

time of peace no other work of national defense or protection so valuable as this which the army can perform, and that the national forests cannot be adequately guarded and protected by any other means. It is obvious that the measures which have been tried, including those now in operation, or nominally in operation, have proved almost entirely ineffective. The officers of the army are picked men, educated at the expense of the nation, and already in its paid service.

The third step in this plan is the appointment by the President of "a commission to make a thorough examination of the condition of the forests belonging to the nation, and of their relation to the agricultural interests of the regions through which the streams flow which have their sources in these forests, and to report with the facts observed a comprehensive plan for the preservation and management of the public forests, including a system for the training, by the Government, of a sufficient number of foresters for the national forest service. . . . A National School of Forestry should be established at a suitable place in one of the great mountain forests on the public lands, and its equipment should be as thorough and adequate for its purpose as is that of the National Military Academy at West Point."

The plan thus proposed has the merit of being practical, and of providing the means and instruments for its own effective and successful administration.

Nothing else at once so direct and efficient, and so thoroughly adapted to accomplish these most important objects, has hitherto been presented for the consideration and action of the American people in connection with this department of our national interests. It should be adopted and put in operation as soon as possible.

The Dark Continent.

FROM the beginning of time, men have been accustomed to associate with the name of Africa only such conceptions as darkness, ignorance, helplessness, and the opportunity of oppression. Sir John Hawkins and the Roman conqueror of centuries before may have had little else in common, but they agreed in their belief that Africa and the Africans were fair game, the storehouse from which were to be drawn supplies of slaves, and in which Rob Roy's was the only law.

Since the Pharaohs' kingdom, with its supplies of grain to the Mediterranean region, and Carthage, with its more universal commercial intercourse, international relations have for centuries felt hardly any disturbing influences from the side of Africa, with the exception of the den of pirates so long permitted to exist in the Barbary States. Lord Salisbury's recent invidious speech about "black men" and their implied incapacity for national or international affairs, though applied to Hindus, was merely another curious survival of the feeling of absolute contempt bred from centuries of supreme international indifference to everything African except the plunder of Africa. This indifference was the product of the feeling that international interests and the balance of power were purely European affairs, a feeling which does not really date from the struggles of William and Louis, but from time immemorial,—from that time, at least, when the headlong retreat of the Persian from the shores of Greece

gave the first great shock to rudimentary international relations. From that time international law has virtually been founded on the notion that international rights were confined to the nations of Europe, while the nations of other continents had at best only international privileges.

One may well fancy the rudeness of the shock that would have been given to this notion by the appearance and geometrical increase of the great American Republic but for the self-control of the latter power. Silas Deane's wish for three thousand miles of fire between Europe and America has been pretty fairly fulfilled so far as international law is concerned; and diplomacy has been permitted to assume that the center and circumference of all its real rights and interests are in Europe. It has often been wondered that American diplomacy should have been so constantly successful; perhaps the wonder would be less if one could weigh exactly the natural desire of the diplomacy of the old school to maintain the *status quo* in order to neutralize its American rival by granting all the latter's reasonable demands, and thus to retain to itself the appearance of its ancient exclusiveness.

Circumstances seem to be forming new combinations to shock the solidity of the *status quo*. Not only are torpedo-boats, iron-clads, and perfected weapons and munitions at the service of any government that has money to buy them, but some governments, once accounted only barbarous, have come to know and value these tools of destruction and to use them as a defense. The Japanese army and navy must now be reckoned with by Russia and England in any general war in which these two rivals take part. China, which once relied on junks, gingals, and stink-pots for the extermination of the foreign devils, now patrols her own seas with well-appointed squadrons of iron-clads, and doubtless will not wait for European permission to take advantage of the earliest opportunity to settle up several long-standing accounts. Cases of the kind are numerous and striking, though those who talk so glibly of a "general European war" seem to ignore them and to imagine that international circumstances have not changed since the general European peace was made in 1815.

The share of the Dark Continent in the new circumstances thus far has been mainly commercial. He who can teach the black man to want and wear one shirt where none was worn before brings a wide and welcome increase to the markets of European producers; and it is shameful to be compelled to add that Christian nations have found a still richer mine in fastening upon Africa the love for distilled liquors. Under such auspices the Congo State has been born; but is it certain or probable that this is to be the end of all for Africa? Everything seems to portend an epoch of European colonization in the Dark Continent, modeled on the Congo State; but there are some considerations to the contrary.

