

substance out of her adversaries and indemnify herself largely for her sacrifices.

The terrible risks and the appalling catastrophies which a war nowadays involves are understood by none better than by the great military powers themselves, who have long been occupied in making all possible preparations for war; and therefore their diplomacy has aimed mainly at securing themselves against the moral odium and the material risk of being the first to engage in a war. Each power has, for some twenty years past, been nursing *in petto* the pious wish that some one else would begin. The advantages of a great military or naval power, able, while still fresh and untouched, to fix at will the price of her alliance with one of those who would be already more or less exhausted, need no explanation.

It is not within the province of this mere statement of facts to inquire into the probable outcome of a war between England and America. It would be a struggle of giants, which would result for certain in crippling and in exhausting both combatants for an indefinite length of time. Such a result would be fraught not only with ruinous consequences to their own immediate prosperity, but with long-abiding disaster to the interests of civilization the whole world over. The two foremost leaders in progress, the guardians of liberty, the champions of the oppressed, the propagators of Christianity in modern times, would be laid low, and, being themselves reduced to impotence, would be compelled to allow free scope to those agencies whose illiberal, nefarious, and retrograde tendencies they alone hold now in check.

EDITOR'S STUDY.

I.

THERE is a disposition among our contemporaries to criticise women for wearing at theatres and operas big hats that obstruct the view of the stage. Everybody who frequents the theatre suffers from this evil, and those who cultivate the Christian graces elsewhere find it easy during the performances to construct emphatic expressions which would not pass current in a drawing-room. These theatre hats are such stumbling-blocks to a Christian disposition that it is doubtful whether the theatre will ever be a means of grace so long as they are permitted to irritate the minds of the spectators. The topic is not a new one. In the early part of this century the newspapers of New York devoted themselves to the extirpation of this nuisance. They employed all their weapons of entreaty, of sarcasm, of ridicule. Did they have any effect? Not the slightest. Ridicule, which is always a mistake when applied to a "fashion," glanced off harmless. Sarcasm was taken as an envious tribute, and entreaty regarded as a sign of weakness in the attacking party. The hats grew like weeds in a garden under copious

showers. When they diminished it was not on account of public opinion, but in obedience to a ukase from an authority absolutely undiscoverable and veiled in obscurity, but more powerful than any law, human or divine.

It is this mysterious origin of a fashion that makes any attack on it so futile. Why blame the women? Observation teaches that they are helpless. They must follow the mode of the hour. If any number of them were to meet in convention and pass resolutions against wearing hats and bonnets in theatres, probably every member of the convention would break the resolution that night. They would like to be unselfish and altruistic—that is their nature; they agree that the wish of people in a theatre to see the actors is a natural wish; but some power which is stronger than they compels them to act as obstructors of the view. And they are so amiable that they do this with an air of innocent enjoyment. They do not resent an appeal to their "better nature" in this matter—they respond to it; but better nature must take a vacation when fashion bids.

That women are helpless in this mat-

ter they freely acknowledge. The evidence on this point is overwhelming. There is scarcely anything that women, and men also, will not sacrifice on the shrine of their personal appearance and good looks. Yet women would rather be ugly in apparel and look like guys than be out of the mode. Some time ago, when it was rumored that big hoops were coming in again, a shiver of terror went through the feminine world, for no invention had ever so deformed the human figure as the huge balloon skirts. And yet no woman dreamed of resisting the hideous thing if it became again the style. With tears they confessed themselves powerless. It is so with regard to big sleeves, which, mounted above the scant skirts, give to women the appearance of some flamboyant sort of orchid, sweet, but misshapen. Unanimously the sex condemn them as inconvenient and ugly. And yet no woman who aspires to be in the mode would dare to wear an ordinary mutton-leg sleeve when the fashion is a Southdown-mutton-leg sleeve.

But this is not the only just defence of the women for destroying the pleasure of theatre-goers. There is the serious matter of dressing the hair. There is one method of dressing the hair when a bonnet is worn, and another method without a bonnet. As it is necessary for most women to wear a hat or bonnet in the street, it is very inconvenient to change this method in laying aside the hat in the theatre. This is a vital question of personal appearance, not connected with enjoyment of the dramatic art. It may be contended that fair personal appearance is as important as any pleasure that may be got from seeing a play. I am not saying that any women go to the theatre to be seen and not to see, and that men ought not to be satisfied with the real loveliness that is around them instead of longing to see the fictitious world on the stage. There are several justifiable objects that take people to a theatre. But the argument about the hair has proved to be a specious one, if the real object is to see the people on the stage and not those in the auditorium. It has happened in some periods when hats have been left off that the hair has been dressed in such a fashion, piled up into such wonderful structures, as to beat any hat as an obstructor of the view. "Hence we

view" that the difficulty is deeper than the hat. It is in the nature of woman. And would any of the critics expect or desire that woman should change her nature?

