

poor out of it? or to assume that a "free-pew system" is all that is needed to bring the poor into it? The building might be as barren of architectural effects as the early colonial churches; the pews might be bare boards, and open to all the world; the members might limit their wardrobes to the dress of Sisters of Charity; but the poor would not come in. Even the region in which the building is placed is almost a *terra incognita* to the poor; they live many squares to the southward, or off on the East or the West side; the public opinion of the up-town church, on such a subject as that of spending Sunday at Coney Island or up the Hudson, has no interest or importance to them; and many of them have personal objections even to the substituted relationship of the mission church. If the rich will not go to the mission church, and the poor will not go to the up-town church, how is the widening chasm be-

tween the two classes to be closed or bridged? That is the problem which is one of the results of the modern development of cities, particularly in our own country.

Our purpose is not to suggest any solution of the problem, only to ask attention to the cumulative natural forces which tend to make it continually more difficult of solution for the future. Hardly any question of our times better deserves attention. One need not even be a believer in Christianity to appreciate its gravity; it is only necessary that he should appreciate the part which Christianity has hitherto played, merely as a social force, in Germanic development. The segregation of the people into classes is always a peril in a democracy; will it be made less noxious by the failure of a social force which for so many centuries has been preaching the equality of man?

OPEN LETTERS.

The G. A. R. as seen from the Inside.

IN 1874 a Massachusetts soldier, General Charles Devens, addressing the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic as its fourth Commander-in-Chief, spoke warmly of the plans and aims of the new order, and his words, though intended only for the hour when they were spoken, served as an outline for the future of the fraternity of veterans. He said that if old schoolmates and classmates delight to keep up the happy ties of former days, surely that affection which unites men who have suffered together must be no ordinary one. Soldiers cannot be insensible to the merits of comrades who stood with them in the ranks of war, and upon whose fidelity and courage their own lives often depended, and it would prove a grateful duty to do justice to the memory of those who have fallen, and to guard the welfare of the living, also. Whatever the public may do, he continued, either through general or State laws, for the survivors who become dependent, there must still remain many cases calling for individual assistance from private hands, and the associated veterans, while strengthening and brightening the friendship that began in the ranks, would support those private charities of which the distressed and broken might be in need.

The views of General Devens were the popular ones at that time among those who adhered to the association, but the movement was just emerging from the experimental stage, and the veterans generally considered its future as uncertain. At the present date the Grand Army has probably reached its highest limit in point of numbers and influence, and its record has been made chiefly within the last fifteen or sixteen years. The six thousand posts that now constitute it are so many local clubs devoted to those deeds of friendliness outlined by General Devens, and which are symbolized in the well-known motto, Fraternity, Charity, Loyalty. The posts of the Grand Army owe their existence entirely to the impulse of the veterans who maintain them, and are located almost wholly in the northern belt of States extending to, and across, the Missouri River, and on the Pacific coast. In the older communities, and more especially, perhaps, in the great

cities, liberal provisions for relief have been called out by the numerous cases of destitution, while the multitude of social attractions in these localities have inclined the veterans to sociability in their gatherings, and works of charity and fraternal enjoyments now distinguish the order in the East. In the newer communities the question of relief is regulated by the urgency of the need and the means that are at command to meet it; but there fraternity has the deeper meaning, and it becomes on occasions another mystic tie, showing its power alike in public and commercial circles, and in social life. Loyalty is a factor that admits of no variableness, since every one who claims the privilege of the order, or receives any of its benefits, must have been a Union soldier, or must be known to have a dependent relation to one who wore the blue.

The G. A. R. organization is shaped after the plan of an enthusiast, Dr. B. F. Stephenson, who organized the first local society, or post, at Decatur, Illinois, in 1866. Dr. Stephenson had been a surgeon in the Western army, and having while yet in the service conceived the idea of forming an association of old comrades when the war should end, he began the agitation in 1865 by correspondence with his former camp associates. As a result of this agitation a ritual was prepared from models taken from the Masons and the Odd Fellows, and Post No. 1, Department of Illinois, was instituted. Although it was intended by the founders to make the movement a national one, the causes which led to the rapid growth of the order throughout the North were quite outside of those that were operating from the little center at Decatur, Illinois. By 1866, in several States the Union veterans had already formed associations for mutual benefit. Kansas had a "Veteran Brotherhood"; Wisconsin, several independent Soldiers' and Sailors' leagues; Massachusetts, a "Grand Union Army and Navy Veterans'" association, and a "Soldiers' and Sailors' Union"; New York, a "Soldiers' and Sailors' Union"; Pennsylvania, an association called the "Boys in Blue," and Connecticut, a "United Service Club." The avowed object of all these societies was the advancement of the true interests of the soldier; in other words, the accomplishment of a work of brother-

