reminiscences" for many years, have read them again and again, and put every statement to critical proof, I shall scarcely be denied the right to pronounce an opinion.

Before I do this, however, it will be my task to contradict a few assertions put forward in that article, since silence might be misconstrued into acceptance of them.

I read: "Herbert Bismarck's influence has undoubtedly been as important to the form given to the 'Reflections and Reminiscences' as was the German Emperor's visit to Friedrichsruh in 1895." What the writer here speaks of as "undoubted" is an absolutely wilful perversion of the truth. These notes were unknown to Prince Herbert Bismarck as a connected work till after his father's death; he never had the smallest influence on the form they took, and has made no erasures in the text. It is doing truth but an ill turn when a fact is stated as certain which has its origin in pure imagination. Nor had the German Emperor's visit in 1895 any more effect on the shaping of the Memoirs. At that time they were already finished; and during a long life Prince Bismarck amply proved that the favour of princes was not to him the first object of ambition. He always served the truth,

and the truth only ; and any one who supposes that a visit from the Emperor could have influenced him to alter a single line of what after due thought he had set down in his "Reflections and Reminiscences," judges him by his own promptings, and has no conception of the man's moral greatness.

I need scarcely defend the publisher of Bismarck's Memoirs against the Frenchman's hypothesis, accepted by the German journalist, that, as a *Geheimer Rath* (a privy councillor), he would certainly never have accepted for publication a work that was "in any way likely to cause dissatisfaction at Court or in Government circles ;" that gentleman is perfectly well able to defend himself. How absurd is the notion will at once be evident when we note the date of the agreement for the publication of the book—July 6, 1890.

At that time the legend of *Bismarck in the sulks* was almost the truth. In every paper, official or non-official, we read accounts of the old man in the Sachsenwald, brooding mischief day and night, and finding a diabolical joy in the destruction of the work of his genius and his wonder-working hands, the German Empire. How could Herr Kröner suspect that the Prince's notes, as yet unwritten, would turn out so tame and loyal that he, as a privy councillor, could stand before the Emperor as the publisher of such a book. That he should be glad not to have published Moritz Busch's book no one will think ill

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of him for. But no one has any right to conclude from that, that he would have refused to bring out the "Reflections and Reminiscences" *unaltered* if they had contained remarks which might cause annoyance in Court and official circles.

Bismarck's work could cause no disappointment—"more deeply felt in Germany even than abroad"—excepting to those who sought in it what is not to be found there—namely, scandal. Prince Bismarck was at all times the foe of the sensational; and was he the man to condescend to "produce sensational revelations, or to blurt out political secrets," thus proving that he was not, in fact, the "highly disciplined" statesman he had always shown himself? * In point of fact, we Germans have every reason to be grateful to Prince Bismarck for not having aimed in his notes at "sensations" as transient as the butterfly that lives a day, but at political instruction; he has left us a political testament of imperishable value, a "possession for ever," such as Thucydides tried to produce in his history of the Peloponnesian War.

* See his speech of December 17, 1873 (*Politische Rede*, vi. 131).

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN OF THE BOOK.

I HAVE already given, in the preface to the book, a brief account of its origin. The first impetus was supplied by a request to Prince Bismarck, supported by an offer to publish, from the great firm of Cotta. The Prince had been dismissed from office on March 20, 1890. Compulsory idleness must have been doubly irksome to a man accustomed to unremitting toil, and his faithful medical adviser, Professor Schweningen, was not without anxiety as to how his patient would bear the blow. Bismarck compared himself to a tree suddenly bereft of its espalier, and left to sway to and fro till a gale breaks it down. It was to help him over the first period of indignation and lack of occupation that Schweningen advised him to record some notes of the eventful history of his life; and he was efficiently seconded by Lothar Bucher, the historian and diplomate, who had accompanied Bismarck to Friedrichsruh, where he was for months the quiet and very welcome guest of his princely friend.

