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Ludendorff

RETURNING to Berlin from the German East front on the evening of January 31 last, I awoke the next morning to find the temperature six or eight degrees below zero, my ears, nose, and fingers kissed by frost, and the newspapers gaudy with announcements of the *uneingeschrankten* U-boat war. An historic, and, for all the cold, a somewhat feverish day. The afternoon conclave of American correspondents in the Hotel Adlon bar was never better attended. For once the customary stealth of the craft was forgotten, and as each man came in with his fragment of news—from the Wilhelmstrasse, from the Embassy, from the Military Bureau, from this or that officer, or politician, or door-keeper, or headwaiter—it was fraternally pooled for the information of all. A newcomer myself, for I had got to Germany less than three weeks before, I chiefly listened, and the more I listened the more I heard a certain Awful Name. As witness my mental notes: —

Jetzt geht's los! The jig is up. They will never turn back now, Wilson or no Wilson. Bethmann-Hollweg is probably still against it, but who cares for Bethmann-Hollweg? When the jingoes won Ludendorff they won Hindenburg, and when they won Hindenburg the fight was over. . . . The whole thing was settled on the Kaiser's birthday at Great Headquarters. Did you notice that Helfferich and Solf, who are strongly against it, were not asked? Nay, it was a military party, and Ludendorff was the host. Of course, Bethmann-Hollweg was there, too, and so were the Kaiser and Kaiser Karl of Austria. All three of them hesitated. But what chance did they have in the face of Hindenburg—and Ludendorff? Ludendorff is worth six Bethmann-Hollwegs, or ten Kaisers, or forty Kaiser Karls. Once his mind is made up, he gets to business at once. Hindenburg is the idol of the populace, but Ludendorff has the brains. Hindenburg is an old man, and a professional soldier by nature, and a Junker to boot--he despises politics and diplomacy and all that sort of thing. All he asks for is an army and an enemy. But Ludendorff has what you may call a capacious mind. He has imagination. He grasps inner significances. He can see around corners. Moreover, he enjoys planning, plotting, figuring things out. Yet more, he is free of romance. Have you ever heard of him sobbing about the Fatherland? Or letting off pious platitudes, like Hindenburg? Of course you haven't. He plays the game for its own sake—and he plays it damnably well. Ludendorff is the neglected factor in this war—the forgotten great man. The world hears nothing about him, and yet he has the world by the ear. If he thinks Germany can get away with this U-boat war, and he undoubtedly does—well, don't put me down for any bets against it.'

And so on and so on, while the German bartender mixed capital Martini cocktails, and all the fashionables of Berlin drank synthetic coffee in the great lounge outside the American bar. All that day and the next the name of Ludendorff kept bobbing up. And the next, and the next, and the next. Zimmermann and Gerard were the leading actors in the week's comedy; apparently unaided, they fought the memorable battle of the Wilhelmstrasse; but behind the scenes there was always Ludendorff, and now and then his hand would steal out through a rent in the back-drop, and the traffic of the stage would be jerked into some new posture. It was curious, and even a bit startling, to note the perfection of his control, the meticulousness of his management. The main business before him was surely enough to occupy him: he was

hurling a challenge, not only at the greatest and most dangerous of neutrals, but also at all the other neutrals, and meanwhile he had the Franco-British push on his hands, and a food situation that was growing critical, and a left-over fight with anti-U-boatistas who still murmured. And yet, in the midst of all this gigantic botheration, he found time to revise the rules governing American correspondents, and to hear and decide an appeal from those rules by the last and least of them.

I know this because I was the man. Up to the time of the break a correspondent had easy sailing in Germany, despite the occasional imbecilities of the censor. He was free to go to any part of the Empire that intrigued him, barring military areas. He was taken to the front as often as he desired, and allowed to see practically everything, and entertained as the guest of the army from Berlin back to Berlin. He had ready access to all the chief of state and to most of the commanders in the field; the Foreign Office arranged credit for him with the wireless folks; his mail dispatches were sneaked to the United States by government couriers; he saw maps and heard plans; special officers were told off to explain things to him. The one definite limitation upon him was this: he could not leave Germany without the permission of the military authorities, and this permission was invariably refused during the two weeks following his return from any front.

