

Brief Chamberlains an Anne Guthrie vom 11.11.1901

Monday 11/11/1901

My dear Aunt Anne,

I am very tired and stupified and headaching after that abominable index; however, other things crop up, and I have to copy a very long epistle for the Emperor, - and so I will start off at once with my rigmarole and only take time to beg your kind indulgence.

I think I remember writing you a hurried note from Berlin, between Liebenberg and Potsdam, but I have no notion what I told you and what I left untold, and so as you take interest in this interview I will begin at the beginning and give you a short account of the whole thing.

I left Vienna early on Sunday morning 27 October, arriving late in the evening at Berlin. After a good long sleep, I strolled out to get a peep at the new monument for William I - a very enormous and grand concern, unfortunately lacking in air and space. But that was all I did, wishing to be as rested as possible. And so after a quiet luncheon, I prepared my trunks quietly and drove off very early to the station. Prince Eulenburg had kindly sent me very precise instructions, which I of course follow [sic] à la lettre. It is the train bound for Stralsund I had to take, and it was crammed with men setting out for shooting parties. I was huddled up with a very aristocratic lot - four counts (as I afterwards discovered), and as they were considerably disgusted at finding a fifth man in the carriage they had fondly thought would be all for them, they were just a little bit rude towards me at first - which I should not mention were it not that this was the only one moment during which my heart had a tendency to sink into my shoes. "O, said I to myself, would I had remained quietly at home! What need had I to come all this way to be snubbed by overbearing Prussian noblemen?" And I felt sure they were going to be my neighbours at table, for they spoke about the emperor and Prince Eulenburg etc. - - - However they turned out not to be as bad as their looks, and when they endeavoured to make up for their first movement of impatience by various advances, I had it all my way and amused myself by snubbing them and refusing to be talked to. For in the mean time I had discovered that they were not going to Liebenberg, and they had begun to surmise that I was, and of course that altered the whole aspect of affairs! And so after all they had rendered me a service, for the slight ebullition of my blood, coupled with the minute triumph for my vanity, made me get out at Löwenberg - my station - in high spirits and ready to stand up for my rights against any man disposed to question them. And from this moment on everything was smooth and delightful.

It is ½ an hour's drive from Löwenberg to the castle of Liebenberg. A carriage was waiting at the station and a sort of omnibus for the luggage. And in front of the carriage a rather stout, comfortable-looking man was walking up and down with his hands in his pockets and when he espied me at once

came up: "Oh, Mr. Chamberlain, I presume? I am delighted to make your acquaintance. We shall have half an hour all for ourselves ..." It was Count Bülow, the imperial chancellor, who had come down by the same train.

A propos: the papers got up a great excitement about the Count having been summoned by the emperor, etc. and all sorts of political conjectures were indulged in - not in Germany only, but in France and I daresay in England also. Well, when Prince E. invited me, a fortnight before, he had mentioned that the Chancellor and his wife would be among his guests! It was settled weeks before. And the only alteration in the original plan was, that instead of arriving with the emperor on Sunday evening, he came on Monday afternoon - and this because his mother-in-law was ill in bed, and so the Countess did not like to leave her. So much for our newspapers!

The drive was pleasant. Country quite flat, but lovely atmospheric effects, ponds and lakes, beautiful fir and beach [sic] trees, old-fashioned windmills - - quite a landscape for our modern painters. And Count Bülow is one of the most entertaining men I have met. A "fin littérateur"; an amateur of beautiful things, whose taste has been cultivated by the many years spent in Italy; a man fond of philosophy; a politician who knows personally all the leading men of the day. As you may imagine conversation did not flag. And although his face shows a great power of silence and cunning, he was most pleasant and entertaining. He has not read my "Grundlagen", - "as Chancellor I have alas no time to read nowadays"; but he had picked out some of the best tit-bids, as great readers only know how to do. And we had plenty of other things to talk about.

