

# The Saturday "News" Special Foreign Service.

## "Children's Lord Mayor" of London at Last Reaches His Life's Ambition

Sir William Purdie Treloar Devoted His Year as Head of the Largest City in the World to Begging on Behalf of the Crippled Children, with the Result that He has Just Opened the Finest Cripples' Hospital in the World—Will not Release the little Sufferers Until They are Fully Cured.

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, Dec. 24.—Hundreds of little cripples and their parents are blessing Sir William Purdie Treloar, who has been called the children's lord mayor of London, for the great work which has just been completed by the opening at Alton, Hampshire, of the Lord Mayor Treloar Cripples' Home and College. The institution which has now become a permanent feature of England's relief work, is the result of a year of strenuous effort by a man who has devoted the greater part of his life to ameliorating the lot of London's crippled children.

Sir William Treloar has long been a prominent figure in public life in the old city of London. He is a great merchant and he has been a member of the City Corporation for years. Two years ago he was chosen lord mayor of London, the highest honor that can come to a citizen of the ancient city, and he determined to devote his year of office and the great influence which the office gave him, to establishing an institution which should do what no institution did—really care the little cripples and restore them to the world, able to support themselves and free from all disabilities.

MAN WHO BEGGED \$350,000.

"I have always been a pretty good beggar where the children were concerned," Sir William said to me at the opening ceremony a few days ago, "but I determined when I became lord mayor that I would beg as no one had ever begged before and that I would leave a record behind me in the way of begging that would not soon be forgotten. I surpassed even my own expectations, for in less than a year I managed to beg a hospital and 70 acres of ground from parliament and I got \$350,000 from the public."

STUDY CORNISHMAN.

Before telling about Sir William's achievement it may be well to say something about the man himself and about his lifelong interest in the crippled children. Like so many of the men, from the time of Dick Whittington to now, who have ruled over the destinies of the largest city in the world, Sir William was not born in London. He is a Cornishman and no one who looks at him could doubt for a moment that he came of sturdy country stock. He is more than six feet tall and although he is nearly 70 years old, he is as straight as he was when he came to London as a boy to seek his fortune. He is said to be the handsomest man who has presided at the Mansion House banquets within the memory of the present generation.

INTEREST IN CHILDREN.

His interest in the crippled children is no new thing. Nearly 20 years ago it occurred to him that there must be thousands of little children who were prevented by illness or injury from attending the banquet given every Christmas-time by the Corporation of London to the poor children of the city. He investigated and the result of his inquiries was the establishment of the Treloar Hamper fund. It began



in a small way, but for the last 14 years, Sir William Treloar has been a single crippled child in London has been without a hamper of good things to eat and toys to delight at Christmas-time. The title of the fund explains its object. A corps of investigators seeks out the little cripples and every Christmas-time a hamper of good things is dispatched to each of them. Much of the money is raised by public subscriptions and many of Sir William's associates in the corporation and in the trade guilds which form so great a feature of London's civic life, contribute in kind; but there is always a large deficit to be made up, and this invariably has been contributed by Sir William himself.

FEW REALLY CURED.

From supplying Christmas hampers to the cripples to trying to cure them was a natural step. Sir William found that while many of the little unfortunates spent their lives in and out

of hospitals few of them received permanent benefit. Most of the child cripples are victims of tuberculosis of the bone and the cure of this terrible disease is a slow process. Few hospitals can spare a bed for the months or years necessary to effect a cure and the result has been that the little victims have been merely patched up and sent home again to fresh suffering. One of the inmates of Sir William's home, a little girl only 12 years old, has undergone no less than 20 operations in hospitals. She is now in a fair way to be permanently cured without further operative treatment.

QUEEN'S LEAGUE.

These facts impressed on Sir William the need of an institution devoted to the patient and scientific treatment of such cases and he made up his mind to crown his life-work by founding it. The opportunity came when he became lord mayor in 1907. He issued a letter after letter to the press point-

ing out the need of an institution such as he had planned and the money began to flow in, slowly but steadily. Then he interested the queen in his work and the money began to flow faster. He secured her permission to organize the Queen Alexandra League of Children to aid in collecting for the home, and the queen herself designed the badge of membership. The league has now many thousands of members who are described by Sir William as "the little children who are well working for the little children who are ill."