The regulation was reasonable, and no one caviled at it. But on the day of the U-boat proclamation there arrived an order from Great Headquarters—that is, from Ludendorff—which jumped the time to eight weeks. A different harsher tune! Every correspondent in Berlin thought that the United States would declare war in much less than eight weeks; some put it at four or five weeks. To most the matter was academic; they had orders to cover the current news until the last possible moment; and besides, but three of them had been to the front within eight weeks, and these had but a few weeks to serve. But I was in a different situation, for on the one hand my commission was such that its execution had been made impossible by the break, and on the other hand I had just got back from the front. Accordingly, I asked the Military Bureau of the Foreign Office to waive the rule, that I might leave at some earlier time. The gentlemen there, as always, were charming, but they held up their hands.

'Waive the rule!' exclaimed the first one I encountered. 'But, my dear Mr. Mencken, it's impossible!'

'Why impossible?'

'Don't you know Who made it?'

The drama was contagious. I gasped. Was it Hindenburg, the Kaiser--Bismarck, Frederick the Great? 'The rule,' came the reply, 'was made by Excellenz Ludendorff Himself!' — 'The rule' (*pianissimo*) — 'was made by' (*crescendo*) — 'Excellenz Ludendorff' (*forte*) — 'Himself — (*fortissimo, subito, sforzando*).

I retired abashed; but, later, the Military Bureau, ever eager to please, called me up and suggested that I apply formally, and offered to indorse my application with certain flattering words: to wit, that I was of a rugged honesty and would betray no secrets; secondly, that I knew nothing of military science, and had none to betray. The document went to Great Headquarters by wire. Two days passed; no reply. Several fellow correspondents interested themselves, some testifying that I was honest, others that I harbored no secrets. On the third day a member of the Reichstag added his certificate. He was a man of great influence and his imprimatur penetrated the citadel. On the morning of the fourth day I was hauled out of bed by a telephone message from the Military Bureau. Come at once! I went —shivering, breakfastless, frost-bitten —and behind the door I heard the Awful Name again. Excellenz had stooped from his arctic Alp. I was free to go or to stay; more, I was a marked and favored man. All the way to Zurich I paid no fare.

II

I rob my forthcoming autobiography of this feeble chapter to show two things: first, the vast capacity of this Ludendorff for keeping his finger in a multitude of remote and microscopic pies, and secondly, the powerful effect of his personality upon the better informed and more sophisticated classes of Germans. To the populace, of course, Hindenburg remains the national hero and beau ideal; nay, almost the national Messiah. His rescue of East Prussia from the Cossacks and his prodigies in Poland and Lithuania have given him a half-fabulous character; a great body of legend grows up about him; he will go down into German history alongside Moltke, Blucher, and the great Frederick; monuments to him are already rising. His popularity, indeed, it would be impossible to exaggerate. Nothing of the sort has been seen in the United States since the days of Washington. He not only stands side by side with the Kaiser he stands far above the Kaiser; ten of his portraits are sold to one of Wilhelm's; a hundred to that of any other general. His promotion from *Oberbefehlshaber Ost* — commander-in-chief in the East — to supreme command on all fronts was made, almost literally, by acclamation. 'If it had not been made,' a high officer told me, 'there would have been a revolution — and not the mythical revolution that the English press agencies are always talking of, but a very real one. The people unanimously demanded that he be given absolute command; there was not a dissenting voice. Go to any *Biertisch* and you will find a severe critic of almost any other general in the army, but I defy you to find a single critic of Hindenburg. You have just seen a proof of his influence. A great many Germans were opposed to the "sharpened" U-boat war. Some thought it would fail; others thought it unnecessary. But Hindenburg's simple assurance to the Chancellor that it was necessary, that it would succeed, that the army was ready to face its consequences, was enough. The people trust him absolutely. In sixty-four words he disposed of the opposition.'