hood. The problem was a difficult one, especially as the meetings were held in open convention; and experience gained in other fraternities suggested to the veterans that they abandon the convention method, unite under a strong vow, and adopt a system of instruction. In the winter of 1866-67, the Grand Army of the Republic, which had started out with those features, a solemn oath, and an impressive ritual, was brought to the attention of the soldiers throughout the North, and the veteran societies then existing were rapidly changed into posts and departments of that order. The idea was very popular, and at the second annual encampment of the order, held at Philadelphia in January, 1868, there were representatives from twenty-one States. The strength of the movement lay in the West, and the delegates from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio constituted one-half of the assembly. An Illinois veteran, General John A. Logan, was elected commander-in-chief. This encampment was successful, and decided two very important questions for the new association of veterans. It would be national and absorb all others; it would be secret and non-partisan. The exact lines on which so vast an organization would develop could not be fixed by resolutions or by-laws. Dr. Stephenson's ideas of secrecy and fraternity were sustained by a large following in the West, and the rules and the ritual that had originated with him were retained with some amendment. Some common impulse was needed, and it was found at length in the noble instinct of charity. The general regulations which were formed at that time made it binding upon each post to have a relief fund for the assistance of needy veterans and their widows and orphans.¹

In some favored localities the relief fund was looked upon at first as a sentimental hobby that would never be called into real service; but it appears from the reports of the Department of New York for 1872, that the posts of the State had generally founded such funds, and put them to practical use. Some of the posts in large cities had paid out in relief during the year amounts averaging ten dollars for each post member, and the surplus on hand for relief in these posts averaged twenty dollars for each member. The amount reported officially for the whole country during three years past has averaged nearly \$250,000 each year, and an equal sum, by a narrow estimate, is distributed in a form of private charity that is not entered upon the post records. The three annual reports referred to also show that about one-third of the beneficiaries during those years did not belong to the order. It is but just to state here, too, that so far as the members of the order are themselves concerned in receiving relief from the post funds, it is in a large measure the return of "bread cast upon the waters." The recipient has at some time, and perhaps regularly, and for a long period, contributed to the fund which succors him in his need.

The committees having in charge the work of relief

¹ The application of the fund is not restricted to members of the order, and a call is made at each post meeting on behalf of any soldier or his dependents who may need relief. The methods for sustaining the fund are left to the selection of the posts. Usually it is done by direct donations and the use of balances in the post treasury. The amount of fees payable upon initiation to a post or upon transfer from one post to another, and also of the annual dues for membership, is determined by each society, and in addition to these revenues, which are regular, the relief fund may be increased by a general assessment.

² It is a fact also not generally known, that any member, or post,

act also as employment committees. In large cities, particularly in New York, Brooklyn, Boston, and Buffalo, there is a central employment bureau, and all posts within the limits cooperate with it. Relief committees generally have full power to aid all worthy applicants who are in immediate distress, and if any applicants are entitled to admission to institutions of relief the committees can at discretion place them there. The "Woman's Relief Corps" and the "Ladies of the G. A. R." have for a number of years supplemented the labors of the Grand Army in the work of immediate relief. The Relief Corps has expended an average of \$70,000 a year for three years past. The "Ladies of the G. A. R." is an independent society, devoted to special work in attending suffering comrades of the Grand Army.

In some States where soldiers' homes were needed, the Grand Army founded them before asking help from the State governments.

Aside from the distinct features of benevolent work, there are attractions in the G. A. R. for men who are eligible. The vow, with the exception of what it demands for fraternity and charity, is an exceedingly simple one for a United States citizen to make, and it leaves entire freedom in politics and religion and in all civic and social duties.²

There has been scarcely a period in the career of the Grand Army not marked by progress, and from time to time it has overcome the evils that have threatened its usefulness and stability, the chief of which has been the desire of partisans and others to use it for political or private ends. The *personnel* of the order has been changed throughout many times, and the earliest adherents would hardly recognize the methods at work to-day.

Of the features that have been instituted in advance of the original purposes of the society the most prominent, and probably the most important, is memorial work. The Memorial Day is now honored in nearly every Northern State; but the chief feature of the observance, the marching columns of veterans, will soon decline, and then the festival will lose its impressiveness. Some more enduring memorial will be required to perpetuate the story of the war. In many places the Grand Army has undertaken to build monuments and memorial halls, and the preservation of war relics and historical documents. The vast work of the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association has been inspired and supported by veterans and posts of the order. Ohio has several memorial buildings; Indiana, a \$25,000 monument; Vermont, a monument under way. Rhode Island is moving for a memorial hall, while New York is trying to secure a monument in Central Park, and also to erect a Grant Memorial. The Department of New York has secured a room in the Capitol at Albany for the preservation of documents having historical value and of relics of the battlefield and of the service.³

The labors of the Grand Army veterans have been

or department, is free to criticize and to oppose the action of any committee, local, State, or national.