His crowning feat of begging, however, was when he induced parliament to turn over to him the great hospital at Alton which was built for the care of wounded and sick soldiers during the Boer war. It was called the "Absent Minded Beggar" hospital because the war office built it in response to Mr. Kipling's stirring appeal for the men who were fighting England's battles. The war ended before it was ready for use, and it had never been

occupied. As it stood it had cost the government about \$700,000 and parliament voted it to Sir William Treloar for his cripples' home absolutely free of charge.

The home is ideally situated for its new purpose. It stands near Alton on the Hampshire downs, one of the healthiest spots in England, and is only a few miles from Aldershot, the great military camp. The elevation is about 500 feet above sea level and there is nothing to arrest the soft breezes from the English channel. The grounds, which are about 70 acres in extent, lie along the side of a hill. At the top is the governor's house and the administration buildings which overlook the whole. A little lower down are the nurses' quarters and nestling under the shelter of the hill is the home itself.

UNIQUE ARRANGEMENT.

The arrangement is probably unique, and is made possible by the unlimited

space which was at the architect's disposal. There are 20 wards, each containing 12 beds, and each ward stands by itself. They are arranged in a semi-circle and running round the inside of the circle is a covered way, communicating with each ward. At the outer end of each ward there is a sun parlor. The wards, of course, are only one story high. They are built of pitch pine on brick supports, rising out of a concrete floor, and there is a free circulation of air over and under and on all sides of them. All the sanitary arrangements are away from the wards themselves. Situated as they are, there is, of course, a maximum of sunlight.

In addition to the wards there is a school for older boys. The majority of the patients will be less than 12 years old, but about 50 boys from 14 to 18 will be taken, and while they are being cured of their infirmities they will be taught trades. The smaller patients will also receive the ordinary schooling

Queen Alexandra Lends a Hand and Helps to Organize a Band of Children to Aid in Collecting for the Home—Parliament Votes a Government Hospital Worth \$700,000 to Sir William Absolutely Free of Charge and the Public Contributees \$350,000.

while they are inmates of the home. LOVER OF CHILDREN.

The whole institution is now in full running order and is in charge of Dr. H. J. Gauvain, who showed me round the wards. Apart altogether from his qualifications as a medical man no better man could have been selected for the post than Dr. Gauvain. He is a genuine lover of children, and although the home had only been open a few weeks at the time of my visit, he knew every one of the hundred little patients by name. They all knew him, too, and his coming was the signal for a romp, for little cripples are wonderfully like other children. They all knew Sir William Treloar, too, and welcomed him with a happy smile, although they regarded him with greater awe than their own doctor.

"We have accommodations for about 300 inmates at present," said Dr. Gauvain, "but our capacity for expansion is limited only by the amount of money we get. So far we have only received about 100 patients because we are waiting for the applications very carefully. We have decided that we will not take in any case that we cannot see a reasonable hope of curing. That may sound rather cruel, but it is real kindness. An incurable case occupying a bed would only shut out a child that might be made whole."

TIME NO OBJECT.

"We are here to cure, not only to patch up and relieve. It does not matter if the treatment takes 10 years; we will not let the child go until it is quite whole. The average term will be from six months to two years and after the children go home they will have to come to see me in London at regular intervals and if I detect the slightest symptom of a return of the disease back, they will come to Alton at the spot."

FRESH AIR AND SUNLIGHT.

Dr. Gauvain took me to see the little girl who had undergone 20 operations. When she came into the home three weeks before, I was told, she was pale and emaciated, but when I saw her she was plump and pretty and happy. There is but little doubt that she will be entirely cured in a year or two.

The treatment consists chiefly of fresh air and sunlight and good food. Medicines, of course, are given as required, and there is a fully equipped operating theater in case operative surgery should be needed. What is needed now most of all is an X-ray apparatus, and Dr. Gauvain is hoping that some one will present it to the home. The patients range in age all the way from 6 months to 11 or 12 years old. Most of them seem to have little the matter with them as they lie in bed, but when the cover is drawn aside pitifully twisted limbs or deformed joints are disclosed. Some of the little patients, however, are obviously under treatment, for as they lie in bed their limbs are held rigid by arrangements of weights and pulleys and others are fixed immovably in boxes.