The sun - about the size of a carriage-wheel - set whilst we were driving, and a damp dusk came down rapidly over the plain. We had turned into an approach, and the buildings of Liebenberg loomed through the twilight. The drive with Count Bülow had been so pleasant; I thought to myself: now we shall meet the Prince, then I shall be introduced to his wife and then the men will come in from shooting and I shall make their acquaintance one by one, - and by the time dinner hour comes and his Majesty appears, I shall feel quite at home - - - However, the gods had decreed otherwise. Our carriage whisked round a corner and there we suddenly were at the principal entrance - a sort of semi-circular garden arrangement, the house being composed of a main building and two wings which inclose [sic] the entrance, and about 20 steps leading up to the door. And here at the foot of the steps was congregated the whole party - men, ladies, servants with torches - grouped in a sort of half-moon, and in the centre the Emperor. I believe they happened to be returning from a walk - the Emperor not having been inclined to go out shooting - and hearing our carriage's wheels on the gravel His Majesty decided to stay and welcome us. I must admit it was a wee bit intimidating for a man who lives in a 5th flat alone with his wife and his dog to find himself all of a sudden in the very centre of such a grand assembly and stared at out of about 40 pair of eyes. However in reality it was the greatest blessing; it was like taking a header, which is better than shivering down into the water step by step. Count Bülow bounced out of the carriage, helped by Prince E., and rushed up to the Emperor hat in hand. Prince E. bid [sic] me welcome to his house in very cordial words, and said: "I will introduce you at once to the emperor." The latter only spoke about 2 minutes with Bülow and then my turn came. The Emperor shook hands most cordially: "I am very happy to make your acquaintance, Mr. Chamberlain, and I am really extremely grateful to you for your kindness in making such a long journey to give me pleasure." Those were his first words. I am rather hazy about what he then said and what I replied, for the tone of his voice was so absolutely different from what I had expected, that it quite upset me at first - although the surprise was an agreeable one, not the contrary. I had thought he would have a high-pitched, slightly nasal trumpetty sort of voice, as Prussian officers often have and as his style of face (according to the photographs) seems to promise, - whereas on the contrary his

voice is deep, often low, and has a peculiarly dark, passionate "timbre". Presently the conversation fell on the great theologian Harnack (whose "Wesen des Christenthumes" has created a sensation in England also I hear, and who is an enthusiastic admirer of my "Grundlagen"; he is professor in Berlin). "You don't know Harnack personally? Oh, that will never do!" - "I hope to call upon him at Berlin on my way home." - "No, no; you won't find him at home, you won't have time to talk. I say, Philip! (the emperor says "Du" to Prince E. and always calls him by his christian name) Just fancy, Chamberlain does'nt [sic] know Harnack! Could'nt [sic] we summon him here?" "Your Majesty has only to order; I'll telegraph at once." - "Yes, do so, do so at once; I shall be proud of introducing them to each other." - "But Harnack can't possibly come out today, Majesty, it's too late and before - - -" - "No, no, tomorrow's all right; I want to have Chamberlain to myself before; do take care Harnack shall be here for luncheon tomorrow, - we'll have a grand day! Well, goodbye, Mr. Ch., we'll meet again presently; and once more, thank you." - I felt at once perfectly at home with the emperor, for he is simple, frank, plain-spoken, - and besides that he is the most enthusiastic admirer of my writings.

I forgot to say - but I think I told you so in my Berlin letter - that the Emperor, the Prince, and most of the men were dressed in a very impressive hunting costume, which is I believe a mediaeval knighthood. It is green, with very high yellow top boots, and a small green hat turned up at the back (as one sees it in pictures of Albrecht Dürer); to which is added - if necessary - a very ample green mantle falling down to the feet, and which looks clumsy enough on some men, but which emperor William throws over his shoulder in a hundred different ways, one more becoming than the other, as though he had been a "bandite" all his life in the Albanian mountains. - This costume added not a little to the impressiveness of the scene on our arrival.