Still it must be admitted that the dissatisfaction at the monstrous hats in the theatres is shared by some women, who would like to escape from this tyranny, and they express this when the offending hat is worn by a lady in front of them. They also would admit that the abatement of this nuisance must come from outside their sex. One suggestion is that the men should have the orchestra seats exclusively to themselves, and indulge unrestricted their propensity to see a play. Another is that the women should be massed together on one side of the house, so that they could have the undisturbed enjoyment of their own obstructions, and that admission to the men's side should only be given to women with uncovered heads. The corollary to this would be that no men who did not wear tall hats should sit with the women. But the only real remedy is one that can be applied by the managers of the theatres, and this is the application of the almost universal practice in all civilized countries, namely, that no man or woman shall occupy a seat in a theatre or opera with a hat on. This is the application of the doctrine of equality, and it is at least curious that it is not applied in the country which is specially committed to that doctrine. It has often been said that women are opposed to this doctrine, but it is not fair to close this brief and inadequate defence of the conduct of women in regard to the theatres without acknowledging the new spirit that is abroad in the feminine world.

II.

It is the voice of the crow! It is heard at intervals all winter—for the crow is loyal to his home—whenever there is a spirit of Thaw (one of our Northern gods) abroad; but it is really a harbinger of spring, when the streams are released, and the clouds are loose and high-sailing, and the wooing south-wind makes all the trees uneasy to take on color and to burst their buds into bloom. On any day when the sun, climbing northward, attacks the frost, and the snow and ice slide with a thunder-rumble off the steep New England farm-house roofs, the crow is abroad calling us to a new life. It is the harsh-

est voice in the whole orchestra of birds, yet it is homelike and sincere, and has in it a note of wild freedom, of indefinite promise. The crow has never yielded to the modern demand for culture, and his "caw" is almost the only thing in civilized life that can take us back to the untamed and primeval nature. He belongs to the forests, to the free buccaneering life we all secretly long for. When we walk in the woods in the spring, it is the call of the crow that interprets for us our wild desires. For myself, I confess that he stirs in me more memories and sets me in a more sympathetic thrill with Nature than any other of her voices. He is not for me the raven of poetry—the dark-winged symbol of a maiden's hair—nor the ancestral and domestic rook, but the plain New England crow. Perhaps he is the gypsy of our staid region. He is called a thief, because he digs where he has not planted, like a stock-operator, and he is an outlaw with a price on his head; but as I hear his voice on a day when there is a smell of new earth and a wide awakening over the liberated land, I forgive him all the defects of his qualities. When I consider his ways, his military-like discipline, his shrewdness, his contempt of the scarecrows of this world, his refusal to be tamed in our decadent civilization, I am grateful for his example.

There are two charges against the crow: he is despised because he is poor, and he is hated because he is not edible. But many men are as poor as they are inedible. If the crow were not both, we should exterminate him. His refusal to be civilized in these respects is his protection. He sets us an example of poverty borne with self-respect, and he shows his wisdom in making his diet so miscellaneous that no one desires to eat him. Even in the matter of diet he is better than the decayed-fish-eaters of the arctic regions, and I have no doubt he prefers good clean corn when he can get it, and he often risks his life to pull it out of the corn-hills. In fact, the crow has character, and we cannot tell what he might not become if he were well fed and decently treated. We may criticise his voice—though I hope its note of wild freedom will never be changed—but I have heard some orchestras which would be improved by the introduction of his "caw." I wish I could sing the crow! No poet has ever done it, not even Walt Whitman, who

might have had a surer hold on immortality by singing the crow than by singing himself.

III.