True. I had witnessed it myself. But the further one gets from the people and the nearer one approaches the inner circle of German opinion, the less one hears of Hindenburg and the more one hears of Ludendorff. Two years ago Hindenburg was given all the credit for the astounding feat of arms at Tannenberg — the most extraordinary victory, surely, of this war, and perhaps one of the greatest of all time. Legends began to spring up on the day following the news; they made the battle no more than the delayed performance of a play long rehearsed; Hindenburg was said to have planned it back in the nineties. But now one hears that Ludendorff, too, had a hand in it; that he knew the ground quite as well as his chief; that it was he who swung a whole corps — by motor-car, *a la* Gallieni — around the Russian right to Bischofsburg, and so cut off Samsonoff's retreat. One hears, again, that it was Ludendorff who planned the Battle in the Snow — another gigantic affair, seldom heard of outside Germany, but even more costly to the Russians than Tannenberg. One hears, yet again, that it was Ludendorff who devised the advance upon Lodz, which wiped out three whole Russian corps; and that it was Ludendorff who prepared the homeric blow at Gorlice, which freed Galicia and exposed Poland; and that it was Ludendorff who found a way to break the Polish quadrilateral, supposedly impregnable; and that it was Ludendorff who chose the moment for the devastating *Vormarsch* into Lithuania and Courland, which gave the Germans a territory in Russia almost half as large as the German Empire itself. Finally, one hears that it was Ludendorff, bent double over his maps, who planned the Roumanian campaign, an operation so swift and so appallingly successful that the tale of it seems almost fantastic. In brief, one hears of Ludendorff, Ludendorff, whenever German officers utter more than twenty words about the war; his portrait hangs in every mess room; he is the god of every young lieutenant; his favorable notice is worth more to a division or corps commander than the *ordre pour le merite*; he is, as it were, the esoteric Ulysses of the war.

But this is not the whole story, by any means; for as he has thus gradually slipped into the shoes (or, at all events, into one of them) of Moltke, the *Erste Generalquartiermeister* has also tried on the coat of Bismarck, long hanging on its peg. That is to say, he has reached out for the wires of civil administration, and now he has a good many of them firmly in his hand and is delicately fingering a good many more. It was in Poland and Galicia, while still merely chief of staff in the East, that he first showed his talent in this department. The German plan, once an enemy territory is occupied, is to turn it over to a sort of mixed posse of retired officers and civilians. Hordes of frock-coated and bespatted *Beamten* pour in; an inextricable complex of bureaux is established; the blessings of *Kultur* are ladled out scientifically and by experts. Belgium has suffered from this plague of cocksure and warring officials, and also Northern France. But not so the East. Over there, despite the fact that the population is friendly and the further fact that the enemy does not menace, the *Beamte* has found no lodgment. The army is the source of all law, of all rights, of all privileges, even of all livelihood. And the army is Ludendorff.

Curious tales are told of his omnipresence, his omniscience. He devised and promulgated, it is said, the Polish customs tariff. He fixed railroad rates, routes, and even schedules. When it was proposed to set up branches of the great German banks in Warsaw, Lodz, and Wilna, he examined the plans and issued permissions. When Americans came in with relief schemes, he heard them, cross-examined them, and told them what they could and could not do. He made regulations for newspaper correspondents, prison-camp workers. refugees, *Dirnen*, Jews. He established a news-service for the army. He promulgated ordinances for the government of cities and towns, and appointed their officials. He proclaimed compulsory education, and ordered that under-officers be told off to teach school. In brief, he reorganized the whole government, from top to bottom, of a territory of more than 100,000 square miles, with a population of at least 15,000,000, and kept a firm grip, either directly or through officers always under his eye, upon every detail of its administration. Hindenburg has no taste for such things. He was, and is, an officer of the old school, impatient of laws and taxes. So the business fell to Ludendorff, and he discharged it with zest.

