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The Daily Record

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Strasse 5, 1.
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1755.

and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

THE FIRST DAILY PAPER IN ENGLISH PUBLISHED IN GERMANY.

№ 609.

DRESDEN AND BERLIN, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1908.

10 PFENNIGS.

The Daily Record is delivered by hand in Dresden, and may be ordered at any Post Office throughout the German Empire. It is published daily, excepting Mondays and days following legal holidays in Dresden.

Monthly Subscription Rates: For the whole of Germany and Austria, mark 1.—. For other countries, marks 2.50.

BERLIN

In the triennial election of seven Clerical Members of the London Diocesan Conference to represent the Continental Deanery B, comprising Russia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Belgium and Holland, the following were elected: Rev. W. R. Stephens, Brussels; Rev. J. F. Seaton, Homburg; Rev. E. F. Scofield, Leipzig; Rev. T. A. S. White, Baden-Baden; Rev. C. A. Moore, Dresden; Rev. W. W. Clarke, Brussels; and Rev. W. A. Macleod, St. Petersburg. The Rev. J. H. Fry, Chaplain at Berlin, being Rural Dean is an *ex officio* member of the Conference.

The Right Rev. Bishop Wilkinson D. D. will arrive at Berlin on Saturday, February 15; will preach the next morning at the English Church; and will hold a Confirmation on Monday, the 17th, at 3 p. m., leaving Berlin for Russia the same evening.

During the last few days the whole American colony of Berlin had no other subject to speak of than the Minstrel Show. Everything else was nothing compared to this great event. As was foreshadowed in these columns, the managers, the performers and the whole colony now, after the first night, have reason to be proud of their great victory. The Show was a great success, artistically, socially and, last but not least, financially. There is every reason to believe that the second night will prove equally successful.

Kroll's Theatre, one of the largest in Berlin, was already crowded at eight o'clock with a multitude of distinguished ladies and gentlemen, mostly in evening dress. This appearance of the audience, something quite unusual in Berlin theatre life, created an atmosphere of elegance and splendour reminiscent of the gala performances at the Royal Opera. Here it may be stated that it is impossible to enumerate the names of those present; we might just as well print a directory of the American colony of Berlin.

Shortly after eight o'clock the curtain rose and the grotesque nigger company on the stage, smiling their broadest smiles, were greeted with general applause. The "End Ladies and Gents" were introduced, bowed to the audience and were warmly received, whereupon the orchestra struck up the melody of the National Anthem. In walked Miss Liberty with a large American flag, impersonated in the most charming manner by Miss Thackara, younger daughter of Consul-General and Mrs. Thackara. The patriotic enthusiasm of the audience reached the climax when, at the end of the first part, Uncle Sam (Mr. Buchmann) walked in, and the band, the performers and the whole audience rising from their seats, joined in singing two verses of "America".

The first part consisted of several solo songs by which the soloists introduced themselves, choruses and witty dialogues in true negro style. Mr. Marshall Pease acted the part of confereancier with astonishing dexterity and spirit, ably supported by the rest of the performers. It might be said, however, that the first part was entirely too long and drawn out. An energetic use of a thick blue pencil would have done a lot of good in the interest of the whole performance. This would also have prevented the show lasting till nearly midnight, which fact compelled many people to leave their seats and walk out of the hall during the performance.

The second part was the first production of a negro burlesque, written for and dedicated to the American Woman's Club by the musical director, Mr. Paul Knox, who also played an important part in it. "The King of Coontown" is full of comic scenes, catchy melodies and humour, giving everybody a chance to show her or his ability. The special features of it were a fine quartette, admirably sung by the "Chirping Constituency," consisting of Messrs. Pease, Saylor, Knowles and Derrick, and merry dancing and singing by the whole company. But the climax in this part was undoubtedly the singing of that old negro song "Swanee River" by Miss Hewes, who was the lady star of the evening. The six night bur-

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GENERAL NEWS.

ENGLISH NEWS.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

In the adjourned debate on the Address Mr. Ramsay MacDonald (*Lab. Leicester*), withdrew his amendment with reference to expenditure on armaments, after the Prime Minister had stated that the House would have an opportunity of discussing this question before being asked to vote on the Army and Navy estimates.