Well, the emperor disappeared, walking into the house. And at once I had another pleasant impression, as an old acquaintance of mine, Count Moltke (nephew of the Moltke) came up, very effusive, and evidently very proud of being the only man of the whole set who knew the man the emperor made much of. And then the inevitable German introductions, one by one, to about 25 different men began. The torches had gone and I was all in the dark; however it didn't make much difference to me, for I would'nt [sic] have recognized them if I had seen them. The ladies had all disappeared. And here came the Prince, to conduct me to my room, and to ask me to dress for dinner at once, as the Emperor wanted to have a quiet talk with me and thought this would be the best plan. It was 5 ½ by this time; and at 6 ½ the Prince came to fetch me. There is a magnificent drawing-room - I suppose 200 people could dance in it - with steps at one end, which serve for picturesque effects; but here people meet before dinner, and so the Prince took me off into a smaller off-sittingroom, - and here came the emperor, always in the hunting costume, but with some little additional fancy. Around his neck a broad silk ribbon of a more intense green, held an order which is (I believe?) that of St. Hubertus, and on the ribbon in gold letters were inscribed the words: "Vive le roi et ses chasseurs." The commander-in-chief of the troops in Berlin and an other [sic] man - I afterwards saw - wore the same medal and ribbon; one or two others had it in a simpler form - with no words on the ribbon, - as I suppose there are various degrees. The amount of rings the emperor wears on his fingers is simply appalling, and as many of them are what the French call - do they not? - cabochons, standing up an inch or two out of the setting, his hands at times look like an ambulating jeweller's shop. And you must add to the rings a gold bangle on each wrist, - and also various crochets on the breast, all ablaze with diamonds and other precious stones. I must have looked a strong contrast indeed! For as you know I eschew even a watch-chain, and my evening shirt shows one single stud, which is the minutest pinhead of gold I could discover.

Well, in he came, in his high boots and in the jingling of spurs. He again caught hold of my hand: "I

ca'nt [sic] help repeating it once more: I am really grateful to you for having come all the way from Vienna to let me make your acquaintance." Generally the emperor looks straight into ones [sic] eyes; and he gesticulates not only with hands and arms and head and body, but often rolls his eyes about, either in excitement and anger, or with a very troubled and sly look. But now and then - when he is extremely serious about what he is saying - he lowers his eyes to the ground, almost turns away from one and mutters the words between his half-closed lips. So he did now, as he continued whilst we walked across the room: "You have rendered the whole German people a great service; and that also it is my duty to thank for." This he mutters in small abrupt fragments; the French say: en phrases hachées; jerking out one bit after another. We had reached a sofa, but if we had sat down as we stood, I should have been to the right; he made a circular motion with his finger: "Come! Let's sit down!", and so I marched round the sofa and there we sat together till past 8 o'clock, and had our first good talk. Occasionally one of the rest of the party stuck his head in at the door, but of course didn't dare to enter; only Prince E., and later on Count Bülow were incited by the Emperor to join us.

At last however Princess Eulenburg ventured inside the doorway - evidently her dinner was menaced with disaster if we continued chattering; the Emperor saw her and jumped up. But before we went in, he and Bülow and the Prince retired to the further end of the room. Telegrams had been coming the whole time; the emperor reads them without interrupting the conversation; and I believe there was some important political event going on - either with regard to the Reichstag or to the French action against Turkey. Whilst they were consulting and writing their telegrams I was at last introduced to the lady of the house, a very charming, simple woman, a born Swede - and also to various other grandees I had not yet seen. The emperor took the Princess in; the only other ladies at table were her 2 eldest daughters; the youngest (still a child of 15) and two countesses belonging to the household, the one who has the whole inner organisation to look after, the other the girls' companion and teacher, did not dine with us. It is rather difficult to get 25 men to walk into a room; each one wants to be last t<...> in a donkey's race. However, the Prince's cousin, Count Eulenburg, the Obersthofmarshall of the imperial house - one of the most delightful and kind old men I ever met - caught hold of my arm and said: "Come along with me, you are sitting opposite his Majesty, it won't do to keep him waiting." - It was a long, straight table, the Emperor in the middle on one side, Prince E. opposite him. Princess E. and her eldest daughter sat to the right and left of H<is> M<ajesty>, Bülow to the right, I to the left of the Prince. The emperor was in high spirits at table and most entertaining; the conversation was mainly between him, Bülow and me, the others listening. But there was no sort of gêne and étiquette; those at the ends of the table had their own fun, - and so the whole was as pleasant and simple and as little stiff as if it had been Dhar<...>[?] Lordswood.

