

The Daily Record

and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

No 566.

DRESDEN AND BERLIN, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1907.

10 PFENNIGS.

The First Daily Paper published in Germany
in English.

Office: Dresden A., Steube Strasse 51. 'Phone: 1755.
Berlin W., Soldaten Str. 10/11. 'Phone: VI 1079.

Subscription for Dresden and the whole of
Germany and Austria:

1 mark a month.

THE SEQUEL TO PORT ARTHUR.

It is impossible to read of the military trial proceeding at St. Petersburg without reflecting upon the senseless animosity of which it is the outcome. It is now almost three years since General Stössel capitulated to the remorseless Japanese siege, a siege which earned grim distinction by reason of the appalling slaughter on both sides. Whether he was justified in sacrificing national prestige to the dictates of humanity is a question which will probably remain for ever unsolved, owing to the singular lack of authentic data. Judging from the information available, however, surrender certainly seemed the most prudent course. It will be remembered that subsequent to the fall of Port Arthur General Stössel returned to Russia, where he was feted and eulogised as a popular hero, his action apparently receiving official approbation. Then, with characteristic inconsistency, public opinion executed a *volte-face*; the unfortunate officer was treated with every indignity; his personal courage was impeached; and all sorts of rumours were abroad as to his impending trial by court martial, with the probability of a death sentence being passed. General Nogi, the Japanese victor of Port Arthur, was interviewed by a press representative, and gave utterance to the opinion that Stössel had done everything that mortal man could, his surrender being inevitable. But malignant forces were working against the defeated officer, in an effort to cover him with disgrace; his most bitter enemy being Admiral Wiren, whose achievements during the siege were in refreshing contrast to the seeming lethargy of other officials. From private sources it has been possible to gather details, more or less authentic, of the sanguinary drama that was brought to a close on January 2nd, 1905, when the decimated Russian garrison marched out of the fortress between long lines of Japanese bayonets. Certain it is that several high officers in Port Arthur were strenuously opposed to capitulation, and chief among these was Admiral Wiren. We have read a detailed narrative of the siege penned by a junior Russian officer, who was in the fortress throughout the struggle. Being a naval man, he naturally sides with Admiral Wiren, who, he asserts, was continually at loggerheads with General Stössel on account of the latter's refusal to permit another sortie being made by the fleet. The narrator further says that Wiren used to implore the commandant to let him act on the offensive, shedding tears of chagrin when his request was refused, and swearing to make a dash with his own ship, the "Bayan," the armoured cruiser whose exploits have immortalised her in naval annals. As one after another of the Russian vessels were disabled by the Japanese shells which swept the whole harbour from end to end, it is on record that the indomitable Wiren was rowed to and fro between the ships amid a rain of projectiles, the occupants of the boat frequently being drenched with spray caused by shells striking the water in close proximity. He endeavoured to infuse fresh courage into the demoralised sailors, and finally worked them up to such a pitch of enthusiasm that only General Stössel's threat to arrest Wiren for insubordination deterred them from making a last desperate sortie with their shattered ships. It is not impossible that a well-executed, determined sally would have inflicted material damage upon Togo's squadron, and might have resulted in the temporary raising of the merciless blockade. Stössel, however, was inexplicably adamant on this point; he took men from the ships to man the forts and even removed every portable naval gun to strengthen the land defences. At last, we are told, living conditions in the beleaguered fortress became frightful. The unnumbered dead were perforce left unburied, and the resulting effluvia grew intolerable. Epidemic diseases devastated the garrison to a greater extent than the Japanese bombardment.