After an agreement had been concluded on July 6,

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1890, between Prince Bismarck and the representative of the Cotta publishing firm, to the effect that in the event of the Prince's making any record of his life and recollections, that house was to be allowed to publish it, it was owing to Lothar Bucher's exertions that Bismarck was confirmed in his determination to write such notes of his reminiscences and political ideas, and he made the performance of it easier.

The mess of pen and ink had always been repellent to Bismarck, and it would have been a very difficult matter to persuade him to make any systematic record of his recollections. Some other way then had to be sought for attaining this end, and Bucher found it. Prince Bismarck was naturally communicative ; and when, after breakfast or dinner, he opened to his guests the rich stores of his experience and political ideas, every listener hung on his lips. If he could but extract these recollections in some systematic sequence, and record these spontaneous utterances with the swift pen of the stenographer, they would form the basis of an autobiographical work. This was not indeed altogether easy ; the speaker was not pleased at any interruption in the flow of his ideas, and they often diverged from matters of a past time to those of the present, in which he took the most eager interest even after his dismissal. But Bucher never tired of collecting the separate stones to form a great mosaic picture, and of fitting each into its place. He sorted the immense mass of materials under the chapter-

headings which have been preserved in the finished work. After the gaps were filled in, he wrote the whole chapter out with the closest possible adherence to his stenographic notes, completed it from the Prince's dictation when any additions were needed, and then the Prince himself read it through for correction with his own hand.

Bismarck threw himself into the task with eager zeal. This may be seen not only in numerous verbal improvements of style, but in the many additional pages which he wrote in pencil to supplement the different chapters. He returned to the work again and again, and an expert can easily detect a second, third, or even fourth revision of some passages. Thus the "Reflections and Reminiscences" are, in the strictest sense, his own work—not Bucher's work, as malevolent tongues have asserted. Bucher was no more than his faithful assistant, and never asked to be anything more. Though a man of great learning himself, he felt the supremacy of genius, and bowed to it in humble deference. He would have turned with rage and disgust from such a work as Moritz Busch has written, not in honour, but in contempt of his master.*

* I believe the "Notes of Conversations with Bismarck," published some time since in the periodical *Das neue Jahrhundert*, under Lothar Bucher's name, to be apocryphal. From information supplied by Bucher's surviving brother, residing in Vienna, no such notes of any description were found among the dead man's papers. So long as the genuineness of these fragments,

Until the year 1893 the work was to all intents locked away from view.

The Prince's severe illness at Kissingen in the summer of that year was the first reason for setting the manuscript aside. Also he did not think it ready for the press, so the *pulls*, with their broad margin, served for fresh manuscript. The Prince could now with greater ease look it through once more, and found frequent opportunity for alterations and amendments, for the insertion of political reflections, and the softening of certain expressions, particularly in pronouncing judgment on other personages. A disposition to show everything *in meliorem partem* grew on the old man year by year; the kindness of his heart was shown towards the end by the often startling tenderness of his feelings. He never intentionally hurt anybody, and the fact that *litera scripta manet* led him to weigh his words with care in passing judgment on men and things, that he might do no injustice by too strong an expression.

Bucher's death, on October 12, 1892, had the unfortunate result of hindering the composition of

published with no name to certify them, remains unproved, it will be wise to regard them as spurious.

Herr Joh. Grunow's championship of M. Busch, in the *Grenzbote*, pt. i., 1899, is a grievous illustration of the saying, *Virtus post nummos*. Especially unworthy are such attacks on the men who enjoyed Bismarck's intimacy in his last years. Not one of them has hitherto done anything so base as Grunow's *protégé*.

any fresh chapters. It is to be inferred, from certain marginal notes, that it was the Prince's purpose to fill up some gaps, of which he himself was conscious, with added chapters. He would have placed the chapters relating to the events of 1866-70 in a separate section with that on the organization of the North-German Union; but after Bucher's death the motive-power was gone. And for Bucher, who had a vast and comprehensive memory, besides having been the Prince's colleague in all his political acts, no substitute could be found. Added to this came the hindrances and weakness of old age, and a very natural sense of weariness after such productive activity. Then followed the death of the wife he had so truly loved, the daily interruptions from visitors, and deputations to be received, and, above all, a private correspondence by letter and by telegram which increased in volume every year, and took up a serious amount of time and mental effort, leaving but a small surplus for the retrospective labours of the historian.