Among the anecdotes the Emperor told, one may amuse you, of a nuntius who once (he did not say when [?]) asked for an audience of the Emperor. When he came, he began a lecture on the history of the church, from the death of Christ to the proclamation of the infallibility of the Pope 1870, the whole proving that there is but one true and only church, the holy Roman one - - - This lasted $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour. When the monsignore left off, evidently expecting a discussion, the emperor said: Do you wish to add anything more? The nuntius stammered: I thought - - - your Majesty - - - But the emperor interrupted him: Thank you; so kind; goodbye - and walked out of the room! - What the deuce does that man come and worry me for with an epitome of ecclesiastical history? says the emperor to his adjutant who had led the church dignitary back to his carriage. Oh, answers the latter, you've made such a good impression on him, he's quite enthusiastic about your Majesty. - I? Why I did'nt [sic] speak a single word; he didn't give me the opportunity of getting one in edgeways. All I can say, answers the adjutant, is he affirms, he never in his life saw such a clever and well-informed man as your Majesty!

After dinner - in the large drawing-room - where coffee is served and liqueurs, cigars and cigarettes, some people playing billiards at the further end, others playing cards, others chattering in groups, others reading - it is so big that there is room for each one to follow his own taste - I made a point of keeping in the background, talking to Prince's E.'s young sons and making up to his daughters, as much as a man who has doubled the bluff cape of 45 may do without rendering himself ridiculous. However, very soon Prince E. came and took me by the arm and led me off into the remotest corner of the room, half hid by a screen, where we were quite alone. He is - what the emperor is not - very fond of philosophy and mysticism, and all that sort of thing; and so whilst the emperor is particularly taken by all that is historical or scientific in my "Grundlagen", Eulenburg is particularly interested in the parts treating of philosophy and art and so on. So we were soon deep in God and pantheism and Kant - but it was well we had made haste, for all of a sudden there was a jarring of spurs and the emperor - who had been playing billiards - laid his two hand on our two chairs: "I should like to shove in between you two, if you will allow me to, in this cosy corner." The emperor took my chair; and as I sat down on the one next to him which was lower than I expected and rather the worse for me, so that I almost came to grief with my feet in the air, he burst out laughing: "Ha, ha! I know that chair, I sat on it myself yesterday; that's why I let you take it today! Each one his t<...>" - It was about 9 ½ then; and from that moment till 1 a.m., when H<is> M<ajesty> retired, he and I remained alone at that end of the room, - excepting that Prince E. occasionally came and sat near us. - There was some music. Prince E. is himself quite a celebrated composer of songs, known in all German-speaking countries, and perhaps in England also. Some of his songs have been sold in more than a hundred thousand copies. He is also a poet. And his second son, a lad of 17, is evidently a musical genius. However I don't think the emperor cared much for it all. The boy is very "modern", whilst the emperor confesses that he is like a street-boy and only likes the tunes he can whistle at once. - After ½ past 10 the ladies retired. The emperor had risen to say goodnight to them; and from this moment till 1 a.m. we two remained bolt upright, alone at an end of the room. In the distance I saw the lucky men lounging in their armchairs, but as H<is> M<ajesty> pleased to stand, I had to stand too. Luckily his conversation was so replete with interest that I bore the stress without showing fatigue. I am told all these royal folk can stand for 10 hours' running. At 5 minutes to one he beckoned to Prince E., to accompany him upstairs, shook hands most cordially with me: "Well, goodnight; and mind you sleep well; we'll go on talking tomorrow." And then he ascended the steps, turned round and made a short bow to the rest of the company, which said company responded to by bending double, and disappeared. Two or three men at once rushed up to me and began rubbing my back, and then pushed me into a chair: "Poor fellow, 2 hours and ½ without even being able to lean on a table or a chair! You must be half dead." No, said I, I feel all alive, only with your kind permission I think I will go to bed at once and thus not lose the habit of being in a straight line - horizontal or vertical, it's all one; the great thing is to get the angles out.

