

Harden, Who Talks Freely and Yet Avoids Jail

German Editor's Astonishing Record of Assailing Junkerdom and Praising America—One of the Few Who Dare to Speak

THERE may be an iron censorship in Germany, but it has not yet silenced Maximilian Harden. In almost every issue of his paper, *Die Zukunft*, you can find one of his broadsides, lashing everything and everybody whom Germans revere, from the Kaiser down.

"The goal of our enemies is democracy and independence for every race ripe for freedom," he said in his latest. "If Germany sees blazing over that goal the great celestial sign of the times, then peace is reachable tomorrow. Over all questions agreement will be achieved easily, but if that condition of things for which millions of people sigh appears to her to be ignominious, then she must fight on until one group conquers and the other falls in exhaustion."

That is the kind of thing, hurled in the teeth of Kaiser and Junkerdom and censorship, which has made Maximilian Harden the most famous, feared, admired, and hated journalist in Europe. Great as was his renown before the war on account of his celebrated exposure of the "Round Table" camarilla, and other outbursts of audacious frankness, it has grown by leaps and bounds since Aug. 1, 1914.

During the war Harden has flung every shred of caution from him and has dared imperial wrath in a series of articles more sensational than anything that issued before from his pen. Those who know Prussian autocracy have gasped in wonder as scree after scree from him, each bolder than the last, have followed in quick succession, throwing cold water on German hopes, belittling German victories, lecturing and satirizing and ridiculing and warning Germany's proud leaders.

"How does he get away with it?" asks the man in the street.

That question nobody has been able to answer. *Die Zukunft* has been suppressed now and then since the war began, but it always bobs up again more vitriolic than ever. Now it leads off with an article scoffing at the possibility of a victorious German peace, now with one ridiculing the Kingdom of Poland under German chaperonage, now it praises China for taking an anti-German course, now it extols Woodrow Wilson just as he has done something especially outrageous to Prussian feelings.

"How does Harden get away with it?"

Some say that his influence is so enormous, his power so great, that the German Government does not dare to do more than periodically discipline this "enfant terrible." Others, mindful of the unsavory "Round Table" revelations of ten years ago, recall what has been hinted in circles supposedly well informed—that Harden has evidence similar in character to that which drove some of the Kaiser's intimates into disgraceful oblivion, evidence that he would produce if persecution of him and his journal passed the bounds of perfunctory repression.

"Do not force me to play my last card!" he exclaimed during the "Round Table" trial, when heckled by cross-examination.

The Judge retorted: "Play your trump and stop making threats."

Harden did not play it. But there is a possibility that he may still have the trump up his sleeve. Anyhow, the German Government has not dared him again.

Harden's remarks about the United States since the beginning of the war have been consistently friendly and admiring. As for his attitude toward President Wilson, it amounts to veneration. Two of his famous broadsides, occupying entire issues of *Die Zukunft*, were entitled "If I Were Wilson" and "The Real Wilson." They overflowed with praise of the American Executive and abounded in dark warnings for Germany. Since then Harden has continued to speak well of America in the Fatherland, undeterred by the fact that now the United States is arrayed among Germany's enemies.

As for Russia, Maximilian Harden laughed at his compatriots who foresaw a separate peace with the new Russian Government. He predicted that Russia would be back in the fight before long. When the vitriolic editor of *Die Zukunft* read the news of Brusiloff's resumption of the offensive last week, of the capture by his troops of thousands of German prisoners, he must have smiled cynically and muttered the German equivalent of "I told you so."

Harden's onslaughts have earned for him the appellation of "the Bernard Shaw of Germany." It is deserved. There is something similar in the sardonic joy taken by both men in gibing at the mighty, rousing the conventional to Berserker rage, flinging down the idols of the many, waving red rags at the Gov-

never one which conferred greater benefits on the conquered. Germany wants no French or Russian territory."

Harden also justified the execution of Edith Cavell, saying:

"Whoever adds to our army's danger must never hope to be spared. War is not play nor pastime; it is rough work."

But in the course of the article in which he wrote those words he flung out a number of other things which must have made the authorities in Berlin wonder whether they had better congratulate Harden for upholding the Government or arrest him for gibing at it.