And yet what depth of thought is here! what ripeness of judgment! what lucidity of language! what beauty of expression! what prophetic insight in the discussion of future developments! The French critic says—and the German writer quotes him with a kind of satisfaction—"The thoughts are not even intrinsically important, and the work cannot stand comparison with Marmont's *Memoirs*, or Pasquier's, much less with Guizot's." I, for my part, assert that there is not,

in the whole political and historical literature of the nineteenth century, another book of equal value and importance, and that the German nation may be proud of possessing such a *monumentum ære perennius*. It will no doubt disappoint many persons, just as almost every work of Goethe's in its turn left some of his contemporaries unsatisfied with the outcome of his giant mind. The multitude who look in a book only for facile and transient entertainment will seek here in vain for the gross or piquant anecdote which abounds in Varnhagen's Diaries. But serious readers, eager for instruction and training, will find what they seek ; and I am fully convinced that every year will add to the number of those to whom Bismarck's notes will be a familiar favourite, to be read again and again, because they will constantly reveal to them new depths of wisdom and knowledge. And just as the once unintelligible Goethe is now a common possession of the German people, so the Germans of the twentieth century will regard Bismarck's "Reflections and Reminiscences" as a political bible, to give them counsel and comfort as often as they seek it.

So to every German who is seriously concerned with his own political education I would quote the injunction which, as legend tells, St. Augustine of old received from heaven—

Tolle, lege, "Take and read."

CHAPTER III.

THE "REFLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES" AS A HISTORICAL WORK.

Is Bismarck's book a book with a purpose (*tendenz*)? May it be regarded as historically authoritative, or should it be approached with the distrust that is due to so many books of memoirs? These questions will inevitably be asked; indeed, they have already found an answer of an unfavourable kind from Prince Bismarck's political antagonists.

I can declare that the Prince had never but one end in view, namely, to tell the truth, and to remain *objective* in his judgments, so far as it is given to any man to fulfil this highest requirement of the historian. Prince Bismarck was always an honest man; everything false and dishonourable rebounded from his noble sense of truth, and although his political opponents have not failed to accuse him of falsehood, duplicity, and want of candour, the reproach has not only remained unproven, but the arrow has infallibly recoiled on him who had aimed it. Thus in the "Reflections and Reminiscences" it was the spirit of

truth that guided the pen. Nowhere do we find the writer attempting to conceal or gloss over anything. He had no need to deny anything he had done ; he calmly confesses where he made mistakes, where his calculations proved erroneous, and, on this point as on all others, is faithful to the principle he constantly insisted on—that a man, and especially a statesman, must never cease to learn that the ways of the doctrinaire lead only to petrification ; or, as he would quote from Goethe, that theory is always grey while the golden tree of life is green.

Bismarck's posthumous work—so I read in an article not long since—is remarkable for what it does not say. This sounds clever, without being so. For if the fact that Prince Bismarck says not a word concerning the Franco-Prussian War is adduced as evidence of intentional silence, *de parti-pris*, I can but ask what in the world could Prince Bismarck have to say about the progress of the Franco-German War? He did not aim at writing a history giving a full report of everything and everybody he had known ; all he wanted was to express his views of the guiding ideas of his own policy, of what he had tried to do, what he had done, and what he hoped for in the future. The chapter on the Ems Telegram gives all the information needful as to the origin and causes of the Franco-Prussian War ; to write the history of the war would be no part of a diplomatist's functions ; and as regards the diplomatic negotiations which were carried on,

the historical student can draw on such an abundance of sources, German and foreign, that Prince Bismarck could hardly have added anything essentially new in his *Reminiscences*; especially as he himself had given copious statements as to his proceedings at Versailles, Ferrières, etc., in reports of general publicity. This reserve, then, is not in the least singular.*

The French critic regards it as of deep purpose; and there is another purpose (*tendenz*) which he believes he has discerned. "All through the work," says his German echo, "I find, not indeed in plain words, but very clearly between the lines, a determined effort to belittle the greatness of the first Kaiser."