The next morning I took advantage of the Prince's leave and breakfasted alone in my room and then strolled alone through the village of Liebenberg, and only went into the park at about 11 a.m., where I found some of the party playing tennis, others away shooting, walking and riding etc. - A long way off one saw the emperor and Count Bülow walking up and down evidently debating on political matters. In the mean time Prof. Adolf Harnack arrived. And soon the Emperor turned up, calling out from far: "Good morning, Mr. Chamberlain; you only slept 5 hours last night, I heard, that's not enough; a man with your brainpowers should sleep 8 or 9 hours at least!- Well, come along Professor Harnack. You learned men don't take enough exercise; I shall make you walk." And that he did, from 11 ½ to 1 o'clock, and a most delightful conversation it was between him and Harnack, - I chiefly listener. "Now come, Prof. Harnack, now you repeat what you said to me when last we met, in May. Did'nt [sic] you say that no other man in the world was capable of writing Chamberlain's chapter on Christ?" -

"Yes, your Majesty, I did." - "And did'nt [sic] you say that if all the theologians of the globe were to put their heads together, they could'nt [sic] succeed in doing it as he has done it." "Yes, I did, for it's my deliberate opinion." - "And did'nt [sic] you say that if you had written that one only chapter of Chamberlain's book you would be proud of yourself?" "Your Majesty has an excellent memory." - "Well, Mr. Chamberlain, now you know what Harnack thinks of your work; he would'nt [sic] have told you so in your face, and I think it's right you should know."

This little bit it may please you also to know. Luckily our conversation branched off to other subjects.

At luncheon the daughters were not at table, several new men having arrived, so that it would have been too crowded. And so Bülow sat to the left of the Emperor, and I to the right of Prince E. And a pleasant meal it was. The Emperor had heard about my little dog and about my being inconsolable about his loss. He rather joked at me. "Well, said I, your Majesty may laugh, but he was not only my friend but my collaborator; he did a great deal of the thinking for me." - "Oh, by Jove, exclaimed the emperor, that alters the aspect of the question. It will never do for you to leave off thinking. I will issue an order tomorrow and have all Germany searched for a dog the image of your former one!"

After luncheon - again in the large drawingroom - the emperor at once took hold of me, and there we again remained - joined later on by Harnack - standing from 2 till 5. Luckily the conversation - exclusively political this time - was of absorbing interest. At 5 at last he said: "Well I want to tell you one thing more, but I think we must sit down for that."

In the mean time I had noticed the Prince and Princess and others twisting and turning about evidently in a mild despair; it appears tea was to have been served at 4, as there was to be early dinner; but nobody has the right to disturb an emperor.

I was to have returned to Berlin with the emperor and his suite in the imperial train; that was the original plan; however I saw the Prince was anxious I should stay and he was quite wild with delight when I said I would. It was not only right or kind to stay, but useful, as he, being the emperor's ambassador in Vienna, is the best channel for further communication between the emperor and me.

Dinner was early and short. I sat next the Chancellor, and we had a delightful conversation about Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom we both consider the greatest writer who ever lived; no man without posture, without social position, without any direct control of any position of public affairs ever exercised such an immense influence over the whole social and political evolution of the world, - merely by the might of his written word. We almost forgot to eat.

Soon after 8 p.m. those who were going began to leave; then, long after they had all gone, the emperor turned up again and conversed with the princess and her children, until the Prince came to announce that it was time to leave. About ten or twelve guests were remaining the night. The emperor went up to each and shook hands. I was the last, as I happened to stand near the side door he went out at. "Au revoir, Mr. Chamberlain. I hope that now we have made acquaintance you will honour our house also by your visit." - "I am at your Majesty's orders." - "Yes, do come. I promise you we wo'nt [sic] tease you." - We all crowded out into the hall; round about the village people were assembled with torches; the emperor jumped into the open carriage, Prince E. after him; and off they went to the sound of three hearty cheers.

The "we wo'nt [sic] tease you" - so the Prince said - alluded to Prof. Harnack's having begun criticising some passages of my book, which the emperor thought bad taste. But it may also have borne an other [sic] interpretation in the Emperor's mind. For the evening before, at about 10 ½, as we were sitting together, a telegram had come from the empress and he had handed it to me, saying: "This may

interest you also." And in it she said: "How I envy your being in Mr. Chamberlain's company - - - " no, those were not her words: "How glad I am to think of you in Mr. Chamberlain's company; he must be such a very interesting man; could you not bring him to Potsdam?" Of course I expressed my thanks in polite words. But a few minutes later I added: "The very great honour and happiness of being introduced to her Majesty would be marred, if I thought she would expect of me to be interesting. My books may be interesting, but I have personally no pretension to any such thing, and am as dull as a ditchpond and as stupid as a giraffe, if I know people are expecting me to be clever and to say profound things. I think, these few hours will have sufficed for your Majesty to be able to affirm that I am not what is socially called an interesting man." This seems to have tickled the emperor's mind hugely: "I say, Phillip, mind you do'nt [sic] say to Chamberlain he is interesting; it puts him in a rage." And when on Thursday morn<ing> I said goodbye at Potsdam, he remarked with a cunning gleam in his eyes: "Now the Empress knows by experience that you are not an interesting man, so you need have no anxiety on that score." - And I think, that's what his "teasing" alluded to.