The Postmaster General, Mr. Buxton, said, in answer to a question, that the convention with regard to wireless telegraphy had not yet been ratified by the Government. In order to take advantage of the provision as to excepting certain stations, it would be necessary to ratify the convention, and to specify the rights of exception reserved, before the end of March. The Government saw no reason for altering their decision to ratify the convention.

PRESS OPINIONS.

The *Morning Post* of yesterday writes: The withdrawal of the amendment with reference to expenditure on armaments gave rise to rumours among the Liberal members of the House that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will decline to accept the Ministerial proposals as to naval expenditure, on the ground that the amount involved is too great. The *Daily Chronicle* is able to state that the increased expenditure is in no wise due to the German proposals, but that nevertheless naval experts are talking of an increase of from four to five millions in the next few years if the German programme is carried out. The *Daily Mail* fears that the Naval Estimates will show an increase of about a million and a quarter sterling.

THE TRANSATLANTIC RATE WAR.

The conference of representatives of the great Transatlantic lines which is being held in London under the chairmanship of Herr Ballin, the Managing Director of the North German Lloyd, has met several times and made such progress with their deliberations that hopes are entertained of a basis of agreement being found within a short time.

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DRESDEN

Mr. Aubrey Stanhope, the well-known journalist and special correspondent of the New York *Herald*, has been spending a few days in Dresden at the Europäischer Hof, on his way from Berlin to Frankfurt o. M. He left yesterday morning for that city, after having forgathered with several of his friends in Dresden, including Consul-General T. St. John Gaffney, who, by the way, travelled to Berlin yesterday with Mrs. Gaffney, in order to witness the second Minstrel Show performance at Kroll's Theatre.

Mr. and Mrs. John G. Heckscher, who had been residing in Dresden for the past four months, unexpectedly departed for New York on Tuesday, on board the North German Lloyd liner "Kronprinzessin Cecilie" from Bremerhaven.

As a matter of fact, this sudden departure created consternation among the friends and business acquaintances of the couple in this city, and various rumours of a more or less sensational character are circulating, some of them derogatory to Mr. and Mrs. Heckscher.

Mr. Heckscher is well-known in New York as the father-in-law of Mr. George B. McClellan, Mayor of New York City, and also as the father of Mrs. Egerton L. Winthrop.

It may not be generally remembered that Mr. George B. McClellan himself was born in Dresden, where his parents were sojourning in 1865, soon after General McClellan retired from active service in the United States Army.

Franz Naval who is at present singing with great success at Copenhagen was received by the King of Denmark in special audience, and was honoured by his Majesty with the Dannebrog Order. Herr Naval, one of the first singers of the day, has been engaged for the last Philharmonic concert on February 18, at which Signor Caponsacchi (cello) will also perform.

Gerda Hildebrandt-Schnevoigt, assisted by Wolfgang Ruoff (piano), will give a concert in the Palmengarten on Saturday, February 22.

The postponed concert of Luise Ottermann and Doris Walde of songs and duets is finally arranged for February 28, and will take place in the Vereinshaus. Tickets already purchased still hold good.

The recent robbery at St. Petersburg of M. Eugene Ysaye's Stradivarius violin lends additional interest to an article in the current *Revue de Paris* on the famous violin-maker, by M. Camille Barrère, French Ambassador at Rome. During three quarters of a century Stradivarius—*le prince des luthiers italiens*—created the unrivalled masterpieces that are now worth more than their weight in gold. M. Barrère dwells on the fact that Stradivarius was the first to create the concert violin; that is to say, an instrument capable, owing to its power and varied resources, of dominating the sonority of the orchestra. But to what is due the superiority of the "Strad" violin? M. Barrère accepts, adding himself ingenious and original grounds for his belief, the point of view of Messrs. Hill that the qualities of a string instrument depend almost entirely upon the varnish, the supple and brilliant envelope with which it is covered. The tradition of the receipt of the Italian varnish has been lost. M. Barrère believes, however, that the glorious traditions of Cremona, Brescia and Venice will soon be revived in the atmosphere of art of what he calls *la jeune et brillante Italie*.

The essay in question was written at the request of Messrs. Henry, Arthur and Alfred Hill as an introduction to their volume on Stradivarius which is shortly to appear. We advise all our readers interested in this entrancing subject to obtain the February issue of the *Revue de Paris* and read the French Ambassador's illuminating remarks for themselves.

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