

BERLIN LETTER.

It is a feature of great interest to note the anxiety with which the outside world looks towards this portion of the globe, and to read the highly colored articles, political and non-political, that fill the columns of foreign newspapers. Germany plays an important role in the world's drama at present, but it is amusing to note how much more the world at large is agitated over affairs here than this people are themselves.

In reading over the reports of the different papers concerning the 1st of May, I find them as varying as the different imaginations of the several reporters could paint them, and that most of them were greatly exaggerated goes without saying. I passed that day in this city, but for the life of me I could find nothing of a startling nature. The day passed off without demonstration. Those who didn't work went into the surrounding resorts and spent the day quietly and pleasantly. Of course they forfeited their positions thereby, but no rioting nor anything of a like nature was indulged in as the outside world evidently looked for, neither were those sensible people who preferred to work rather than lose their places molested in the least. The right was given to the workman to make a holiday of the first of the month if he saw fit, but also was the prerogative given to his employer to discharge him if he chose. And the employer was upheld in this by the strong arm of the law.

The genial countenance of the ex-Reichskanzler Bismarck has not been seen in this city since the day he took his departure, nor, according to his own word, will we ever see him in Berlin again. It was with the profoundest regret that his friends grasped him by the hand—probably for the last time. It was a pathetic scene and will remain fresh indefinitely in the minds of those who witnessed it. Let us hope that for the benefit he has rendered to his country gratitude commensurate will ever be accorded him; for no one denies the vast good this illustrious man has done. Those who saw the demonstration that took place when he bid Berlin adieu were forced to say, "Truly he is beloved, respected and honored by the people."

Now, on the other hand, see what the herd has to say. Recently, in talking over the condition of affairs here at the time of Bismarck's resignation, a gentleman said to me: "I thank God that Bismarck has gone."

"Why so?" I asked in astonishment.

"Because," said he, "he is no friend to the working man. He takes from the poor and gives to the rich, and has taxed everything to such an enormous degree that the ordinary necessities of life are almost beyond the reach of the laborer. No indeed, Bismarck has been no friend nor benefactor of the poor (and certainly they form the majority), and we express no regret that he is gone."

These remarks surprised me much, for I had always understood him to be too much respected to give place to the above. However, I find this sentiment widespread.

Without doubt it will be read with some degree of astonishment by many people that the common necessities of life here are dearer than in America. For example, meat costs 20 to 25 cents per lb. and the best cuts 30 cts., while flour costs 5 to 5½ cts. per lb. and potatoes 50 cts. a bushel. Coffee averages from 35 to 40 cts. and sugar 10 to 12 cts.

Think of it! in this land of extremely low wages, exorbitant taxes and high rent, then you can form a faint idea of how these millions of poverty-stricken people live.

This is all laid at the door of Bismarck, and if he be to blame, who is it that wonders why the people are discontented with his administration? This was not the condition of the people in days past, and with those times fresh in remembrance, they clamor furiously against the extortionate taxations.

In Hamburg, not long since, the people enjoyed a free government with no taxation; but through Bismarck's instrumentality that city was brought under the yoke of the government and heavy taxes placed upon her wares. Few indeed are the friends of the ex-minister in that city.

The pertinent question at once arises in the minds of many, why this apparently unnecessary taxation and where does this vast revenue go? The answer may be embodied in three words—to the army.

The fact is indisputable that Germany has the finest army in the known world to day, equipped with all the latest and best modern inventions that science has devised, trained in all the tactics of war, elevated to a plane of perfection, a wonderment to the world. It is not denied the great Bismarck the praise due him—and it is much—in bringing the soldiery to such a high standard of excellence, to say nothing of the vital interests of his country that he has guarded with a jealous eye and her important movements conducted with a master hand. But with all his greatness, his ability and his foresight he has failed utterly to bring contentment and peace to the hearts of the people. Their groans are heard throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the strongest heart is now moved to compassion when contemplating the abject misery and want of the great masses. Poverty and crime go stalking hand in hand throughout the broad expanse of the empire, and shocking beyond expression are the crimes they perpetrate.

But why criticize this venerable statesman and endeavor to bring to light his weak sides? Is it not better to praise him for the vast good he has done and let the mistakes, as some please to term them, pass by? It is a trait of the human character to slander and calumniate as soon as a public man is out of office, but scarcely a syllable is heard as long as that officer

holds the wielding power in his hands.

Bismarck is one of the greatest lights of the nineteenth century and a man who has certainly loved his country with a passion that characterizes that of a child for its parent. His whole life has been devoted to his country's cause but never to his own aggrandisement. Whose record is a brighter one as a soldier, a diplomat or a statesman? His virtues are as numerous as his characteristics, all stamped with genuineness and true worth upon the face of them. Following is an extract from *Das Deutsche Blatt*, revealing several pleasing features of his magnanimity.

"The *Matin* brings a six column article of Henri des Houx, who has been a two days guest of Prince Bismarck. According to the article, Bismarck said that in 1867 at the declaration of war against France they endeavored to urge him into action at once because at that time the French armament was in a very bad condition. He opposed this measure, as later, after the war, also the appropriation of Metz as indemnity, and also was he against the taking of Strassburg. Bismarck said that he, contrary to the reports, had never spoken with Emperor Napoleon in Biarritz over important political questions. He said further that they would with pleasure have given Emperor Napoleon his freedom after his captivity at Sedan, but the Frenchman preferred detention.

Bismarck's assurance that Germany will never attack France made upon his guest a very quieting impression; and how it flattered Houx that Bismarck commended Freycinet's organizing ability and praised Carnot's journey to Corsica, 'the Island of Bonaparte,' as a great political move!"

The Paris *Abgeordnete Camille Dreyfus* now publishes as a pamphlet, entitled "The Necessary War," that he denotes as an answer of a Frenchman to Bismarck. He says Paris is only twelve and Berlin thirty days' march from the frontier. He declares it an economical necessity to break the eleventh article of the peace treaty of Frankfurt, and shows that France has, since 1871, paid out 15½ billion francs for her army and can pursue this course no longer. Consequently war must be declared. "France," continues he, "is sure of three things: First, of Russia's aid; second, that she is stronger than Germany; and third, that Europe, in case France wins, will forgive her for having begun the war."

He closes his 47 page argument with the following:

"We declare the war! The opportune hour has come! Two years ago would have been too soon; in two years it will be too late."

This pamphlet only speaks the mind of the fanatic; it has no political significance. Report has it here that it received a very cool, disapproving reception in France. No Frenchman is willing to take the responsibility of a rupture of the treaty of peace. Nor is it a certainty that Russia would give