

The Daily Record

and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

№ 500.

DRESDEN, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1907.

10 PFENNIGS.

The First Daily Paper published in Germany
in English.

Office: Dresden, Steuss Strasse 54
Telephone: 1755.

Subscription for Dresden and the whole of
Germany and Austria:

1 mark a month.

THE TONE OF CRITICISM.

Probably since Thackeray held up Penderennis to the admiration of young Englishmen, there have been many ambitions whetted, many careers established, and many disappointments endured by those who are anxious to win the laurels of Literature by snatching them from the brows of the unworthy. The position of the reviewer has been, on the whole, honourable and enviable. Macaulay, following on that brusque "Quarterly" which used to be accused of having killed Keats, showed an admiring early Victorian world how a poet like Robert Montgomery may make a humourist of an historian and a butcher of an appraiser. We live in different days; yet it is time we stood on the threshold of a reaction that should render possible a twentieth-century "Dunciad". The whole trouble has arisen because Mr. Arthur Benson, mildest of philosophers and most urbane of essayists, has ventured to express in the columns of the *Tribune* his appreciation of the good manners displayed by the modern reviewer who almost universally refrains from the slightest discourtesy. In his essays Mr. Benson repeatedly speaks of his love of peace, quiet, reflection; and one sympathises readily with a frame of mind for which a murmur of gentle remonstrance is ample criticism. But, asks Mr. Cosmo Hamilton in a characteristically perky letter, is it right that this should be so? Mr. Hamilton is unnerved by the obsequiously honeyed phrases of the reviewers, and quite rightly, we think, blames a particular type of reviewer whom he saddles with the whole mischief. The fact is that reviews are too often regarded, even by the principal journals, as something inconsequent and almost negligible. Books fall into young and incompetent hands, and are dealt with as green enthusiasm or morbid knowledge suggests. Young men and young women, with the best intention in the world, continue day by day to extol nonsense and competence with superb indiscriminateness, and as an immediate result we find a steady output of trashy fiction and a steady stream of faithful readers. Meanwhile, the reading and appraising of nonsense is a task that few men of any standing in letters could be induced to undertake. The labour has grown so specialised as to require a sacrifice of time and activity from men whose abilities are too great to be altogether altruistically employed.

The public is misled, and the publishers, being neither angels nor idealists but men of business, follow the public. The circumstance suggests that, if criticism cannot be competent, there is at least more to gain from abuse than from courtesy. If in their fulminations the beardless arbiters of public taste were to exercise the indiscriminate violence of former days, one might hope for some sort of survival of the fittest; it is the sugared serenity of their method that is so misleading. The "superior person" of ten years ago is being replaced by a critic priding himself on a sympathetic or synthetic rather than on an analytical bias. A little plain speaking, where one really holds an opinion, is surely worth all these suburban amenities which after all, as Mr. Cosmo Hamilton justly remarks, savour somewhat of the counter and the shop-window.

THE GRAND DUKE OF BADEN.

A bulletin issued at 4 p. m. on Tuesday reports a slight improvement in the condition of H. R. H. the Grand Duke of Baden who appears to have gained a little strength.

Mainau, September 25.

A bulletin issued at 10 a. m. announces that throughout Tuesday and up to the time of making the report, His Royal Highness' temperature has been normal, but the heart's action continues in

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the same unsatisfactory condition as before. His Royal Highness has regained perfect consciousness. The night was a very restless one, owing to palpitation and lack of breath. It was only towards morning that restful sleep set in.

LAWLESSNESS IN INDIA.

MURDER AND RIOT.

Calcutta, September 25.

Two railway employees were attacked last night on the journey to East Bengal by a Bengalee armed with a large knife. One of the men is seriously wounded. The culprit, who is a barrister of good position, has been arrested.

Later.

A telegram from Calcutta states that at Sheipur in East Bengal a grave encounter ensued between a detachment of police and the natives. Two persons were killed and eleven wounded.

CHOLERA IN RANGOON.

Rangoon, September 25.

During the past week there have been several cases of cholera. Four deaths are reported among the Europeans.

AMERICAN NEWS.

BUBONIC PLAGUE AT SAN FRANCISCO.

San Francisco, September 24.

Forty-two cases of bubonic plague have already come under notice. There have been twenty-four deaths. Twenty-five suspected cases are under observation.

POLITICAL RIOT AT NEW YORK.

New York, September 24.

At today's preliminary elections, a fight ensued between Tammany men. Knives and revolvers played a part. The fight broke out owing to disagreement as to the choice of candidates. It is reported that fourteen persons have been wounded and a few killed.

THE RAILWAY SCANDALS.

New York, September 24.

An Official Receiver has been appointed for the New York City Railway Company. This company has the contracts for the greater part of the over-ground railways in New York.



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Chicago, September 24.

The Attorney-General has stopped the proceedings against the Chicago and Alton Railroad Company for reduction of rebates in favour of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana.

Chicago, September 25.

The chairman of the Illinois Central Railway states that the dismissal of Mr. Stuyvesant Fish was due principally to the fact that he had obtained a personal loan of 1 1/2 million dollars from the company on insufficient and unmarketable security. The directors are taking steps to enforce repayment.

A LINER COLLIDES.

Ottawa, September 25.

The liner "Mongolian" of the Allan Line had a collision in the neighbourhood of Fame Point while bound from Montreal to Liverpool. On account of the damage sustained she is to make for Quebec.

FAMINE AT SAN JUAN DE PORTO RICO.

San Juan de Porto Rico, September 24.

The failure of the crops has caused a terrible famine among the inhabitants of the island. Great numbers are in a state of extreme distress, and misery is spreading day by day. The government of the colony have addressed an appeal for immediate assistance to the authorities at Washington.

THE NEW TRANS-ATLANTIC TARIFFS.

London, September 24.

The Directors of the Cunard Line have issued the following reductions in prices, which are to come into force on November 1 for passages from East to West, and immediately for passages from West to East. For the "Lusitania" £14.10, for the "Campania" and "Lucania" 10 guineas, for the "Carmania", "Caronia", "Etruria", "Umbria", "Ivernia" and "Saxonia" £10.

Ottawa, September 24.

The Canadian-Pacific and Allan Lines have also agreed to reduce their tariffs. Their charges are, for the first class \$55 and \$45, for the second class \$45 and \$35. Higher charges will be retained for the "Empress" of the Canadian-Pacific Line and the "Virginian" and "Victorian" of the Allan Line. The Dominion Line is also making appreciable reductions. The result of this general decrease will probably be that travellers from the Central and Western States will avail themselves of the Canadian routes.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL AIR-SHIP ASCENT.

The *Schwäbische Merkur* learns from Friedrichshafen that Count Zeppelin's renewed ascent on Tuesday was extremely successful. At 11.45 a. m. the air-ship sailed straight from Manzell to Konstanz, along the Bodensee, and then straight back to Friedrichshafen. Here it took the direction of the Kurhaus and the Royal Palace. Finally it returned to Manzell and alighted safely. The ship sailed with great sureness and grace; the steering was accurate. It is further reported that at 1.45 p. m. the air-ship passed over Lindau and executed various movements with ease. Its speed against the wind was considerable.

INTERNATIONAL PRESS CONGRESS.

The International Press Congress was dissolved on the 24th. The next congress, which is to be at Berlin, will be held in 1908.

THE ANTWERP STRIKE.

WORK TO BE RESUMED.

September 24.

At a meeting of dock-labourers held this afternoon it was decided by a large majority to resume work on the former conditions next Thursday.

The Finest Habana Cigars, English cigarettes and tobacco. L. Wolf, Prager Str. 48.