Africa, like every other continent, has races of every type. It has its races of cowards, and its militant, conquering peoples. In the natural process, the former should go down and the latter come to the surface of things. We are apt to judge all Africans by the former type. But Lord Wolseley should know the black man as a fighter, if any one does; and he has recently

put on record¹ his testimony to the courage and determination with which the really military black races face any odds in battle. Our own civil war moreover has borne testimony to the superb fighting qualities of the African. In the very month in which Wolsley's testimony appeared, it received striking confirmation in the affair at Suakin, in which the negro allies of the English forces did so unfairly large a proportion of the fighting; and there are further confirmatory cases in the African warfare of the past, familiar enough to show that the Dark Continent has an abundance of the raw material for organized armies. And it is more than probable that the militant African will be as competent as our American Indian to handle modern weapons and munitions.

Why, then, when educated leaders shall be developed, should not Africa, in her turn, evolve governments as capable as China or Japan of throwing some weight into any general disturbance of the international balance? The possible wealth of Africa is immeasurably beyond that from which the far eastern powers have armed themselves. When we hear of Chinese and Japanese war fleets now, the conception of them has gradually become familiar; but the conception of them would have seemed about as strange thirty years ago as that of a Zulu squadron of iron-clads would seem to us now. It is certain that if any African power should come to have ambition enough to

form such a fleet, no European power would have any more scruple in seeking its aid by alliance than the Roman emperor had in accepting the tax from an unsavory source, and for the same reason.

It may be, of course, that all such speculations are less than idle; that the African is hopelessly a child or a slave; that the destiny of the Dark Continent is only to be exploited for the benefit of the other continents; and that the relations between Europe and Africa are always to be commercial only, and never in any wise international. It is well to notice, however, that this last hypothesis has already been relied upon in the case of China and Japan, and that it already seems to be proving somewhat delusive. One cannot feel certain that the other hypotheses above stated are not equally or more delusive. Certainly Africa shows no signs of supine acquiescence in a commercial fate. Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians are still chipping at the edges of the Dark Continent, and seem to find advance into the interior unexpectedly difficult. There may yet be the seeds of stirring international episodes in the Basuto, the Zulu, or the Ashanti, as Wolsley describes them; or in the men of whom he uses these astonishingly strong words: "I am certain our men would much prefer to fight the best European troops rather than the same number of African warriors who were under the influence of Mohammedan fanaticism."

OPEN LETTERS.

American Literature.²

WHOEVER will read through this big work, of which seven volumes are now issued, will have gained a knowledge of American history, not so connected, but much more vivid than he can get from Bancroft or Hildreth. And the best way to study history is in the documents. The editors have given a liberal interpretation to the word literature; indeed, they have been forced to do so, for it is not much more than half a century that literature as a fine art has been practiced in this country with any success.

The first two volumes cover the colonial period and follow the time division adopted by Tyler in his unfinished "History of American Literature," being devoted respectively to the years 1607-1675, and 1676-1764 (Tyler makes it 1607-1676 and 1677-1765). The dividing line between the first and second colonial period is Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia and King Philip's War in New England. These volumes, in fact, make an excellent supplement to Professor Tyler's work without in the least taking its place, since they consist merely of selections from colonial writers with no comment, and no biographical matter beyond the dates and places of birth and death. In this respect the "Library" differs from such standard collections as Duyckinck's and Griswold's. It is not a cyclopaedia;

it gives, in general, longer extracts, and its material is chosen with a nicer taste and from a more modern point of view.

A glance at the contents of the successive volumes in the series will enable the reader to follow the growth of the American mind and the development of a native society and a civilization which, if in the main derived from Europe, is also in a degree original. In the first volume, as was to be expected, the place of honor is given to that delightful soldier of fortune, Captain John Smith, of the Virginia Adventurers; and the greater part of the book is allotted to narratives of voyages, reports of life in the New World sent back to England, journals like Bradford's and Winthrop's, the sermons and theological writings of New England divines such as Hooker and Cotton, and descriptions of the Indians. This was the age of settlement and discovery, and the authors represented in this volume were all born in England and in great part reared there. Perhaps the most important names after those already mentioned are Roger Williams and John Eliot, the apostle to the Indians. In New England, theology seems to have formed the sole intellectual interest of the people and almost the daily business of their lives. The Cambridge platform; the letters of persecuted Quakers, "written in the common gaol in the bloody town of Boston"; the punning epitaphs composed upon deceased ministers by their survivors; and the metrical horrors of the famous "Bay Psalm Book" (1640), the first book printed in America, round out the picture of early colonial life in New England and deepen one's thank-

¹ "Fortnightly Review," December, 1888.

² A Library of American Literature, from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time. Compiled and Edited by Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson. In ten volumes. New York: Charles L. Webster & Co. 1888.