All this was nearly two years ago. Last summer came Hindenburg's promotion to the supreme command, and with it a vast increase in opportunity for Ludendorff. Hitherto his power, and even his influence, had stopped at the German border; now his hand began to be felt in Berlin. His first task was to speed up the supply of munitions; the Allies on the West front had begun to show superiority here. The plans evolved by General von Falkenhayn, Hindenburg's predecessor, were thrown out as inadequate; entirely new plans were put into operation When I left Germany, in February, results were beginning to reveal themselves. New munitions factories were opening almost daily; the old ones were spouting smoke twenty-four hours a day. An American correspondent, taken to one of these plants, returned to Berlin almost breathless. He swore he had seen a store of shells so vast that the lanes through it were seventeen kilometres long. As for me, I stuck to Hackerbrau and beheld no such marvels; but this I do know; that all ordinary train-service to the West was suspended for days, while train after train of shells passed through Berlin. And the production of fieldguns, it was whispered, had leaped to six hundred a month.

Gargantuan plans; but what of the labor-supply? Here was a difficulty, indeed, for the army could not spare men, and the number out of uniform was anything but large. Ludendorff, however, argued that enough could be found — that thousands were wasting their time in useless industries, that other thousands had leisure that could be utilized. Out of this theory came the *Zivildienstpflicht*, whereby every German, old or young, rich or poor, found himself conscripted for the service of the state. As yet the utilization of these new forces is but partially under way, but progress is being made, and by the end of the year it

will be hard to find a German who is not doing his bit. The doctrine of Ludendorff is simple: the whole energy of the German people must be concentrated on the war. All other enterprises and ambitions must be put out of mind. All business that is not necessary to the one end must be abandoned.

Another difficulty: the food-supply. Two Food Dictators have wrestled with it. One was quickly and ignominiously unhorsed; the other. Doctor Max Johann Otto Adolf Torlilovitz von Batocki, shows signs of an uneasy seat. A complex and vexatious problem, too maddening to go into here. But this much, at least, may be said of it: that the prime obstacle to its solution is not an actual shortage of food, but a failure in discipline. The peasants, the cattle men, the commission merchants — all these yield to avarice, holding back their stocks for better prices, producing rather what is most profitable than what is most needed. While Berlin ate potato flour, good rye was being fed to hogs. While Berlin paid a dollar and a half a pound for geese, the country barnyards swarmed with them. While Berlin went without butter, there were yokels who greased wagons with it. For a year past Dr. von Batocki has been struggling against this failure of team-work, this very un-German rebellion, this treason of the peasants. In part he has succeeded, — for example, with the milk-problem, as witness the fall in the infant death-rate, — but in greater part he has so far failed.

Now, however, comes a new note in the roar of suggestions, objurgations, objections, recriminations. The voice is Hindenburg's, but every Grerman recognizes the words as Ludendorff's. 'Speculation in food-stuffs must cease. Every citizen must sacrifice his private interest to the common good. If it is found impossible to obtain this cooperation by existing means, then--'

'Which is to say,' said an army officer to me in Berlin, 'that the peasant will become a sort of official, forced to produce, not what he wants to produce, but what he is ordered to produce, and to bring it in when told to, and to take a fixed price for it. We are coming to that system. The gentler plan of Batocki is too cumbersome, too uncertain. It is based partly on tricking the peasant. Witness the way potato prices have been juggled to induce him to disgorge his potatoes. Well, tricking the peasant is a waste of energy. Besides, it is impossible. Ludendorff will put an end to all that. Soon you will see him show his teeth.'

And then? Find an army officer who is communicative, and a place where the human voice doesn't carry, and you will hear various and-thens. The army is rolling a sinister eye toward the Wilhelmstrasse. The imbecilities achieved in that narrow lane begin to exhaust its patience; I can well imagine how the news of the Mexican note was received at the far-flung mess-tables. Moreover, there is Bethmann-Hollweg, indicted by military opinion on two counts. *Imprimis*, he parades Berlin in a lieutenant-general's uniform, and is thus a tin soldier and accursed. *Zum zweiten*, his banal confession of wrongdoing in the Belgian business gave the English their chance. Also there is the 'scrap-of-paper' phrase—perhaps only a slip of the tongue, but how costly! Yet more, there is Zimmermann, the *Beamte* gone to seed, the diplomat all thumbs, the skeleton at all feasts. — Out! Out!