Is literature becoming a mere scheme of color? We do not hear much now of "local color"; that has rather gone out; and there seems to be a belief that you can somehow dye the language and make it more expressive to the reading eye. "Local color" had a fine run while it lasted, and it seemed as easy of accomplishment as one of Rembrandt's pictures. You could go and get it, sometimes buy it in the shops, and put it on like pigment. The process was, unfortunately, not patented, and so much color was produced that the market broke down. It was an external affair, and its use was supposed to serve the gospel of Realism. Given a theme or a motive for a story or sketch, the problem was how to work it out so that it would appear native and Real. The author had only to go to the "locality" that he intended to attack and immortalize, or write to a friend there residing, in order to pick up the style of profanity there current, the dialect, if any existed; if not, to work up one from slovenly and ungrammatical speech, procure some "views" of scenery and of costume, strike the kind of landscape necessary to the atmosphere of the story—endless prairie, iridescent desert, weird passes, smiling valleys, though smiling valleys were not in much request—and the thing was done. As soon as the reader saw the "local color" thus laid on he knew that the story was a real story of real life. He was deceived by the striking appearance, and it was some time before he began to suspect that the artist had begun to put on color before he knew how to draw. Now we never thought of "local color" in the writing of the masters, in Shakespeare, or Scott, or Tolstoi, or Turgenieff, or Thackeray, or Cervantes. All they did was vividly a representation of human life, and was unconsciously stamped with the character of the country, the race, the scenery even, which was not daubed on the picture, or worked in with design, but was part of the texture, the very woof and warp of their literature. No man studied particulars more carefully, no man was more exacting in all the details of the environment of his characters, than Balzac. But

he did his work before the invention of "local color" as a kind of commodity.

But color is essential, and high color attracts even the uneducated taste. Some writers are putting it on their pages in blotches, simply for effect upon the eye. The experiment is an interesting one. Some years ago a volume of sketches and poems was published in Louisville, printed in inks of many colors—shades to match the sentiment of the effusions. The fashion did not spread; and now the color scheme is tried in a more subtle form—that is, by suggestions of real colors in words. We read of an ethical motive as "a yellow light thrown upon the color of his ambitions"; in the army a soldier is part of "a vast blue demonstration"; we read of "liquid stillness" and "red rage," a "black procession" of oaths, the "red sickness of battle," and so on, and so on. The attempt in the book from which these expressions are taken is to make every page blaze with color, in order to affect the mind through the eye. It is all very interesting. Every page is painted, perhaps I should say saturated, with this intensity of color. Undeniably the reader is strongly affected by it—though the effect is weakened in time. The natural eye cannot stand a constant glare of brilliant light, and the mind soon wearies of the quality that has come to be called "intensity" in literature. Great literature is always calm, and produces its effects by less apparent effort. This is of course a truism, but at the same time the reader does love warmth and color and the occasional show of vivid pictures on the printed page.

The story to which I have referred is in many respects a remarkable one. It is the description of the feeling and experience of a raw soldier lad in a couple of days of battle, and it has gained foreign approval as one of the most real pictures of war ever made, one that could only have been drawn from personal experience. I believe, in fact, that it is purely the work of imagination, and it might not have been written but for Tolstoi's *Sevastopol*. And yet it is quite original in its manner. I have been curious to hear what the "Realists" would say about it. The conversations are plainly vernacular, and there is no attempt to idealize the persons of the vivid drama. There is a studied commonplaceness about the talk and the characters, which seems nature

itself. But I have talked with many soldiers of what they actually saw and felt in great battles, and I never got from any of them such a literary appreciation of a battle as this, nothing, in fact, half so interesting. I would not dare to say, from internal evidence, that this young soldier was "not in it," but any man who could see these pictures, have these sensations, and go through this mental and moral struggle in such circumstances ought not to be food for powder. He is needed in the New York drama. I do not wish to be misunderstood. I liked the book very much. I was carried along by its intensity, and felt at the end as if I had experienced a most exciting and melodramatic dream, which I could not shake off when waking. I do not know how much of this effect was due to the scheme of color. It is almost a poem—quite, except in form. It is real, in a way. But what worried me was the thought of the verdict of the Realists. Would they not call it lurid realism?

IV.