Other articles of his have left room for no such doubt. They have given the authorities not the slightest reason to think themselves upheld. The fact that these productions have not sent Harden

his frequent collisions with the authorities, his various terms in jail. In the very first year of *Die Zukunft* its editor wrote something about Otto, the mad King of Bavaria, as a result of which he spent a fortnight in prison. And once he was imprisoned for a whole year in a Prussian fortress.

Long ago Harden gave proof of the admiration for America and Americans which he is showing so strongly during the present war. In the course of the Spanish war he wrote in praise of Hobson, when that intrepid officer sank the *Merrimac* at the entrance to Santiago Harbor. Harden compared the young American with El Cid, the great hero of Spain.

During the present conflict he has lost no opportunity to extol the United States and its inhabitants. Writing in one of the issues of *Die Zukunft*, published just after our entry into the war, he said, answering a letter from an imaginary correspondent—a favorite Harden trick:

I have received as something long expected your advice "not to include America in the account as a real military factor." I receive it with as much calm and amusement as possible in this late Spring of terrible death, the most fearful period of the war that there has yet been.

The Congress of the United States, a country inhabited by 100,000,000 people, resolved by two-thirds majority on universal military service. By September half a million men can be trained for the eastern or western front in Europe. As late as the Autumn of 1914 the British Army was "not to be taken seriously." We know the refrain, and we have no doubt we shall hear it until we have another Arras.

One of Harden's recent articles, on account of which his paper was temporarily suppressed, contained these passages:

Germany is responsible for the war. She should have helped Lord Haldane, and come to an agreement with England. The Chancellor is unreasonable to expect the Allies to make peace based on "the situation of the map." They will not do that until convinced that their cause is lost, and such a moment cannot be foreseen.

Here is another one of Harden's frank outbursts, written a few weeks ago, in which he distinctly hints at German defeat and the coming of a democratized Germany:

Bagdad English, the advanced troops of the British and the Russians in contact on the frontier of Persia, wide areas of the soil of France once more in the possession of the republic, China's revolt from Germany, the success of the British at Arras, a new community with 100,000,000 Americans who desire for themselves neither land nor money nor even repayment of the cost of the war, and who, with their ideal solution, work upon the nerves of all mankind, confident in the hope of Central and South America—in these circumstances, is it possible for any sober man who does not want to blush before our warriors to say in his madness that the results of these three months have wearied our enemies and set them whimpering for feeble peace? . . .

Our fate depends, not on bits of territory, which European States can no longer take away from one another and can no longer hold to their own permanent advantage, but upon the acquisition of higher spiritual values. Elevate the conscience of mankind and light up the German house also! Then what the enemy demands too loudly, but what we in secret feel to be a necessity, will come to pass. The will of the people will be free and Germany will know for what the dearest children of her bosom are dying and suffering!

In the course of an article on the Russian revolution, written shortly after the Czar was dethroned, Harden said these prophetic and daring words:

The first earthquake shock of the Russian revolution is the great test of German politics. Humanity is enriched if the Russian people place themselves at its service and transform the gloomy domain of the Czar into the roomy, cheerful dwelling place of free men engaged in happy labor. The German Empire that exists since 1890 could not endure this change with serenity, neither in its economic nor its political constitution.

Does this prove that Russia must remain as it was yesterday and refuse to follow the path leading to a nobler destiny? No. It proves that since 1890 the German Empire has allowed itself to be misled into highways and byways in which the heavenly signs of the times do not beam, and has striven for objects which, if they were attained, would be bound to result in bitterly disappointed hopes.

Wherever the rise of 100,000,000 human be-



Maximilian Harden.

enmental bulls of Germany and Great Britain.

Nor does the similarity end there. There are contradictions in Harden's writings as there are in those of Shaw. Perhaps he incurs reproaches on this score voluntarily out of sheer irreverence for the gods of consistency worshipped by the average writer. Whatever the reason may be, a perusal of his articles reveals some strange things.

