

POPULAR PERSONALITIES.

No. 13.—LT.-COLONEL LONGSTAFF, F.R.G.S., &c.



The genuine philanthropist—and this whether his generosity is displayed either in public-spirited benefactions, art, or almsgiving—has been described as 'a person with a craze.' He has also been represented as vain, crotchety, misanthropic, egotistical—a man with a 'fad,' who unless

allowed to do good things precisely in his own erratic and eccentric way will not do them at all. There is, alas! for the imperfections of human nature, a great deal of truth in this view of the ordinary 'benefactor of humanity.' But when we see a man with 'a craze' who is *not* crazy, and a lover of his day and generation who is *not* erratic, we intuitively want to know somewhat anent this *rara avis*, and, if possible, limn his career, for the sake of posterity.

Lt.-Colonel Longstaff has contributed £30,000 to the equipment of the British National Antarctic expedition. But it is not on account of his aid to this international scientific enterprise that we this week sketch his career. From the time he was first able to assert his marked individuality he was one, as Wordsworth sings, 'in whom persuasion and belief had ripened into faith; and faith had become a passionate intuition.'

Colonel Llewellyn W. Longstaff is a grandson of the late Thomas Longstaff, colliery owner, and at one time a lecturer on Physics, of Butterknowle, Hamsterley, in the county of Durham, and the eldest son of the late George Dixon Longstaff, M.D., Edin. His mother was Maria, eldest daughter of the late Henry Blundell, J.P.

One of his great-uncles, Lieutenant Blundell, of the 101st Regiment, was killed in a duel by Ensign McGuire, of the 6th West India Regiment in the moat of Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight, on the 9th of July, 1813. The particulars are in the Annual Register for that year. Another great-uncle, at one time of Brussels, Dr. Edward Blundell, was Assistant Staff-Surgeon at Waterloo. His great-uncle, William Spence, F.R.S., for some time President of the Entomological Society, wrote, in conjunction with the Rev. W. Kirby, F.R.S., of Barham, Suffolk, the 'Introduction to Entomology, 1815-26.' It has passed through many editions, and is still a classic.

The subject of this notice was born on the 23rd of December, 1841, at West Hill, in the parish of Wandsworth. When about two and a half years old, travelling by railway near Chesterfield, he was sitting on his grandfather's knee playing with the tassel of the window, when the door flew open and he fell out. The train was stopped, and he was picked up—providentially uninjured. He was educated at Wandsworth Proprietary School under the late Bishop Staley, and on leaving was for nearly two years a pupil of the late Rev. George Palmer Davis, M.A., Agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society at Frankfort-on-the-Maine. He accompanied him on his frequent visits to the towns of Southern Germany and German Switzerland, and made tours in Austria, Bohemia, Saxony, and Prussia. On returning to England, he studied chemistry for some time under the late Professor A. W. von Hofmann, at the Royal College of Chemistry, then a department of the Royal School of Mines, but now merged in the Royal College of Science, South Kensington.

He has travelled much, his limits to the north and east having been Finland and Moscow; to the south and west, Naples and Vancouver.

From 1860 to 1877 he resided at Hull. He was the first Vice-Chairman; for some eight years Chairman, and is still a Director of Blundell, Spence and Company, Limited, Manufacturers and Merchants. In 1884 he introduced a system of profit-sharing by gratuities, one of the earliest successful attempts in England to reconcile the interests of employers and employed. In 1894 he initiated a Pension Fund. Whilst at Hull he took some part in public matters, and was twice President of the Incorporated Chamber of Commerce and Shipping, entertaining in 1877 the Associated Chambers of the United Kingdom. He also interested himself in Freemasonry, was twice Master of his Lodge, and in 1869 Junior Grand Warden of North and East Yorkshire.

In 1860, the Colonel saw Her Majesty the Queen fire the inauguration shot at the first meeting of the N.R.A. at Wimbledon. She made a bull from a fixed rest. In the same year he was enrolled in the first Vol. Batt. of the East Yorkshire Regiment (then called the 1st East Riding of Yorkskire Rifle Vol. Corps). In 1863 he was gazetted Ensign, gradually rose to be Lt.-Colonel, and for some years commanded the Battalion. He retired with his rank in 1880, and was afterwards granted the Long Service Medal. Subsequently he was offered the Honorary Colonelcy, but did not see his way to accepting the compliment. In 1866 he made his last appearance (he was always fond of things theatrical) on the stage in an amateur performance in aid of the Barrack Building Fund of the Corps, at the Theatre Royal, Hull (since burned down), as a 'Prince for an hour,' Carlotta being played by Miss Madge Robertson, now Mrs. Kendal (Mrs. Grimston).

During the Fenian troubles in 1868, Colonel Longstaff was a superintendent of special constables. His father had been a special constable at the time of the Chartist movement in 1848; and his brother (Dr. G. Blundell Longstaff), was a special constable during the Trafalgar-square riots in 1887.

In 1870 Colonel Longstaff visited the field of Sedan shortly after the battle; the quarters of the 2nd Prussian Army Corps in front of Metz during the investment, and Strassburg a few days after it fell. In 1871 he was in Paris when the insurrection of the Communists broke out, and only got away with considerable risk and difficulty.

In 1887 he was present at the opening of the People's Palace, Mile-end-road, by Her Majesty the Queen. He has especially supported our great hospitals, the proper provision of dwellings for the poor, open spaces, and such movements as make for the physical welfare of the population, being convinced that health is the foundation of goodness and happiness.

He has been a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society since 1870, is a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological, Zoological, and other Societies, and a Member of the Royal Institution and of the Royal United Service Institution. He is a Unionist, a member of the Reform, Junior Athenæum, Royal Yorkshire Yacht and Geographical Clubs.

When we contemplate the feelings with which later generations will regard such benefactors, we can imagine them singing with Henry Taylor in his *Philip van Artevelde*:

'Such souls
Whose sudden visitations daze the world,
Vanish like lightning, but they leave behind
A voice that in the distance far away
Wakens the slumbering ages.'

Colonel Longstaff's brother, Dr. G. B. Longstaff, is now seeing through the press an exhaustive genealogical memoir of the Longstaff and connected families. The children living of the subject of this notice are four sons and three daughters.

On the 17th of April, 1873, Colonel Longstaff married Mary Lydia, younger daughter of the late Lieut. T. W. Sawyer, R.N.R., Knight of the Order of Albertus Generosus of Saxony.

Our portrait is from a picture by Lafayette.

S. E. T.