Has the Chancellorship been offered to Ludendorff? Many Germans believed it at the time I left. It was, in fact, common gossip in Berlin. But, so far as I could find out, it was gossip only. Ludendorff is unquestionably the new Moltke; is he also the new Bismarck, so long awaited, so diligently sought in vain? Alas, the question is purely academic. After all, he is but one man — and the job in front of him is enough to fill every second of one man's day.

III

The 1914 edition of *Wer Ist's*, the German *Who's Who*, does not mention Ludendorff at all. At the time it was published, he was a simple colonel on the Great General Staff, detailed to work out routes of march for the army in case of war — a highly important

commission, but one not bringing him to public notice. The younger Moltke, nephew of the field-marshal and then chief of the General Staff, had an eye on him, but he was by no means conspicuous, even in Berlin. On April 22, 1914, he was promoted to major-general and made commander of the 85th Infantry Brigade at Strasburg. On August 2 he was detached from his brigade and made *Oberquartiermeister* that is, chief of staff — to General von Emmich, and two days later he crossed the Belgian border and got his baptism of fire in front of Vise. The next day, August 5, he returned to Emmich's headquarters before Liege, and before nightfall found himself in command of a brigade again. The commander of this brigade had fallen in the first onslaught. Ludendorff resumed the attack at once, and after an all-day fight on the 6th, he led his whole force into the city on the morning of the 7th. This was no easy feat. The Liege forts still held out, —it was not till the 9th that the 'Busy Berthas' were brought up and began to knock them to pieces, — and Ludendorff, though in almost complete possession of the city, found himself cut off from Emmich's main army. On the night of the 7th he stole back through the Belgian lines to report upon his situation. He was greeted in Aix-la-Chapelle *wie ein von den Toden Auferstandener,* like one arisen from the dead. A week or so later he was summoned to Great Headquarters and the Kaiser personally engauded him with the *ordre pour le merite*. There followed the *Vormarsch* into Belgium, and Ludendorff went along as Emmich's chief of staff. On August 22, just as the artillery was beginning the attack on Namur, there came a telegram from Moltke which changed the whole course of Ludendorff's career, and perhaps the whole history of the war. It notified him that he had been gazetted chief of staff to Colonel General Paul von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg; it ordered him to proceed post-haste to Aix-la-Chapelle, to board a special train waiting there, to pick up Hindenburg at Hannover and to proceed to Marienburg, in East Prussia.

Ludendorff lost no time. Before sundown he was at Aix-la-Chapelle, and at 3.30 o'clock in the morning his *Extrazug* was at Hannover and Hindenburg came aboard. All the rest of the night the two labored with their maps and plans, and all the next morning, while the train raced across Germany.

On Sunday, August 23, at half-past one in the afternoon, it reached Marienburg, the old capital of the Teutonic Knights, now sorely menaced, like all of East Prussia, by the great tidal wave of invading Russians. On the Saturday following, shortly before noon, the Great General Staff in Berlin issued the following bulletin: —

'Our troops in East Prussia, under command of Colonel-General von Hindenburg, have met the Russian Narew army, consisting of five army corps and three cavalry divisions, in the neighborhood of Gilgenburg and Ortelsburg. After a battle of three days' duration they have defeated it and are now pursuing it over the frontier.'