What does Goethe say in one of the "Xenien"?—

"In explanation boldly speak your mind!

What's not explained of course has ill behind!"

This is indeed a very remarkable covert purpose, admirably fitted to show up the Prince as a mean soul prompted by envy to malignant criticism, so as to secure for himself the honours of triumph in the eyes of posterity.

A flame of anger rises to my face, not because a

* At any rate to me. When, in 1893, I asked Prince Bismarck whether he did not intend to give some fuller account of events previous to the war of 1866, he thought it needless, and referred to the mass of despatches published alike on the Prussian and Austrian sides; he had no idea of writing the history of his time, and had not the documentary materials at command.

Frenchman should have written this, but because the German who quotes it should not have found a word of dissent even without having read the "Reflections and Reminiscences." He must have known the first Chancellor of the Empire throughout a long life, he must be aware that no one was readier than Prince Bismarck to credit his King with his own achievements, and to parry with his own person every stroke dealt at his old master ; and, strong in this knowledge, it was his duty to the nation to protest, in the face of the foreigner, against such a formal accusation of the greatest son of the German people. Bismarck, to the day of his death, was the faithful German servant of the Emperor William I. But fidelity does not show itself in turning facts upside down, and in ascribing decisive acts to the sovereign who, amid such variously conflicting influences, needed such an inflexible counsellor, and yielded to superior genius with a noble self-surrender that proved his true greatness. It shows itself in the affectionate devotion with which Bismarck always speaks of his "old Master," the warmth with which he paints the characteristics of his heart and mind, the dignified gratitude he expresses for each token of favour shown him by the Emperor. Is it not touching, indeed, to read, when Bismarck describes the battles he had to fight with the King at Nikolsburg, and other similar discussions, that the only mark they have left on his mind is the painful sense of having been obliged so seriously to

displease a "master for whom he had so great an affection"?

In fact, if Prince Bismarck, following the example of other dutiful Court historians, had in his Memoirs ascribed to the leading minister, who was constitutionally responsible for all his sovereign's acts of government, the part of a willing tool, obedient to the master's hand, he would have died leaving a lie behind him which history could never have forgiven. He was conscious, and had every right to be conscious, that he was the creator of the German Empire; but this knowledge never betrays him into vain gloriousness or self-complacency. He always gives the King his due, and modestly confesses that but for the King's valiant co-operation he could never have achieved the task in which he so splendidly succeeded. I am convinced that every reader of the "Reflections and Reminiscences" will form an idea of the Emperor William I. as a truly great monarch—not in the sense in which the words were rightly used of old, as a ruler from whom the initiative emanated of every act, but in a higher and nobler sense. I assert, and no one can prove the contrary, that Prince Bismarck was moved by no other motive than that of serving historic truth, of concealing nothing, sparing no one, and of supplying materials, such as his personal experience alone could command, for an accurate judgment of men and things, aims and events. This being so, the "Reflections and Reminiscences" constitute an authority of the

first rank, which no historian of the nineteenth century can ever afford to ignore.

The objection may yet be raised that the Prince, as he looked back on the past, may have unconsciously brought the feelings of an old man to bear on the events he has described. A proof to the contrary is easily adduced in the certainty with which, even in his latest years, he could revive the past processes of his mind by the wonderful strength of his memory. On one occasion, when I was preparing his political speeches for publication, I came upon a passage in the stenographer's report which I could not succeed in revising. I had only to explain to the Prince what the occasion had been, and after a brief but strong mental effort, visible in his face, the whole speech flowed from his lips as he had originally uttered it, while I followed him in the printed report, to and beyond the dislocated passage, which the orator set right with unerring certainty. I have mentioned another similar case in a note to the "Reflections and Reminiscences" (vol. i. p. 279).

