

**BISMARCK**

EMIL LUDWIG  
BISMARCK  
THE STORY OF A FIGHTER

*Translated by*  
EDEN & CEDAR PAUL

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That which is imposing here on earth  
. . . is always akin to the fallen angel ;  
who is beautiful, but lacks peace ; is great  
in his plans and efforts, but never succeeds ;  
is proud, and melancholy.

**BISMARCK.**

TO  
GERHART HAUPTMANN  
IN VENERATION AND FRIENDSHIP  
MOSCIA, SUMMER 1926

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## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

### Book One : 1815-1851.

- 1771 : Ferdinand von Bismarck, Otto's father, born.
- 1790 : Wilhelmine Mencken, Otto's mother, born.
- 1810 : Bernhard von Bismarck, Otto's brother, born.
- 1815 : Otto von Bismarck born, April 1st, at 1 p.m.
- 1816 : The Bismarck family removes to Kniephof.
- 1822 : Bismarck goes to the Plamann Institute in Berlin.
- 1827 : Malwine von Bismarck, Otto's sister, born.
- 1832-1833 : Bismarck a student at Göttingen.
- 1833 : Becomes acquainted with Roon.
- 1835 : Barrister at the Municipal Court in Berlin.
- 1836 : Referendary in Aix-la-Chapelle.
- 1836-1837 : Two engagements to marry.
- 1837 : Referendary in Potsdam.
- 1839 : Mother dies.  
Takes possession of Kniephof.
- 1842 : Third engagement to marry.
- 1844 : Friendship with Thadden and Blanckenburg.  
Plans for an Asiatic tour.  
Malwine marries Arnim-Kröchlendorf.
- 1845 : Father dies.  
Removes to Schönhausen.
- 1846 : Becomes dike-reeve.  
Death of Marie von Blanckenburg.
- 1847 : Betrothal to Johanna von Puttkamer (born 1824).  
Deputy in United Landtag.  
First speech.  
Marriage.
- 1848 : Marie von Bismarck born.
- 1849 : Deputy in Lower House.  
Herbert von Bismarck born.

*Chronological Table*

- 1850 : Deputy in Erfurt parliament.  
 1851-1858 : Envoy to Bundestag in Frankfort.

**Book Two : 1852-1862.**

- 1852 : Wilhelm von Bismarck (Bill) born.  
 1855 : First visit to Napoleon III.  
 1858 : Prince William becomes regent.  
 1859-1862 : Envoy in St. Petersburg.  
 1859 : Serious illness.  
 1861 : William becomes king of Prussia.  
 1862 : Envoy in Paris. Visits Biarritz.

**Book Three : 1862-1871.**

- 1862 : Premier and minister for foreign affairs.  
 1862-1866 : Conflict between government and parliament.  
 1864 : Meets Lassalle.  
     Danish War.  
 1865 : Convention of Gastein.  
     Meets Napoleon III. at Biarritz.  
 1866 : Attempt on Bismarck's life in Unter den Linden.  
     Victory over Austria.  
 1867 : Founding of the North German Confederation.  
     Bismarck becomes federal chancellor.  
     First dotation. Buys Varzin.  
 1869 : First tender of resignation.  
 1870 : Ems despatch. Franco-German war.  
 1871 : Founding of the German Empire.  
     Bismarck becomes imperial chancellor.  
     Is created prince, the title being heritable.  
     Peace of Frankfort.  
     Second dotation. Buys Friedrichsruh.

**Book Four : 1872-1888.**

- 1872 : Kulturkampf.  
     Three Emperors' League.