After the emperor had left there was a great deal of music; however that has no interest for you. Next morning, after a pleasant breakfast, I left with the Prince for Berlin; he was going up to see his mother and return in the ev<ening>, as he expected a new shooting party of 40 men for boar-hunting.

In my hotel I found an invitation for the very same evening to Potsdam and the intimation that a room would be at my disposal if I wished to spend the night there. I was told what train to take and that a carriage would be at the station of "Wildpark." - And so at 7 p.m. I was off again, reaching Wildpark beyond Potsdam at 7.40, and in 5 minutes the "Neues Palais", as it is called, although it is now no longer very new, having been built by Frederick the Great. It is a very sumptuous building in the style of the last century, with no upper flat of any sort, - every window being at the same time a door; of which one set goes out onto the approach and the marble colonnade, the other onto the park. After having crossed a series of magnificent halls, I was ushered into a sort of drawing-room - if such a name can be applied - where a neat little man was standing, who introduced himself as Hofmarschall von Trotha. It was his business to look after me, and he at once asked whether I should return to Berlin or stay the night here; and as he said their majesties generally retired at 10. ½ and the last train goes at 11 p.m., I said of course I should go back and not give them the trouble of housing me.

However, luckily I had brought my gladstone with night things and a day suit; for when, at about 10 ½ Trotha bowed to the emperor to announce the carriage, the emperor burst out in his violent way: "What carriage?" - "The carriage for the station." - "Who's going to the station?" - "It's the carriage for Mr. Chamberlain, your Majesty." - "Mr. Chamberlain? He's not going away. Absurd. No such thing. He'll be better put up here. Tell the carriage to go away." He did'nt [sic] even ask me my opinion. And of course I was happy to stay.

Well, presently came in Countess Brocksdorf (whose portrait you will see in the last number of Studio - excellent, whilst the empress by the same hungarian artist is a calumny) Obersthofmeisterin of the Empress, an "excellency" and evidently - as I saw - a woman who has more influence over the empress than I would allow of, were I monarch. Then Countess Keller, Palastdame, and her cousin Count Keller, gentleman-in-waiting to the empress, and a lady-in-waiting, Fraulein [sic] von Gersdorff. Whilst we were conversing - and they all knew me, as they form what's called "der kleine Hofstaat", who are there almost every day, and the Emperor had read my Grundlagen out loud to them of an evening - the Hofmarschall called out with a loud voice: "Der Kaiser kommt!" (the emperor is coming), - and in walked his Majesty, in a very simple uniform, much quieter in his manners than I had seen him at Liebenberg, and if possible still more kind and genial. Soon the door opposite that at which he had entered was thrown wide open, and in came the empress, who, after having said a word to the

