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The Daily Record

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and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

THE FIRST DAILY PAPER IN ENGLISH PUBLISHED IN GERMANY.

No 854.

DRESDEN, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 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 Dresden, mark 1.—; for the rest of Germany and Austria, mark 1.20. For other countries, marks 2.50.

A FISHER OF MEN.

AN INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL BOOTH.

A tall patriarchal figure, erect and unbending despite the weight of nearly four-score years, a keen, but benevolent, countenance, surmounted by the high forehead denoting intellect,—that is the impression received by an observer who first comes into contact with one of the most remarkable figures of the age. The kindly atmosphere which seems in some indefinable way to envelop the personality of General Booth does not detract from the dominant influence of the man. A few moments in his company are sufficient to explain how it is that the marvellous system created and firmly established by him does its work so smoothly and unswervingly. The General has been blessed with the rare gift of organisation and the power of imbuing his assistants with his own indomitable energy. The result is seen today in the unique host of militant religionists aptly called The Salvation Army, with ramifications extending to practically every country of the globe. It was on the 5th of July, 1865, that the first steps towards the creation of this great work were taken. As a travelling evangelist, weary of the monotonous routine involved by the ordinary circuit duties of a Methodist minister, William Booth arrived in London and came face to face with the appalling misery and destitution of those inhabiting the East End purlieus of the metropolis. He instantly realised that he had come upon his appointed life's work, set his hand to the plough with characteristic decision, and has never turned back. The little band of devoted followers who first flocked to his standard was known as the Christian Mission. No one but the General himself and the survivors of that first movement will ever know of the tremendous difficulties which cropped up at every stage of the campaign. The appearance of the familiar uniform in the streets of London and elsewhere was usually the signal for a bitterly hostile demonstration, and on more than one occasion the workers were compelled to seek refuge from the violence of the bigoted mob. Only a man possessing almost superhuman patience and profound faith in his call could have persevered in the face of such determined persecution. But the General never faltered or allowed his helpers to falter; always before his eyes were the hideous forces of vice and degradation, against whom he battled as valiantly as ever did the more flamboyant Crusaders against the Saracen hordes. Space is lacking to describe the steady progress made by the Army once popular prejudices, invariably based on a complete misunderstanding of the workers' aims, had been overcome. Clergymen of all denominations came to view the work of regeneration for themselves, and went away marvelling at what they had seen. Scoffers were converted into sincere admirers of the Army, in some cases its active helpers. In 1907 the Salvation Army had 7,820 corps, circles, and societies, established in 54 countries and colonies, with 20,306 officers and employes, i.e. men and women maintained for the work. A great rescue system for the benefit of the submerged, starving, vicious, and criminal classes was established, and now has 762 social institutions, with 2,259 helpers employed in the work of regeneration. During the twelve months ending Dec. 31, 1907, no fewer than 5,449,004 needy people were sheltered for the night, and 9,557,241 meals were supplied during the same period.

In conversation with a *Daily Record* representative at Blasewitz on Wednesday morning, General Booth explained how it was that at his great age he is able to work with such energy and cover so much ground in the course of a year. "Become a Salvationist and live on my diet," he said, "and you will be as active at eighty as I am, given the strong constitution with which I am blessed. For long years now I have taken care of myself with the sole object of continuing to work for the cause I have embraced. Of course, I attribute my continued health in no small degree to the prayers of God's people the world over. I find the Army's influence increasing marvellously, and in Germany particular progress has been made within the last two or three years. This I believe to be due to the fact that our aims are becoming better understood. The German mind is essentially profound; when it comes upon a fact it wants to get to the bottom of that fact. It is not, in my opinion, a very receptive mind, but once it



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has embraced a principle it does so with thoroughness. Consequently here in Germany we have had to contend with the prejudices of both saints and sinners—newspapers among the rest, but all have since come to deal more fairly with us. What originally gave me the idea of the Army? Well, I saw the urgent need of it; my heart yearned for those suffering under the results of sin and vice, and I was bound to find some remedy. Thereupon I resolved to employ whatsoever means I could, so long as they were lawful, to achieve my object. By adapting my system to the needs of those whom I was striving to rescue I attribute much of our success. My business was not to please, not to gain the approval of existing organisations, but first and foremost to assist those perishing beneath the weight of sin. I gave women helpers an opportunity of proving their powers, with splendid results. The chief principle on which I have acted, however, is that people will do what you make them do. If you keep this steadily before your mind, and provided your cause is a good one, success must in the very nature of things crown your efforts. Frederick the Great was a distinguished exponent of that rule; he usually got what he wanted just because he insisted on having it; and I have a large admiration for his character.