SCHOOL IN FOREST.

One of the features of the place is the forest school where the children will be taught in fine weather. At the top of the hill is the beginning of a forest five miles in extent and part of it belongs to the home. The school has been established in a natural clearing and is approached by a path through the thick undergrowth, with the great forest trees arching overhead. The school itself consists of an open shed built of rough logs, and with a floor raised high enough to be free from all suspicion of dampness. In winter the children will be taught in a school room near the wards and those who cannot leave their beds will have lessons by the bedside. As soon as they are old enough they will begin to learn a trade, for one object of the home is to enable them to support themselves in after life.

LOUIS HYDE.

## Y. M. C. A. Founder Honored by Monument

Special Correspondence.

LONDON, Dec. 24.—Marked honor has recently been paid to the late Sir George Williams, founder of the Young Men's Christian association. A splendid monument erected to his memory now stands in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral—a fitting site, as it was in close proximity to this spot that the original foundation of the Y. M. C. A. took place. The association, which began on a capital of \$2, today numbers 250,000 members, and controls buildings and real estate to the value of more than \$20,000,000. It is one of the most flourishing organizations in the world, despite the fact that hosts of other attempts on similar lines have proved utter failures.

To the personality of Sir George Williams is attributed a large part of the wonderful success of the

Y. M. C. A., and yet, though his name is so widely known, he always kept the personal element in the background. After his death, it was found that every particle of his correspondence had been destroyed, as if he deprecated publishing his achievement to the world.

THE FIRST Y. M. C. A.

Though the Y. M. C. A. rests today on so solid a foundation, it was not always in such an enviable position; and, had it not been for the personal self-sacrifice of its founder, it is very doubtful if the organization would have weathered many of the severe crises through which it passed. The scene of its beginning was an upper room of a big dry-goods store—that of Hitchcock & Rogers—which stood in St. Paul's churchyard in 1844. Young Williams was a clerk in that establishment, and though but 29 years of age, he exerted a powerfully religious influence on those with whom he came in contact. He persuaded several fel-

low clerks to join him in prayer once or twice a week in the dormitory of the establishment, most of the clerks in those days, as now, "sleeping in."

With reference to the morality of his early comrades young Williams did not speak in very flattering terms, and he attributed his success as much to the non-attendance of certain of his companions as to the presence of others. When he had "converted" all of his fellow clerks, not even excepting some bitter opponents who were down on "that milkop religious business," the founders of the association—12 in number—turned their attention to outside conquests. A Mutual Improvement society and a Young Men's Missionary society came into being; and the influence of the employees of Hitchcock & Rogers on other firms in London became quite marked. There was perhaps the first attempt in England to protect the interests of shop assistants, and out of that early movement has grown the great Shop Assistants' union of today.

As to the actual founding of the Young Men's Christian association as such, it came into being at a meeting held on June 8, 1844, with a capital—collected on the spot—of \$3,125, and the first circular letter, addressed to young employees in London was posted a few days later, young Williams and his friends having scarcely sufficient money even to pay for postage and stationery. However, the dominating personality of George Williams carried everything before it, and the Y. M. C. A. was launched in spite of all difficulties.

One noteworthy fact in connection with Sir George Williams was that he never allowed his fervor for the success of his ethical project to interfere with strict business; and he worked so industriously for his employers that before many years had elapsed he had won his way to a partnership in the firm, which ultimately became Hitchcock, Williams & Co. In less than 10 years after his foundation, the Y. M. C. A. had grown into an important

organization—so much so in fact that politicians of the day tried to use it as a means of advancing to political power, but its founder refused to permit it to be utilized in this fashion, and the wisdom of his decision was proved in after years. Many attempts were made by various parties to "break" the association, both financially and in other directions, but the personality of Sir George was too strong to be borne down, and he saved the Y. M. C. A. many times from financial and internal failure.

After "capturing" London, and then the rest of England, the Y. M. C. A. idea was taken up in the United States, and in 1876 Sir George Williams visited this country, and was received with great demonstrations everywhere. It was after becoming firmly established in the United States that the Christian association became a world-wide movement. For his work in connection with this organization Queen Victoria conferred a knighthood on the founder during her jubilee year, 1897.

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