The story of Helen Keller is too well known to need repetition here. My only excuse for increasing the publicity of it, which she and her judicious friends have never sought, is the exceedingly interesting mental and moral problems involved in it. A child of great apparent promise and most winning qualities, she became deaf, dumb, and blind at the age of nineteen months. Thenceforward, till her seventh year, the soul within her was sealed up from any of the common modes of communication with the world. It could only faintly express itself, and there seemed no way that knowledge could reach it. What was it during that silent period? Was it stagnant, or was it growing? If it was taking in no impressions, usually reckoned necessary to education, was it expanding by what used to be called "innate ideas"? When her teacher, with infinite patience, tact, and skill, at length established communication with her, she found a mind of uncommon quality, so rare that in its rapid subsequent development one is tempted to apply the epithet of genius to it. It was sound, sweet, responsive to a wonderful degree. The perceptions, if I may use that word, were wonderfully acute; the memory was extraordinary; in short, there was discovered a mind of uncommon

quality. Was it really a blank that the teacher had to work on, or was there a mind in process of developing independent of contact with other minds? The development, or the growth, was very rapid. Helen Keller is now fifteen, and better educated in literature and languages, with greater activity of thought, more vivacity, quickness of appreciation, and greater facility of happy expression of her thoughts, than most girls her superior in years. Considering her limited facilities for acquiring information, the result is very puzzling from a merely materialistic point of view.

Another train of thought is suggested by her character and disposition. She is what her infancy promised. Great amiability and sweetness of disposition have been preserved in her intellectual development, and I believe that she is the purest-minded human being ever in existence. She has never known or thought any evil. She does not suspect it in others. The world to her is what her own mind is. She has not even learned that exhibition upon which so many pride themselves of "righteous indignation." Some time ago, when a policeman shot dead her dog, a dearly loved daily companion, she found in her forgiving heart no condemnation for the man; she only said, "If he had only known what a good dog he was, he would not have shot him." It was said of old time, "Lord, forgive them, they know not what they do!" Of course the question will arise whether, if Helen Keller had not been guarded from the knowledge of evil, she would have been what she is to-day. But I cannot but fancy that there was in her a radical predisposition to goodness.

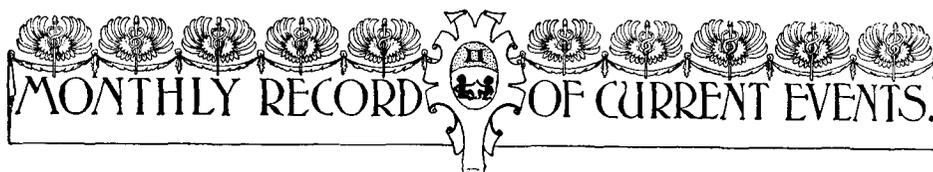
I said that Helen is what her infancy promised. This point needs further explanation. Up to the time, at the age of nineteen months, when illness left her deaf, dumb, and blind, she was a most amiable, tractable child, not only winning and lovely, but with apparently an even, sweet temper and an unselfish disposition. From that date until, in her seventh year, when Miss Sullivan found means to communicate with her, she had been isolated from the world. She could only express herself as an animal might. She could only be influenced by physical means—there was no way of telling her what to do or what not to do but by laying hands on her. She could make signs

if she were hungry or thirsty. Her soul was absolutely shut in from influence or expression. In this condition she began to be more and more like a caged bird, beating its wings and bruising itself against the bars, to its physical injury. When Miss Sullivan took her it was almost impossible to control her. The fiery spirit within exhibited itself in outward violent temper. How could it be otherwise in what must have been an internal rage at the want of ability to make herself understood? But from the day that communication was established with her all was changed. She apprehended at once the means of communication, and was docile and controllable, only eager to learn more. And then she became again what she had promised to be in infancy, sweet-tempered, loving, and gentle. All the investiture of the years of seclusion fell off her as if it had been an ill-fitting garment. And never since for an hour, for a moment, has she been impatient or variable in temper, never otherwise than amiable and unselfish, and always happy.

And this opens the way to what, after all, is the radical question in this case—the educational question. In all her education Helen has been put in communication with the best minds, with the best literature. She has known no other. Her mind has neither been made effeminate by the weak and silly literature, nor has it been vitiated by that which is suggestive of baseness. In consequence her mind is not only vigorous, but it is pure. She is in love with noble things, with noble thoughts, and with the characters of noble men and women. It is not a possible condition for most of us in the world, but, nevertheless, the experiment of her education is very suggestive. If children in the family and in the public schools were fed with only the best literature, if their minds were treated with as much care in regard to the things sown in them as our wheat-fields, what a result we should have! It is not possible to guard any normal person from the knowledge of evil and from the thoughts of a disordered world, but it is possible to encourage the growth in education of love for the noblest literature, for that which is pure and stimulating. And this result we shall have some time when education is taken out of politics, out of the hands of persons who are untrained in psychology or pedagogy, and committed to those who are experts

