

A golden jubilee

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A GOLDEN JUBILEE



CHRISTIAN KUNZLE.

*In working well, if travail you sustain,
Into the wind shall lightly pass the pain;
But of the deed the glory shall remain,
And cause your name with worthy weights to reign.*

Amongst the anniversaries which are mentioned in this issue, none deserves a better place, than the one of Christian Kunzle, who has completed fifty years of residence in this country.

Our countryman can to-day look back on a life rich in success and achievements. He has built up, from small beginnings, a business, which enjoys an honoured name not only in the British Isles, but also across the seas; but he has done more than that, he has dedicated his life to the service of his Master and followed his teaching, to be a help and comfort to his fellowmen.

Although in the early seventies, he has lost none of the vigour of his younger days, his kindly eyes have lost none of their lustre, his voice, which has so often been heard defending and advocating a good and worthy cause, sounds still like a clarion call through the darkness of the night.

The writer, who has had the privilege of knowing this lovable man for many years, is fully aware of the difficulty of sketching a life, so full of richness, in the relatively small space at his disposal. It is hoped, that one day a book will be written of the life of this remarkable man, who, though successful, has remained modest and God-fearing; it would be a shining testimonial of what hard work and tenacity can achieve, and what an example and inspiration it would be to our younger generation.

Although a self-made man, who, owing to circumstances did not enjoy the benefit of an advanced education, success has not turned his head, whatever achievements have come his way, he has attributed to the loving kindness of his Master, to Him alone he left the glory.

I met Christian Kunzle for the first time some twenty years ago, when he mentioned to me a scheme which was dear to him, namely that of sending weakly and ailing children from this country to his Home in Davos, a scheme which I am happy to say, is now well advanced, and in operation, and had it not been for the war, it would by now have attained larger proportions.

Well do I remember with what vigour and enthusiasm he expounded this undertaking to me, it left a deep and everlasting impression on me, here I knew, was a man whose heart was beating warmly for all those who suffered and who were in need of succour. He has known bitter tragedy in his own life, it has not turned him bitter but made him understand better the need of others.

* * *

Shortly before the turn of the twentieth century, Christian Kunzle, left his native town Davos, to seek his fortune in foreign lands, with the blessings of his parents. As he related to me, his mother, to whom he remained deeply attached throughout his life, until her passing away, presented him with a Bible asking him to follow its teaching and to do what was right. This Bible, the book of books, has remained a constant companion up to this day, from it he received guidance and help in many a critical hour.

His first stay was in Oxford, where he joined his uncle who kept a confectionery shop in the centre of this city, here he learned the secrets of the trade. After a twelve months apprenticeship he left Oxford to obtain a post on the kitchen staff of the House of Commons. One of his special jobs was to make rice puddings for Lord Salisbury, there he cooked for well-known Peers and Members of Parliament at the munificent salary of nine shillings a week! It was a hard struggle to make both ends meet, because he received no financial help from home.

In order to improve his position he entered into the services of the Grand Hotel in London, at a slightly higher remuneration. In those days the kitchen staff in Hotels was principally recruited from foreigners and in order to improve his knowledge of the English language he entered private service, and later on went

to Glasgow where he founded a catering business together with a cousin of his.

After a short stay in his native land, he returned to this country with the firm determination to start a business of his own. This time he had chosen Birmingham as the field of his activities. With great enthusiasm and indomitable spirit to succeed he started a little shop together with one apprentice. With a twinkle in his eye he related to me the joy he experienced when his books showed for the first time a weekly net profit of thirty-five shillings. Down went the shutters of his shop, and he, and his apprentice, went out together, to celebrate this event with a meal at one of the Birmingham cafés.

Slowly but surely things improved, the small shop was enlarged and additional premises were acquired. In 1905, he obtained a lease of 156, Broad Street, and as time went on, branches in Birmingham, Solihull, Leicester, Stratford-on-Avon, Leamington and London were opened. The small business of two men became a large concern which to-day employs over 1,200 employees.

The crowning point of his career was, no doubt, reached when he opened his new factory at Five Ways which I had the pleasure of visiting on various occasions, the last time about a month ago. And what a factory! Tiled walls and mosaic floors are prominent features of the more modern portion of a works which has been built with an eye on the hygienic side. Everything is spotlessly clean, and reminds one of some of the factories one sees in our own country. Here we find the latest machinery for wrapping boxes of chocolates with transparent paper, and ovens of the most modern design for baking the cakes for which the house of Kunzle's is to-day famous.

Another feature which strikes one and which is well worth mentioning, is the cheerful enthusiasm with which the large staff works, amongst them Mr. Kunzle is known as "Father," it is undoubtedly due to this spirit, which is such a prominent feature in all his establishments, that the firm has gone from success to success.

Like in a family, where children who are in distress go to their father, to tell him their little troubles, so they go to Mr. Kunzle, seeking advice and help, indeed a rare happening in these times.

* * *

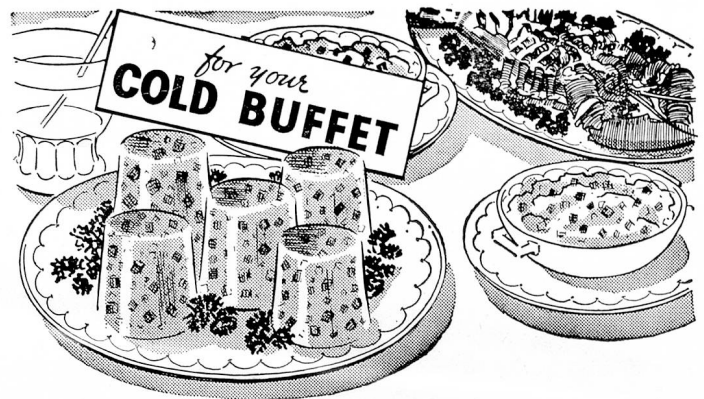
This then, is in short, the life story of one man,

who has risen to an honoured position, well beloved by all those who come in contact with him.

A fighter from beginning to end. A man, who has stuck firmly to the principles of Christian ethics.

We are proud to call him one of us, he has carried high the banner of Swiss enterprise, tenacity and patriotism, and our most sincere wish is, that he will remain amongst us for many more years to come, as a shining example of what hard work and trust in God can achieve.

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