emperor, came up to me: "I am so glad to make your acquaintance! It is very kind of you to have come out to Potsdam." - She is, I think, the softest-mannered woman I ever saw, speaking in the lowest of low voices, smiling and amiable and shy. In the mean time the only other real "guest", Dr. von Lucanus, had put in his appearance; he is the Hausminister, the emperor's right hand, a clever, intellectual looking little man, on whose forehead are marked the cares of state and the weight of secrets. And so we stood and talked - the Emperor with Lucanus and me - and I wondered what they were waiting for. And presently the empress came up to the emperor and said with her sweet smile: "Why, William, your gentlemen are'nt [sic] there?" The emperor - always in his impetuous way, as if he had been suddenly woken out of a dream by a cannon shot - : "Who? what? what's the matter? Who are we waiting for?" "The gentlemen of your staff, my dear." - "Donnerwetter!" began the emperor, with a violent movement of his right hand, as though he was going to crush the whole said "staff" to dust, "what on earth does this-." But little Herr von Trotha had rushed off and now returned with a fine old fellow, Lieutenant-General von Scholle [sic], the emperor's chief military adjutant, an old war-horse, not in the least put out of countenance, smiling and explaining that he had been waiting for a ¼ of an hour in another room. It was the first day the empress dined in company and it appears that for her sake there had been some alteration. And as for the naval adjutant, the emperor suddenly remembered that he himself had sent him off to Berlin at 7 on urgent business, from which he only returned at 10 o'clock. And so dinner was now announced. The empress followed by her ladies went in first, then the emperor, then we all in a bundle. Dr. von Lucanus sat to the right of the empress and I to her left. The meal was excellent but exceedingly simple. They did not call it dinner, but Abendtafel. There were only four dishes; and with the cheese and fruit tea was served. Red and white wine, champagne, mineral water. There were as many servants attending as people at table - besides one or two butlers -, so that plates came and went in an instant. And the moment everybody is served, all the servants disappear; not a single one remains in the room, and they shut the door behind themselves in going out. So pleasant and quiet and intimate - more so than in any of the houses of wealthy people I have ever seen. The emperor has an electric bell knob under the table and rings when the next dish is to come; and although it is rather terrifying to see a dozen men rush in, they do so very quietly; and in about two minutes they are all off again (for whilst some of them are handing the new dish round, others are pouring out wine, etc.) It is beautifully organized and shows really regal good taste.

The conversation at table was simple and unpretentious and without any sort of gêne. I have known Princess Feodora, the youngest sister of the empress, since years, so that gave us something to start on, - and the emperor is a man of so numerous and varied interests that a blockhead only could feel dull in his society. He was very indignant that evening about the abominable lies of Joseph Chamberlain; but when I remarked philosophically: "If England chooses to be governed by a cad, one can but expect vulgarity", he laughed and replied: "You're quite right; let's talk of other things."

After dinner we went into a further drawingroom, as cosily arranged as such immense rooms can be, - with a billiard-table in the corner and opposite the further wall a huge oval table round which we sat like any old-fashioned country family would; a large lamp in the middle, the empress doing embroidery, her ladies needle-work of various sorts. "Look at that table attentively, Mr. Chamberlain," said the emperor, as we entered the room, "it is the historical table at which your Grundlagen were read out loud by me! And oh! you should have seen the ladies, - why, Countess Keller almost flew up to the ceiling when you begin to talk about David having treacherously murdered Goliath, and having won all his battles with Philistine troops!" - "Oh, - interrupts Countess Keller - "I can assure your Majesty, I didn't mean-." "No, no, Countess, no backing out of your position; now here's the man himself, and you

must fight it out with him." And so we all sat down. The empress at one end of the table, in a large arm-chair; to her left on a small chair the emperor, I next the emperor in an arm-chair; opposite us on the sofa Countess Keller - my supposed enemy - between Lucanus and General von Scholle; at the end opposite the Empress Fräulein von Gersdorff, who spent the whole evening making sketches of me - which I of course pretended not to notice; next me to the left Count Keller and Herr von Trotha; next the empress to the right, quite near her, often her hand in the empress' arm, Countess Brocksdorf. When Captain von Grumme arrived (the naval adjutant) he sat next Countess Brocksdorf. After some conversation and debate on philosophical and religious subjects, I offered to show the proofsheets of my new book, "Worte Christi", and also the preface and additions to the 3rd edition of the Grundlagen, which have been published in a separate pamphlet. The emperor jumped eagerly at the proposal: "Oh, yes, please do!" Old general von Scholle showed me the way to get to my gladstone and was very full of the emperor's simplicity and constant kindness to them all. The emperor was so full of my additions to the Grundlagen that he insisted upon at once glancing through them all and read several aloud - calling out: "Oh, I say! you must listen to this! Oh this is first-rate!" and so on. He reads slowly, clearly, and with the evident intention of understanding every word thoroughly. He and I remained plunged in this for some time - whilst the others conversed freely. But when my Worte Christi were shown, they absorbed all interest, as the empress was very keen on the subject. The sheets were handed round; questions poured in on me, and I also read fragments of my introduction.