This was the memorable battle of Tannenberg, the one indubitable military classic of the war. The Russian Narew army, under Samsonoff, ran to nearly 300,000 men, and hard on its heels was another Russian army, under Rennenkampf, of the same strength. To meet these huge forces Hindenburg had the First and Twentieth Corps of the line, two reserve corps, and some miscellaneous troops — in all, not more than 200,000 men, and at least sixty per cent were Landwehr and Landsturm. By August 29 he had completely destroyed the Narew army and hurled its remnants over the frontier; by September 14 he had beaten and dispersed the army of Rennenkampf; and by September 15 he had crossed into Russia himself. In less than three weeks, with a force not more than a third as large as the enemy's, he had fought two great battles, taken 140,000 prisoners, and killed and wounded as many more, had put the survivors to flight, cleared a territory of 10,000 square miles, and begun an invasion of Russia!

How? By what process? By what strategy? Ask these questions in Germany and you will ask in vain. The whole business already belongs to fable. Everybody has a different explanation, a different theory. The thing was so swift and so colossal that no one seems to

have kept any coherent record of it. I searched in vain in Berlin for a clear account; I got very little more light from officers who were present. Four months after the battle James O'Donnel Bennett, the very able correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*, went to East Prussia to go over the field and unearth the facts. He told me later that he had to give up the enterprise as impossible. The staff officers of Hindenburg actually differed as to the days on which the action had been fought! More, I find an error of the same sort in the official biography of Ludendorff, read and approved by him. The author, Dr. Otto Krack, says that the victory was reported on August 28. But a copy of the Berliner Tageblatt, that lies before me, shows that it was really reported on the following day.

In brief, a most mysterious affair. And even more mysterious is the part that Ludendorff played in it. Down to the end of 1914 he was unheard of; the whole credit was given to Hindenburg, and there were endless fantastic tales about his preparations, his minute knowledge of the Masurian Swamps, his struggles against the Kaiser. After Lodz the name of Ludendorff began to be whispered; after the conquest of Poland he began to rise in fame; today in Germany, among army men, it is chiefly Ludendorff that one hears of. Hindenburg is a nice old man, shrewd, talkative, gemutlich — above all, lucky. Ludendorff is the astute one, the serpent, the genius. This is how they talk.

IV

A genius, perhaps, but not a Junker. Das *Junkertum*, indeed, is on its last legs in Germany — not by revolution, as our newspapers would have us believe, but by natural processes. The war, in its first months, well-nigh exterminated the Junkers of tomorrow; today you will find thousands of architects, professors, lawyers, business men, in officers' boots. And in every other direction they yield to the pressure of the advancing commonalty —even in the Foreign Office. Hindenburg, true enough, belongs to the old clan, — the Beneckendorffs were officers in the fifteenth century, — but the two leaders next in rank to him, namely Mackensen and Ludendorff, are both commoners. Mackensen's grandfather, it is said, was a butcher; Ludendorff's was a merchant in Stettin. Mackensen did not get the right to put 'von' before his name until the Kaiser began to admire him, nine or ten years ago. As for Ludendorff, he has not got it yet. All the bulletins from Great Headquarters are signed simply, —

'Der Erste Generalquartiermeister
'LUDENDORFF.'

Of late, to be sure, the German genealogists — who are quite as imaginative as our own performers in the same line — have sought to trace his descent from Viginia Ericksdotter, a left-hand child of King Erich XIV of Sweden; but this is no more than Kaffeeklatsch chatter. The truth is that the first Ludendorff ever heard of was the general's grandfather, a *Kaufherr* in Stettin. He married a Swedish lady, whose mother was a Finn. This pair had a son whom they called August Wilhelm, and in 1860 he married Clara Jeannette Henriette von Tempelhoff, the daughter of old *Justizrat* Friedrich August Napoleon von Tempelhoff, who had married a Polish woman. August Wilhelm and Clara were the parents of the general. He is thus a much hyphenated Prussian, for he has Swedish, Finnish, and Polish blood. No doubt, as *de facto* King of Poland, he has often thought of his grandmother Dziembowski.

August Wilhelm, having espoused Clara von Tempelhoff, abandoned business and set up as a gentleman farmer in Posen. His small estate was called Kruszewnia, and here, in 1865, his second son, Erich, was born. In 1871 he sold the estate and leased three larger

places, Thunow, Geritz, and Streckenthin; but his management of them was not very successful, and in the eighties he retired from farming and settled down in Berlin. There he died in 1905. His wife Clara, the general's mother, lived until March, 1914.