On June 26, 1862, Bismarck had an interview with Napoleon at Fontainebleau. He transmitted an account of this meeting to his superior minister, Count A. Bernstorff, in a letter of June 28, 1862, of which the original remained in the family archives of the Bernstorffs till the spring of 1898, and has only now been published by me in the *Bismarck-Jahrbuch* (vol. vi. p. 152). No copy of this document had

remained in Bismarck's hands, and yet the conversation with Napoleon was so deeply impressed on his mind, that thirty years later he was able to repeat it from memory in his "Reflections and Reminiscences," in many parts using exactly the same words as he had employed in the letter. In proof of this, I here give part of the text of the letter, side by side with the corresponding passages of the Reminiscences.

Letter of June 28, 1862.
(*Bismarck-Jahrbuch*, vi. 152.)

The Emperor invited me yesterday to Fontainebleau, and on my arrival he took a long walk with me.

In the course of a conversation on the political questions of the day during the last few years, he unexpectedly asked me—

"Croyez-vous que le Roi serait disposé à conclure une alliance avec moi?"

I replied to this effect—

"Les dispositions dont le Roi est animé pour la personne de votre Majesté sont les plus amicales, et les préjugés qui autrefois chez nous régissaient l'opinion publique à l'égard de la France, ont à peu près disparu. Mais les alliances ne sont fécondes en résultats qu'en tant qu'elles sont le produit naturel des circonstances qui en déterminent le besoin ou

Reflections and Reminiscences,
i. 279.

On the 26th of June the Emperor invited me to Fontainebleau and took a long walk with me.

In the course of a conversation on the political questions of the day and of the last year, he unexpectedly asked me whether I thought that the King would be inclined to enter into an alliance with him.

I replied that the King had the most friendly feeling towards him, and that the prejudices which had formerly prevailed in public opinion among us against France had almost died out; but that alliances were the outcome of the circumstances by which their necessity or utility must be judged of. An alliance presupposed a motive and fixed object.

The Emperor disputed the

l'utilité; pour une alliance il faut un motif ou un but."

The Emperor found this answer not always applicable.

"Il y a des puissances," he went on, "que sont amies l'une de l'autre, il y en a qui le sont moins; en vue d'un avenir incertain on doit placer quelque part sa confiance.

"Ce n'est pas à l'intention de quelque projet aventureux que je parle d'alliance; mais je trouve à la Prusse et à la France tant de conformité d'intérêts, qu'il doit y avoir les éléments d'une entente intime et durable dès que les préjugés et les partis pris n'y font pas obstacle. Ce serait une grande faute que de vouloir créer les événements; mais ils arrivent bien sans nous, et sans que nous puissions en calculer la direction et la force; il faut donc se prémunir en avisant aux moyens pour y faire face et pour en profiter."

The idea of a *diplomatic* alliance, on the assumption of a habit of mutual confidence and reciprocal interdependence in difficult circumstances, was still further developed by the Emperor with direct reference to us; till, suddenly standing still, after a pause, he turned to me with these words—

"Vous ne sauriez vous figurer

necessity for such a presumption.

There were powers, said he, which stood in friendly relations to each other, and others with whom this was less conspicuously the case. In view of the uncertain future, it was needful to place his trust somewhere. He was speaking of an alliance with no adventurous projects in view, but he could see a conformity of interests for Prussia and France, and in this conformity the elements of an intimate and durable mutual understanding.

It would be a great blunder to try to create events; it would be impossible to calculate their direction and force, but we may be prepared for them, forearmed by considering the means of meeting them and profiting by them.

This idea of a *diplomatic* alliance, on the assumption of a habit of mutual confidence and reciprocal interdependence in difficult circumstances, was further developed by the Emperor.

Then he suddenly stood still and said—

"You cannot imagine what strange overtures were made to me a few days since on the part of Austria. It would seem that the coincidence of

quelles singulières ouvertures m'a fait faire l'Autriche l'autre jour. Il paraît que votre nomination et l'arrivée simultanée de M. de Budberg à Paris ont produit une espèce de panique à Vienne ; le Prince Metternich m'a fait entrevoir les appréhensions de son gouvernement, en ajoutant qu'il venait de recevoir des instructions d'une portée tellement vaste qu'il en était effrayé lui-même, et qu'il osait à peine en signaler l'étendue ; que j'avais à le regarder comme l'Ambassadeur 'le plus puissant,' et muni sur toutes les questions que je voudrais aborder, des pouvoirs les plus illimités qu'un Souverain eût jamais conférés à son représentant.