In the mean time wine and water had been served; but everybody took water only. And a few minutes after 10 ½ the empress retired with her ladies. The sudden change in attitude was rather ludicrous for an outlander. There we had all been sitting like a happy family round the table, - not the slightest gêne or ceremoniousness, - each one saying his say, - really quite charming, - and now all of a sudden all the men bounced off to the furthest end of the huge room, the ladies half way through it; then the empress came slowly up to me, gave me her hand to kiss and said: "I'm so very glad to have made your acquaintance"; then went up to Dr. von Lucanus in a similar way; then bowed a little goodnight to all the others, at which everybody went double; then the ladies sunk into the earth whilst she passed, and as soon as she disappeared, said ladies again sunk one by one into the very ground, beginning by Countess Brocksdorf, ending by the youngest, at the Emperor, who had remained standing near his chair, and who bowed ceremoniously to each in turn; then each of the ladies gave us mortals a nod, to which a unanimous bow responded, - and out they sailed. It was an amusing little intermezzo; for the moment they were out, everything was as jolly and simple as ever. "Come, now we'll have a smoke", began the emperor, leading up to a table on which were cigars of all sorts and cigarettes. Then he called for a large album of photographs of Syria and of all the region leading from the coast to Bagdad, explaining each one to me, and adding all sorts of information and anecdotes. The book was laid on the billard [sic] table; he and I bent over, and the others stood about. After half past eleven he said goodnight in the most cordial manner, bidding me again welcome to "his house." And he turned back at the door: "Herr Hofmarschall! Mind you give strict orders that Mr. Chamberlain is to have 9 hours' sleep; I won't allow a minute less, and woe to the man who wakes him any sooner!"

No prince could have been more luxuriously lodged than I was, in a room ten metres high, and provided with every comfort. I was informed that the valet who had fetched me from the station and who now accompanied Trotha and me to my room, was at my entire and sole disposal as long as I chose to remain, and ditto the carriage which had fetched me. If I liked to look at Potsdam, I had only to order the carriage and to say at what o'clock I wanted to breakfast and to lunch, etc. Very regal hospitality, but which I of course took no advantage of.

- I am interrupted by a visit come to Vienna on purpose to see me; I should have to put off finishing this

long letter and so prefer not keeping you waiting, but simply adding that the next morning I was informed H^{is} M^{ajesty} wished to see me ½ an hour before I left - to the great astonishment of the Hofmarschall von Trotha, who had just told me I could leave whenever I pleased, as the emperor never received anybody in the morning- And once more he was very kind and cordial, and astonished me by handing me his portrait for Uncle Neville. His name had only once been casually mentioned, when the emperor asked me whether I were related to Joe, and then whether I were related to the Fieldmarshal; never again.

I have said nothing about the subjects on which the emperor conversed with me; but as for my book, you do'nt [sic] know it, and so would not care, - and as for the other subjects, relating to the past, the present and the future and mostly political, they were of absorbing interest, but the emperor spoke so unreservedly that I feel it is I whose duty it is to be reserved and not to be the fountain-head of pseudogenuine imperial "sayings." Some things it was important for me to know, - especially it will be if I live to take up the continuation of my book and to write "the 19th century"; but they must remain stored in my thick skull.

My very charming dinner at the imperial chancellor's - a small, intimate and most animated party, with French as intellectual atmosphere-Donna Laura has been for 20 years trying to learn German without succeeding! - I may perhaps later on find an opportunity to talk about.

As I got into the train on my way home, I met Baron Varnbühler [sic], the representative of Wurtemberg in Berlin: "Well, dear Sir, he said, never anybody has yet skimmed the cream of Berlin society in such a masterly manner as you have." - "No merit of mine, I replied, the cream was served to me in a jug."

Well, goodbye for today. And as I am quite incapable - for sheer lack of time - to write all this out again, I am sending it just to Uncle Neville and begging him to forward to you, my dear Aunt Anne, who will I hope let Hetty and Harry have a read before you forward to Japan.- You asked me in your kind lines of 2d inst. for "a little detail"; I am afraid you will find this a great deal of detail; and yet it is only a hurried sketch of the outer sequence of events, and says almost nothing of what was going on in our two heads and hearts.

Your loving nephew

Houston S. Chamberlain

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