Altogether, a modest family, with occasional flashes of distinction. One of the Tempelhoffs, back in the sixteenth century, was six times Burgermeister of Berlin, and left the post to his son. Another, Georg Friedrich, was a famous mathematician and artillerist, and so carried himself in the Seven Years' War that he died a lieutenant-general, with the *ordre pour le merite* and the Black Eagle, and was raised to the *Adelstand* by Friedrich Wilhelm II. Among the Lefflers, the Swedish relatives of the house, there have been more names of mark: for example, Gosta Mittag-Leffler, the mathematician; Professor Fritz Leffler, the Germanist, and Anna Charlotte Edgren-Leffler, the lady Ibsen. But none of the first rank. No Ludendorff, or Tempelhoff, or Leffler has ever made a genuine splash in the world. Nor are the living Ludendorffs, forgetting the general, of much draft or beam. The older brother, Richard, is a business man in the Dutch East Indies. A younger brother, Eugene, is a minor official in Aix-la-Chapelle — and to-day a cog in the wheel of civil administration in Belgium. Another, Hans, is an observer in the Astrophysical Observatory in Berlin. When the war began he was in Russia observing an eclipse, and he is there yet, a prisoner. Of the two sisters, one died unmarried and the other married one Jahn, an under-secretary in the Imperial Treasury. As for the general himself, he married, in 1909, a wealthy widow named Pernet. She brought him three sons and a daughter, all now grown. He has no children of his own.

His career? It really began in front of Liege. Before that he was merely a hard-working officer, perhaps marked only by Moltke. As a boy of twelve he entered the cadet school at Plon and two years later he was transferred to Gross-Lichterfelde. In 1882, being seventeen years and six days old, he was commissioned a junior lieutenant in Infantry Regiment No. 57 (the Eighth Westphalian). In 1887 he was transferred to the Marine Corps and served in the Niobe, Baden, Kaiser, and other old-time ships, visiting Scandinavia and the British Isles. In 1890 he entered the War College in Berlin for a three years' course, making Russian his chief subject. In 1894, having done well with the language, he was sent to Russia to make military observations. This commission was so competently executed that on his return he was promoted to a captaincy and given the much-coveted *Karmesinroten Streife*n (red stripes) of the General Staff. In 1896 he was transferred to the Fourth Corps in Magdeburg; in 1898 he became a company commander in the Infantry Regiment No. 61 (Eighth Pomeranian); in 1901 he joined the staff of the Ninth Division, under General von Eichhorn, now one of his subordinates; in 1902 he was made a major and attached to the Fifth Corps; in 1904 he returned to the General Staff; in 1906 he became a lecturer on strategy and military history in the War College; in 1908 he got his lieutenant-colonelcy; in 1911 he was promoted to colonel; in 1913 he was given command of the Thirty-ninth Fusilier Regiment in Dusseldorf, and in 1914, as I have said, he was made a major-general. Since then he has been promoted twice. After Tannenberg he was made a lieutenant-general, and last August he was made a general of infantry. There are two steps beyond: colonel-general and field-marshal.

So much for the record. As for Ludendorff the man, it is impossible to say much about him. The simple truth is that no one knows him. He is chilly, reserved, remote, almost wholly without charm; he has been so, according to his old-maid aunt, who knows him probably better than anyone else, since childhood. Hindenburg, at the messtable, is disposed to be expansive, genial, even garrulous. One of his old officers told me long tales of his love for the *Biertisch*, his delight in song, his waggish humors. There are no such stories about Ludendorff. He seems devoid of any social instinct. The few visitors to Great Headquarters come back to Berlin with the news that they have seen him, but that is about all they have to report. He is credited with no apothegms, no theories, no remarks whatever. He remains, after nearly three years of war, a man of mystery.

(Source: The Atlantic, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1917/06/ludendorff/376215/)