"Voilà une déclaration qui m'a mis dans l'embarras ; je ne savais quelle réponse lui donner ; il se dit autorisé à s'arranger à tout prix et sans scrupule ; mais moi, à part l'incompatibilité des intérêts des deux pays, j'éprouve une répugnance presque superstitieuse à être associé aux destinées de l'Autriche." *

* [What is here given in French is in French in the original.] The date of the letter would imply that the interview took place on June 27 ; but there is some error here, probably a mere slip of the pen. In a previous letter of the same date, June 28, from Bismarck to Bernstorff (*Bismarck-Jahrbuch*, vi. 151), he says, "On the day before yesterday I found myself with the Emperor,

your appointment with Herr von Budberg's arrival in Paris caused a sort of panic in Vienna. Prince Metternich told me that he had received instructions that went so far that he himself was startled. He had the most unlimited powers any sovereign had ever given to his plenipotentiary, to come to an understanding with me at any cost on all and every point I might choose to discuss.

"I was placed in some difficulty by this explanation ; for, apart from the incompatibility of the interests of our two countries, I have an almost superstitious disinclination to mix myself up with the destinies of Austria."

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In view of such an unexampled effort of memory, who can any longer doubt that Bismarck wrote the "Reflections and Reminiscences" with the clearest recollection of past events?

somewhat in the predicament of Joseph with Potiphar's wife. He had the most wanton proposals of alliance on his tongue," etc.

CHAPTER IV.

TILL THE FIRST UNITED DIET.

HAVING made these introductory remarks as a warning against unjustifiable attacks, and in proof of the validity of Bismarck's notes, I shall now proceed to an analysis of the contents of the work.

Prince Bismarck tells us nothing of his childhood ; his biographer must rely on the more discursive narrative and anecdotes given by Hesekeel in the first considerable Life of Bismarck (the "Buch vom Grafen Bismarck"), and chiefly derived from the talk of the Prince himself.

The first chapter : "Till the first united Parliament," begins by setting forth the development of religious and political views which the young man held in honour at the time of leaving the High School (the *Gymnasium*) for the University. In religious matters young Bismarck regarded himself as a pantheist, in political opinion as a monarchist, from habit rather than from conviction. Every German Prince who had rebelled against the Emperor before the Thirty Years' War roused his boyish indignation ; but from the Great Elector onwards he was "partisan enough to

decide against the Emperor, and to think it quite natural that the Seven Years' War should be the outcome." And national feeling was always so vivid in him, that at college he first allied himself with the *Burschenschaft*, the group of students who took for their watchword the upholding of the National Idea. What alienated him from the *Burschenschaft* lay chiefly in superficial matters; the refusal to give "satisfaction" struck him as a lack of manly courage, and their indifference to the social conventions that spring from superior breeding offended the refined young aristocrat. Although his conviction that the immediate future would lead us to German Unity was so firm that he laid a wager with his American friend Coffin that it would be an accomplished fact within twenty years, such uproarious demonstrations of the national party as the festival at Hambach, May 27, 1832, or as that led by Putsch at Frankfort, April 3, 1833,* were to him so repulsive, that he returned to Berlin with his liberal

* At Whitsuntide, 1832, twenty thousand men collected at the bidding of the Republicans in Germany—among them many Poles and French refugees after the Revolution—and met at the Castle of Hambach to publish a propaganda for the regeneration of Germany as a republic. This foolish demonstration had luckless results, for the Federal Diet (Bundestag), at the bidding of Austria and Prussia, issued on June 28, 1832, a strict decree against the freedom of the Press and of popular meetings. On April 3, 1833, the Republicans of Frankfort, under the leadership of Rauschenplat, a Hannoverian refugee, made an attempt to blow up the Bundestag, and thus to give the signal for a revolutionary call to arms throughout Germany. The attempt was insufficiently prepared for, it had no hold over the feelings of