"Now you want to know something about the finances of the Army. Let me say here that, contrary to the widespread belief, I do not draw, never have drawn, and never will draw one penny from the funds of the Salvation Army, or from any outward source. The accounts of the Army are superintended by a prominent London auditing firm. I may mention that it is my present object to establish a colony in Africa for the unemployed and those unable to make a living in their home country. I have an offer of four million acres of arable land, and only require funds to the amount of a quarter of a million sterling to finance the scheme." The General proceeded to give some interesting information with regard to the Emigration department of his organisation, the Anti-Suicide Bureau, and many other branches. The Anti-Suicide Bureau, quite recently instituted, is becoming more and more a highly important work. "People come to us in the depths of despair from one cause or another and intent upon taking their lives. We reason with them, advise them, aid them in every possible way, and generally manage to banish the idea of self-destruction from their minds. Only those who have seen the work of the bureau can gauge the beneficial influence it exerts.

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GENERAL NEWS.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

London, November 25.

Although the fate of the Licensing Bill was decided yesterday at the meeting of Unionist Peers, nearly all the benches in the House of Lords were filled when the Earl of Crewe rose to move the second reading of the Bill. He condemned the action of the Opposition in deciding to reject the measure before it had been discussed, and remarked that this would not redound to the credit of the House as a debating assembly.

The Marquis of Lansdowne, in defending the proceeding of the Opposition, declared himself adverse to the principles of the Bill. The debate will occupy two or three days.

London, November 25.

In the House of Commons the second reading of the Education Bill commenced today. The Bill was, on the whole, favourably received.

PRESS OPINION ON LORD ROBERT'S SPEECH.

London, November 25.

The following are some comments extracted from the morning papers with reference to the speech delivered by Lord Roberts in the House of Lords:—

"Lord Crewe took refuge in silence. He spoke, but said nothing, and, though it may be possible to draw more than one deduction from his reticence, we do not know that any possible deduction can be regarded as very reassuring."—*Times*.

"We are surprised that the Government resisted Lord Roberts's first resolution, which merely urged them to see that the British Army is so strong in numbers and so efficient in quality that other nations would hesitate to attempt a landing on these shores. Mr. Haldane, we feel sure, would have boldly claimed that those words precisely expressed the purpose for which he has been working for three years."—*Telegraph*.

"The country owes a great debt of gratitude to Lord Roberts for his fearless and unanswerable exposure of a grave national danger. Lord Crewe may 'deprecate' discussion as he will, but the truth has been told, and sooner or later it will be recognised, not only by the few, but by the many. By that time, of course, it may be too late."—*Standard*.

"Lord Roberts has performed the highest services to the country. His devotion and unselfishness of aim are above suspicion. He gives the country the benefit of his long experience and practical knowledge without stint, and we would not make light of his warnings. But we must remember that a great soldier, especially in retirement, is always inclined to imaginary panic, though in action he would never feel the smallest panic himself."—*Daily News*.

NEWS FROM AMERICA.

THE HAYTIAN IMBROGLIO.

Reports from Hayti received in New York via Cuba and Jamaica allege that President Nord Alexis is adopting methods of terrorism in dealing with the situation arising out of Gen. Simon's insurrection in the South. Arrests are being made upon the very barest suspicion, and many respectable citizens have fled to the foreign Legations, fearing imprisonment and ill-treatment, without hope of legal redress. The position of Gen. Simon is said to be desperate, but this statement probably indicates the desire of the Government more than it represents the actual facts.

It seems to be certain that the Government forces have invested Les Cayes, the capital of the Southern section, by land and by sea, and when the expected fighting takes place it is quite possible that foreigners will be in a dangerous position. The impression grows in New York and at Washington that if Alexis does not speedily demonstrate his ability to crush the insurrection, the United States will intervene in the double cause of civilised interests and humanity. The American Navy, as far as is known, is represented in Haytian waters only by a gunboat at Port-au-Prince, but a small cruiser is understood to be on the way to Les Cayes, from Gonaives.

(Continued on page 2.)