

THE HOUSE OF HOHENZOLLERN AND THE HAPSBURG MONARCHY

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The House of Hohenzollern and the Hapsburg Monarchy by Gustav Pollak

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GUSTAV POLLAK

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and
The Hapsburg Monarchy

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By
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The House of Hohenzollern

[From *The New York Nation*, March 22, 1917.]

IN all discussions of the fate of Germany in case of her ultimate defeat, the question of the attachment of the people to the Hohenzollern dynasty plays an important part. That Prussian loyalty will be equal to almost any test admits scarcely of doubt, but the question naturally suggests itself, Will other subjects of the Empire, notably South Germans, remain unshaken in their devotion to a dynasty that is responsible, as all Germans must eventually recognize, for the most disastrous war in history? It is difficult to make predictions at the present time, with the fortunes of war still trembling in the balance. One may safely say, however, that from the establishment of the present Empire to the outbreak of the war, every non-Prussian has been, first of all, a Saxon, Bavarian, Württemberger, etc., and only secondarily a German. We have on this point the highly instructive cor-

roboration of so excellent an authority as Prince Bismarck. He says, in the thirteenth chapter of his "Recollections":

Never, not even at Frankfort, did I doubt that the key to German politics was to be found in princes and dynasties, not in publicists, whether in parliament and the press or on the barricades. . . .

In order that German patriotism be active and effective, it needs dependence on a dynasty. Independent of dynasty, patriotism, as a practical matter, rarely reaches its full height. . . . It is as a Prussian, a Hanoverian, a Württemberger, a Bavarian, or Hessian, rather than as a German, that he is disposed to give unequivocal proof of patriotism. The German love of the Fatherland has need of a prince on whom it can concentrate its attachment. Suppose that all the German dynasties were suddenly deposed; there would then be no likelihood that the German national sentiment would suffice to hold all Germans together, from the point of view of international law, amid the friction of European politics, even in the form of federated Hanse towns and imperial rural communes ("Reichsdörfer"). The Germans would fall a prey to

nations more closely welded together if they once lost the tie which rests in the sense of the common importance of their princes.

Bismarck was never under any illusions as to the feeling of non-Prussian Germans towards the Hohenzollern dynasty. After the war of 1866 he labored hard to convince King William that it would be a serious mistake to punish Bavaria by forcing her to give up Anspach and Bayreuth to Prussia, just as it would be to compel Austria to give up part of her possessions. "I gauged," he wrote, "the proposed acquisitions from Austria and Bavaria by asking myself whether the inhabitants, in case of future war, would remain faithful to the King of Prussia after the withdrawal of the Prussian officials and troops and continue to accept commands from him; and I had not the impression that the population of these districts, which had become habituated to Bavarian and Austrian conditions, would be disposed to meet Hohenzollern predictions."