³ The efforts in this direction of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, a veteran society composed of ex-officers of the Union army, may be appropriately mentioned here. The District Commanderies of Washington, Boston, and Philadelphia, and the Grand Commandery of Ohio, are doing much to perpetuate the glory of American soldiers, and eventually to elucidate historical points. The Ohio Commandery published recently a valuable collection of papers read before the society under the title of "Sketches of War History."

so important in results that the question often arises whether the work shall rest where they leave it, or whether it shall be handed down to a younger generation with like impulses of charity and patriotism. The "Sons of Veterans," an independent military order now numbering about eighty thousand cadets, are preparing to receive the mantle whenever their elders shall summon them as worthy to bear it.

George L. Kilmer.

Martial Epitaphs.

A STROLL through any of our national cemeteries will suggest the idea that the War Department has official knowledge of but one elegiac poem. Quotations from this one poem are repeated over and over, at the gateways and on painted boards at the turns of the avenues among the graves. In Antietam cemetery one might pick up and put together almost the entire production from these inscriptions. Some stanzas are striking in imagery, as well as perfect in technique, especially the quatrain oftenest quoted:

On Fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
But Glory guards, with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead.

But the poem — at least for the purpose to which it has been so ostentatiously put — has a radical and fatal fault. It lacks all moral character. Its sole argument is, These men were killed in battle, therefore they are to be glorified, no matter whether they were making righteous or unrighteous war. The elegy would be quite as appropriate for Tecumseh's mercenary braves at the Thames, or the Sepoys that were blown to shreds at Lucknow, or the Zulus that fell at Rorke's Drift, or the Tae-pings at Canton, or the Mahdi's dead in the Soudan. You may chant the same dirge for the Dyaks and the Maoris that fell in their murderous forays.

If this were the best we could say for the men that saved the Union, however musical the lines in which we express it, I, as an American citizen, should be heartily ashamed of American letters; though we hardly had a right to expect more from this poem, since it was written to commemorate volunteer soldiers who had lost their lives in an unholy war, that with Mexico — known to be so at the time, and since pronounced so by the most illustrious man that took part in it (see Grant's "Memoirs," Vol. I., p. 53). Let me broaden the proposition. If the cause of the Confederacy was just, or if its advocates thought it was just, this poem, it seems to me, is not worthy of being quoted over the graves of those who fell in the vain attempt to establish it.

Had the Quartermaster-General taken the trouble to inquire of some one conversant with American poetry, he might have learned that there is no lack of appropriate verses having both poetic merit and moral character, with which he could at least have given some variety to the literature of our national cemeteries. Here is an instance:

They marched and never halted,
They scaled the parapet,
The triple lines assaulted,
And paid without regret
The final debt.

The debt of slow accruing
A guilty nation made,
The debt of evil doing,
Of justice long delayed,
"T was this they paid.

On fields where Strife held riot,
And Slaughter fed his hounds,
Where came no sense of quiet,
Nor any gentle sounds,
They made their rounds.

They wrought without repining,
Till, weary watches o'er,
They passed the bounds confining
Our green familiar shore,
Forevermore.

The poem from which these stanzas are taken was written by Theodore P. Cook, a journalist of Utica, who served in the 14th New York Artillery during the civil war. Here are eight lines from a poem written on the eve of the battle of Fredericksburg by Michael O'Connor, a sergeant in the 140th New York Infantry, who died in the service:

May all our boys who fall be found
Where men lie thickest at the front,
Where brave hearts bore the battle's brunt,
Contesting every inch of ground;
Though well we know dead men to be
But broken tools that Freedom flings
Aside, alas! as useless things,
In carving out her destiny.

From Henry Howard Brownell, one of the few famous poets that have actually participated in the battles they have described, might be chosen several appropriate passages — unless, indeed, his poetry is too vigorously loyal for the temper of the time. He was an ensign on the flagship *Hartford* when she led the fight in Mobile Bay. Dr. Holmes called him "our battle laureate," and wrote an article for "The Atlantic Monthly" to prove that he deserved the title. These stanzas are from the close of Brownell's "Bay Fight":

O Mother Land, this weary life
We led, we lead, is 'long of thee;
Thine the strong agony of strife,
And thine the lonely sea.

Ah, ever, when with storm sublime
Dread Nature clears our murky air,
Thus in the crash of falling crime
Some lesser guilt must share.

To-day the Dahlgren and the drum
Are dread apostles of his name;
His kingdom here can only come
By chrisn of blood and flame.

But never fear a victor foe —
Thy children's hearts are strong and high;
Nor mourn too fondly — well they know
On deck or field to die.

Nor shalt thou want one willing breath,
Though, ever smiling 'round the brave,
The blue sea bear us on to death,
The green were one wide grave.

For a briefer inscription, four lines from a poem by Rossiter W. Raymond, who served as a staff-officer, would be appropriate:

Whether we fight or whether we fall
By saber-stroke or rifle-ball,
The hearts of the free will remember us yet,
And our country, our country will never forget!