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Madame Stössel, who was with her husband, undoubtedly urged him to capitulate, and this must naturally have influenced his ultimate decision. He finally called a meeting of all the high officers, telling them that he had decided to deliver up the fortress. This incident is dramatically related by the writer in question. He tells us that when Admiral Wiren heard these fateful words he burst into tears, and, pointing an accusing finger at the commandant, exclaimed in a voice choked with rage and grief: "Traitor!" But Stössel was unmoved, and messengers were despatched to General Nogi with the information that surrender would be made upon certain conditions. It must not be forgotten that Stössel was entirely cut off from headquarters, and knew nothing of the whereabouts of the Baltic fleet. Of provisions in Port Arthur there were none; ammunition was almost exhausted and, worst of all, no medical comforts were available, the most serious operations being performed by the surgeons without the use of anaesthetics. The commandant knew perfectly well that there was nothing to hope from Kuropatkin's army in the north, which was daily being driven back on Mukden. Under all these circumstances it is difficult to see what other course was open to him; but, unfortunately, logic is of little avail against unreasoning spite. Admiral Wiren alone has perhaps some reason to entertain feelings of enmity to the accused officer, and the fact of his presence as a witness at the trial renders it probable that the verdict will not result in Stössel's acquittal. The whole affair, however, is contemptible in the extreme. It is not easy to realise what purpose there can be in thus dragging to light an event of which Russia has no reason to be proud; on the grounds of incapacity rather than personal pusillanimity. The immolation of General Stössel may give satisfaction to his enemies but, on the other hand, it cannot fail to discourage other brave men who will hesitate to do their duty if it is to be rewarded with castigation and disgrace.

CANINE SAGACITY.

"My dog," says a correspondent, "hates his bath, and has been trying to find a substitute. The other day he rolled in the mud, and walked up to the mouth of a vacuum cleaner."



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THE GERMAN EMPEROR IN HOLLAND.

The "Hohenzollern" with the German Emperor on board arrived at Ymuiden at 4.45 o'clock on Thursday evening. No salute was fired, as His Majesty is travelling incognito as far as Amsterdam; but as the Imperial Yacht passed the Dutch iron-clad "Friesland," the band on board the latter ship played "Heil Dir im Siegerkranz" and the crew were paraded. A great crowd assembled on the shore cheered heartily. The escorting ships "Königsberg" and "Sleipner" were moored close to the "Hohenzollern."

All the Amsterdam newspapers contained articles hailing the Kaiser as the friend of peace, and dwelling on the good feeling subsisting between Holland and Germany as neighbours.

ECHOES OF THE GERMAN EMPEROR'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

PRESS OPINIONS.

Referring to the departure of the German Emperor, the *Westminster Gazette* writes: "It will everywhere be heard with pleasure that the Emperor's health has benefited from his stay in England. We believe the visit has contributed materially to the dispersal of the fog of misunderstanding which created an atmosphere more favourable to the growth of mutual suspicion than of friendly relations. It is satisfactory to read the farewell message of the Kaiser which has been published by the German Ambassador. We have all been greeted by His Majesty in a warm-hearted manner, and the cordial sentiments that he expressed have made him personally very popular. The best result of the visit would be that it should constitute a turning-point in the history of the relations of both countries."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* gives similar expression to feelings of satisfaction at the improvement of the Emperor's health, remarking: "The Emperor did his best to bring about an improvement in the relations between Germany and England. We can bear witness to the amiable manner in which His Majesty has adhered to this object, and we sincerely hope time will show that he has been successful. It will not be the fault of the English people if the efforts of the Kaiser are not crowned with the success that they deserve."

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION.

The national committee of the Democratic party have decided to hold their convention for the nomination of a presidential candidate in Denver, Col.

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION.

A resolution was adopted by the Senate on Thursday requesting the Secretary of the Treasury to use all the means at his disposal to increase the Government deposits in the National banks; to add to the means of currency; and to give particulars as to the issue of Panama bonds, the extent of the circulation of Clearing House certificates throughout the country, the despatch of bullion, and the various gold imports during the last few months.

DEPRESSION IN AUTOMOBILE TRADE.

It is reported from Detroit that a serious crisis has developed in the automobile industry, particularly in connection with luxurious cars. As a consequence, 32,000 men are practically starving.

NEWS FROM FRANCE.

SERIOUS RAILWAY DISASTER.

A Besancon telegram states that two trains collided near the station of Valleroi le Nois, five passengers being killed and 15 injured.

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