His antagonism to the Kaiser, for instance, started, it seems, because of Harden's extravagant admiration for Bismarck, the incarnation of German autocracy, with whom the editor of *Die Zukunft* was on terms of intimacy. Frank as he has been in criticizing Germany for her violent deeds in this war and in his denunciation of the goals of her imperialistic policy, yet, only six years ago, he said that England could avoid war with Germany by getting Germany to consent to her control of the seas in exchange for her letting Germany overrun the small nations of Europe. This line of thought was again followed by Harden when the German armies burst into Belgium. At that time he wrote in *Die Zukunft* regarding the land of King Albert:

"There never was a more righteous war than this one which has crushed her,

to prison must wait on the world-wide answer to the question, "How does he get away with it?" For frankness some of them make Bernard Shaw seem like a hired panegyrist of the British Government.

When he began to write he chose the nom de plume "Apostata," indicating his abandonment of all his former beliefs. He found ample opportunity for polemic writing when the present Kaiser, then just enthroned, dismissed Bismarck. So zealous was his advocacy of the former Chancellor that Bismarck invited him to Friedrichsruh, his place of retirement. That and other visits made Bismarck and Harden firm friends. The Iron Chancellor and the vindictive writer seem to have agreed pretty well on political questions of the day except when it came to socialism, where, as may be imagined, Bismarck could not stomach the radical views of the rising young journalist.

In 1892 Harden got tired of the opposition to his views in the Berlin press, which rendered the publication of his articles increasingly difficult, so he founded *Die Zukunft*, the paper which has ever since carried his name and fame to the four quarters of the globe. His troubles multiplied with the growing success of his journal. From its foundation, date

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ings into a state of freedom, self-government, and well-being is lamented as a national misfortune and a cause of gloomy forebodings, all the foundation walls of the mode of will and thought are rotten and good for nothing but rubbish.

Harden is the son of a Jewish merchant. His real name is Witkowski. Like that other daring German with whom he is so often compared—Friedrich Nietzsche—he has Polish blood in his veins. In his earliest youth he showed signs of the fiery independence which have made him the most formidable figure in German journalism and one of the best known in the world. His impatience of restraint and convention led him, when he was 12 years old, to run away from home and join a troupe of actors, with whom he wandered through small towns in the north of Germany. After a while his father got wind of his whereabouts and forcibly brought him back home, but the taste of

gypsy life had thoroughly delighted the wild boy, and a few years later he left college and became an actor. For seven years he stayed on the stage. Even to this day, it is said, he can remember not only all the words of the parts which he played, but he can recite the entire plays. Often he entertains his friends with declamations memorized in the days when he was a wandering actor.

He gave up the stage when he realized that the road to fame for him lay elsewhere. Journalism tempted him while he was yet little more than a boy. As soon as he set pen to paper he made a name for himself. The vigorous, fearless style, now famous all over the world, electrified his readers. It was so strong that, as one German put it, "it tells on one physically."

Harden did not wait until he was famous to begin his attacks on Germany's big men. He made himself famous by attacking them. Nothing was sacred to this audacious upstart.

He soon made himself known as a great German authority on foreign affairs. It is to his profound study of international complications, his extraordinary wealth of knowledge about lands beyond the boundaries of Germany, that he owes his uncanny prophetic power, which time and again has enabled him to look far ahead of the moment and enrage or delight people by the foreshadowing of events, the unpalatability of which to German appetites has never restrained him from spreading them out in *Die Zukunft*.

It is common knowledge in Germany that German statesmen never miss a *Zukunft* article. Nor does the Kaiser. It is related of Wilhelm II. that, after reading one particularly violent attack on him by Harden, he smiled and made a comment in German slang, which might be freely translated: "Harden's certainly a peach!"

Die Zukunft has proved a bonanza to Maximilian Harden. Even before the

war it was said to yield him an income of \$40,000 a year—something phenomenal in Germany.

In addition to his journalistic work, he is also well known in Germany as a lecturer. In his lectures he does not confine himself to prepared speeches, but adopts a confidential attitude toward his hearers, actually chatting with them. He is excellent in repartee, and hecklers at his lectures are more than likely to suffer from the sting of his tongue.

"I believe everything I say," Harden wrote across a photograph of himself presented to an American friend. In those words lies the essence of his personality. Changeable he may be, but he is always Maximilian Harden. No matter on which side of the fence he may stand he is Harden, the writer with an almost Biblical power of phraseology, of indomitable courage, the scorner of "lèse majesté," the scourger of shams.

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