

The Prince of Pests, A Story of the War, F. Scott Fitzgerald

It was night in July, 1914. A man and his board of directors sat around a table in a palace at Berlin. The man was tall, with a moustache and a short arm. Who was he?—oh, reader, can you guess? He wore a military uniform, green with grey facings; his pants were blue with red facings.

"Your Highness," Von Boodlewaden was saying, "everything is ready."

The Kaiser shook his head sadly and folded his arms, at least he tucked the short one in with the other. Then he took his short leg and crossed it over his long one, and having scratched his long ear come to business.

"Nietzsche," he said, and waited for his words to have effect. Von Nicklebottom immediately sprang upon the table and led the customary cheer for Nietzsche—three locomotives with three sidels. of beer on the end.

"Nietzsche," continued the Kaiser, "has said it. We will conquer by the sword." As he said this he ran his hand lovingly along his sword, then trying its edge on a bit of celery which he munched tentatively.

"Your Highness," cried Von Munchennoodle, "Belgium must be sacrificed."

The Kaiser bit his lip until the blood ran slowly down to the table where it spread into little livid pools of red and yellow liquid. His councillors dipped their fingers in it and reverently crossed themselves. Deeply affected the Kaiser pledged them.

"And what of America?" asked Pistachio, Chancellor of the Domino Club.

"America?" said the Kaiser, rising to his full height. "Charles II had his Cromwell, . Caesar had his Brutus, and Wilson—"

There were cries of "plagiarism" and the Kaiser paused.

"'Daniel Webster was a German," he continued, rather abashed. Turning to the man on his center, Baron Badenuf, Chancellor of the Shakespearegoetheteutonic League, he commanded him.

"Look him up, Baddy."

There was an hour while Badenuf looked up Webster, during which an absolute silence was maintained, broken only by the Kaiser as he ran his sword rapidly up and down his neck, where he had caught prickly heat the summer before playing leap-frog on the beach at Ostend with Czar Nicholas. Badenuf finally returned.

"I find in the life of Webster," he announced, "the relevant news that he once stopped at the Sauerkraut Inn while passing through Pennsylvania. This proves the case, for no one but a German would stop at a German Inn unless he has to, and Daniel didn't."

There were three wild cheers at this and according to the ancient German custom they prepared to pledge each other in the royal blood. The Kaiser tried his lip again but all the blood had gone out of it long ago. So he opened an artery in his leg with an olive fork.

They all gulped it down heartily while a German band played "Ach du lieber Augustine" and the Kaiser's valet strapped his paralyzed arm to his sword so he could have his picture taken.

F.S.F.