in dealing with the vital problem of the character of the generations to succeed us. Any one who converses with Helen Keller will find that her high training in the best literature has not destroyed her power of discrimination, her ability to make quick deductions and distinctions. On one occasion she repeated for me Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" with proper emphasis. She has learned to talk so as to articulate words with fair distinctness. In order to test her loyalty to Longfellow, who is one of her heroes, as Bishop Brooks

also is, I asked her if it had never occurred to her that the "sands" in the poem was a poor material upon which to leave enduring footprints. "No," she said, "I never thought of that; but the waves tumbling in on the sea-shore do obliterate the marks on the sand." And then her face lighted up with imaginative comprehension, and she added, "Perhaps it is different with the sands of *time*." Such a mind as that, in time, can be trusted to make acquaintance with any literature, for it will be equipped for judgment.



POLITICAL.

OUR Record is closed on March 10, 1896.—Ballington Booth was removed from the command of the Salvation Army in America by an order from his father, General William Booth, of London. He announced, February 23d, that he would not accept another command in the Salvation Army, and on Sunday, March 1st, Mr. and Mrs. Ballington Booth made public their purpose to found a new religious organization in America.

Ground was broken at Washington March 9th for the first building of the American University.

The war in Cuba continued. United States government officers, February 25th, boarded the British steamship *Bermuda* in New York Harbor, where it was being fitted out for a filibustering expedition, seized a large amount of munitions of war, and arrested General Calixto Garcia, the promoter of the expedition. The United States Senate, February 28th, passed resolutions favoring the recognition by the United States government of the Cuban insurgents as belligerents. The House, March 2d, adopted similar resolutions. This was followed by hostile demonstrations in Spain against the United States. The Spanish government protected United States consulates against mobs, and closed the universities on account of student riots.

The Venezuelan Arbitration Commission appointed by President Cleveland sat during the month. The Blue Book of the British government, issued March 6th, contained a long statement of the British side of the controversy. An unofficial proposal to settle the question by a joint commission of English and American representatives was generally approved in England, and in both England and the United States meetings were held in advocacy of a permanent board of arbitration for the settlement of disputes between the two nations.

Excitement in England over the South African complications subsided. Dr. Jameson and the officers who accompanied him on his raid into the Transvaal were brought to London for trial.

News was received from Archangel February 14th indicating that Dr. Fridjof Nansen, the Norwegian explorer, had discovered the North Pole.

The Italian campaign in Abyssinia resulted in

disaster. Information received March 3d showed a loss of 5000 men in a battle in the mountains near Massowah. Out of 247 officers engaged, 207 were killed. The cabinet, headed by Signor Crispi, resigned, and a new ministry was formed under the premiership of the Marquis di Rudini.

OBITUARY.

February 12th.—At Paris, C. L. Ambroise Thomas, the musical composer, aged eighty-five years.

February 14th.—At New Haven, William Lathrop Kingsley, the writer, aged seventy-two years.

February 15th.—At Boston, Thomas Hewes Hinckley, the painter, aged eighty-three years.

February 21st.—At Columbus, Ohio, President C. C. Waite, of the Columbus, Hocking Valley, and Toledo Railroad, aged fifty-two years.

February 22d.—At Chicopee, Massachusetts, George D. Robinson, ex-Governor of Massachusetts, aged sixty-two years.—At Toledo, Ohio, ex-Congressman Michael D. Harter, aged fifty years.

February 24th.—At Brooklyn, Henry C. Bowen, editor and publisher of *The Independent*, aged eighty-three years.

February 25th.—At Pierce, Nebraska, Joseph Tyffe, Rear-Admiral, U.S.N., retired, aged sixty-four years.

February 26th.—At Paris, Arsène Houssaye, the writer, aged eighty-one years.

February 27th.—At St. Louis, General Madison Miller, of the United States Army, aged eighty-seven years.

March 1st.—At Worcester, Massachusetts, William W. Rice, ex-Member of Congress, aged seventy years.

March 4th.—At Lowell, Frederick T. Greenhalge, Governor of Massachusetts, aged fifty-four years.—At St. Louis, ex-Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick, aged ninety years.

March 6th.—At Hempstead, Long Island, Philip J. A. Harper, eldest son of the late Mayor James Harper, of New York, one of the founders of the firm of Harper and Brothers, in his seventy-second year.

March 10th.—At Kovno, Isaac Elchonon, Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Church in All the Russias.