## *Chronological Table*

15

- 1872 : Motley's last visit.  
Second tender of resignation.
- 1873 : May laws against the Roman Catholics.  
Conservative campaign of calumny.  
Roon's premiership and retirement.
- 1874 : Attempt to assassinate Bismarck in Kissingen.
- 1875 : Third tender of resignation.
- 1877 : Fourth tender of resignation.
- 1878 : Two attempts to assassinate William I.  
Anti-socialist law.  
Congress of Berlin.
- 1879 : Change in foreign policy ; alliance with Austria.
- 1880 : Illness. Fifth tender of resignation.  
Becomes minister for commerce.
- 1881 : Herbert's unhappy love affair.
- 1883 : Triple Alliance.  
Dr. Schweningen's successful regimen.
- 1887 : Reinsurance treaty.
- 1888 : Death of William I.
- ..
- Book Five : 1888-1898.
- 1888 : Reign and death of Frederick III.
- 1889 : Last speech in the Reichstag.
- 1890 : Sixth tender of resignation.  
Dismissal. Created Duke of Lauenburg.  
Non-renewal of the Russian treaty.
- 1892 : Boycotted in Vienna.  
Triumphal progress through Germany.
- 1893 : Death of Bernhard von Bismarck.  
Serious illness.
- 1894 : "Reconciliation" with William II.  
Death of Johanna.
- 1895 : Eightieth birthday.
- 1896 : Revelations concerning the Russian treaty.
- 1897 : Last warning to the emperor.
- 1898 : Otto von Bismarck dies, July 30th, at 10 p.m.

## FOREWORD

A CHIAROSCURO form, fully equipped, shines forth from the twilight. Bismarck resembles the faces painted by Rembrandt, and must be so depicted. For the last eighty years, partisan hatred has flashed its lightnings around him. In his lifetime he was little loved, because he loved little; after his death he was condemned to figure as a statue, because his inner man remained hard to penetrate. Thus among the Germans he became a Roland carved out of stone.

The aim of this book is to limn the portrait of a victorious and errant warrior. Here Bismarck is depicted as a character filled with pride, courage, and hatred—the basic elements from which his actions resulted. To-day, when part of our nation admires him to excess while another part condemns him, we must make a profound study of the history of his spirit. Since Bismarck, as a personality, played the role of destiny to the Germans, the German nation must learn to understand the character of this man, to understand him as he really was, and not as distorted by worship and by hatred.

The historical man is always more organic than his system, and more complicated than his monument. Instead of following the academic method, and burdening the portrayal with notes, we think it proper in our day to make public characters plastic, as an example and a warning to everyone. The man and the politician are inseparable; feelings and actions determine one another mutually; private life and public life run concurrently. The task of the artist is to construct a whole out of the data furnished by the investigator.

By the beginning of the thirties, Bismarck's inner development was practically finished. During a decade and a half prior to that time he had had to endure the most violent agitations. All that followed, throughout his career, was no more than a deepening of the elementary lines already traced. That is why his youth, which most of the biographers dismiss in a few pages, must be dealt with at considerable length—his youth,

the time before his political activities began. The only writer who has succeeded in producing a psychography of Bismarck is the misunderstood Klein-Hattigen, who had to work with the documents that were available in his day. In the year 1911 I myself tried, in what I called a "psychological attempt", to counteract the legend of the Iron Chancellor by the depiction of an enigmatic nature. Ten years later I wrote a trilogy wherein I hoped to present Bismarck dramatically on the German stage.

This new likeness is entirely different from my earlier attempt, which was non-political. Nothing that I wrote in that first book is reproduced here, where the figure is presented in a new light. The only common element in the two works is the fundamental concept of an enigmatic character. Besides, various circumstances have rendered a new and more critical depiction necessary; the post-war epoch has brought with it a fuller knowledge of what was involved in Bismarck's career; a number of memoirs and other relevant documents have been published; and the personal development of the author has contributed to the need for a fresh presentation.

By the new lights, the chiaroscuro surroundings of Bismarck's figure have become even more striking. One who is not trying to carve a monument but to trace the career of a fighter, stands amazed before this life, which was perpetual struggle, occasional victory, unceasing passion, never satisfaction, for the most part sagacity, at times error, but invariably characterised by genius even when mistaken.

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