

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

George Washington and Memorial Day.

THE intrusion of a mass of new Washington material into a number of THE CENTURY intended to be in especial keeping with the sentiment of Decoration, or Memorial, Day, is surely not an inappropriate or unwelcome intrusion. In bringing out, just a year after the Centennial of Washington's inauguration, these relics of the first President, it is well to recall once more the salutary fact that the first soldier of the New World remains also its first citizen.

As a soldier, it is easy now to see that his greatness consisted largely in the way he received disaster. He proved his nobility in rising above defeat, in wrenching success from failure; in keeping an immovable front against reverse, detraction, and infamous abuse. His life was one long struggle; not, as to a superficial view it might seem, a series of mere fortunate successes. High character, rather than "good luck," was his immortal equipment.

But it is as a citizen that Washington gives what may be thought to be the most valuable lesson of his career — the lesson of absolute honesty, absolute disinterestedness. Let those who preach, who teach, who vote, make the contrast on all occasions between the tone of Washington and that of every public man of to-day who falls below his standard. The standard is not too high for any man. Washington was no angel, saint, or demigod. We have a right to exact from every man who takes public service equal public virtue. The people do this theoretically, if not practically, already; but we will not have city, State, or national government what it should be till we make the demand in practice as well as in theory.

To the veteran of our day the lesson of Washington's citizenship applies with special force. Does not every true and manly ex-soldier know that not every one who fought for the Union a quarter of a century ago has frankly re-assumed his citizenship — without boast or insistence or unmanly demand? And yet what noble examples of self-respecting, unselfish return to private life and civic duties have been afforded by our disbanded armies. All honor to the dead who died in the time and act of war; all honor to the true soldiers who have died in the succeeding years of peace; all honor to their worthy living comrades! And how fortunate that the sentiment of reunion across the lines is already an old and trite story — that the blue and the gray so often unite to decorate the graves of those who, living, bravely and honestly contended.

The New Movement in Education.

THIS generation is witnessing a widespread and intelligent interest in the subject of popular education such as even Horace Mann never dreamed of. A profounder appreciation of what citizenship implies and involves is leading to more strenuous efforts to remove the blight

of illiteracy, and to give to every child at least an elementary education, in order that he may not be wholly unprepared for the opportunities and responsibilities of manhood. It may be that many of these efforts are ill-timed and misdirected, but they are all earnest and actuated by lofty motives. In countries where the educational administration is national, and therefore centralized, these new movements produce an effect quickly. Where the local communities must first be reached effects follow more slowly, but, perhaps with the more complete indorsement of the common people, and consequently with a greater chance of permanence.

In the United States the organization and supervision of public education is, without exception, a function of the State governments. The United States has a Bureau of Education, but it is only advisory; the municipalities and townships have Boards of Education and school trustees respectively, but they act by virtue of State legislation and under limitations and restrictions similarly imposed. We have, therefore, in this country no national system of education in the sense that such a thing exists in Prussia or in France, but rather forty-two systems of education. The points of difference between these various systems are almost as many as the points of agreement. Yet, while each State has its own educational laws, and raises, appropriates, and distributes its school funds as it sees fit, there is a well-defined movement in each State to learn by the experience of the others; and slowly but surely that uniformity which the Constitution neither imposed nor provided for is brought about by the action of the States themselves.

Perhaps no single agency contributes as much to this end as the frequent gathering of teachers and educational administrators in associations and conferences. The number of these bodies now meeting regularly to study and discuss the various phases that the problem of public education presents is quite beyond calculation. Undoubtedly the most effective of these associations, and the one that carries most weight with the general public, is that known as the Department of Superintendence, National Educational Association, which held its annual meeting a few weeks ago in the city of New York. This body is composed of the State, county, and city superintendents of schools throughout the country, and for many years past has considered and debated those educational questions that seemed to possess the most immediate and practical interest. Having no official existence, and consequently no legislative responsibility, the Department of Superintendence enjoys a certain freedom of speech and action which is as unique as it is beneficial in a body constituted of such representative men. Almost every educator of note in the country has at some time or other spoken before the Department. At the recent meeting, for example, the presidents of Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, and Rutgers colleges, as well as the

United States Commissioners of Education and of Indian Affairs, appeared upon the programme. The presence of such men is a warrant that the discussions will be lofty in tone and practical in character.

It is not easy to select from the many topics touched upon at the New York meeting those which are of the greatest general interest. A very able discussion was called out by the subject of "The Education of the Negro in the South," and no mere comment could do justice to it. At another session the place that education should occupy in any international exposition that may be held in 1892 was clearly indicated, and a host of valuable suggestions placed at the disposal of those who may be charged with the organization of an educational exhibit. In one of the most forcible papers of the session, Superintendent Maxwell of Brooklyn discussed city school systems,—which, as every one knows, offer very serious problems peculiar to themselves,—and pointed out that the only power which can be relied upon to check and uproot the evil forces that have crept into the municipal administration of education is the State Department of Public Instruction. The sentiment of the majority of the meeting was in favor of Mr. Maxwell's very cautious and conservative suggestions, though the representatives from New England, where the town is still the political unit, were unable to indorse them fully. President Eliot presented with marked ability and success the subject of secondary education in this country. His opinion of its present condition will be gathered from the following adjectives which, among others, were applied at various points in the paper, either to the secondary schools themselves, or to the instruction which they offer: "defective, disjointed, and heterogeneous," "deficient in number and defective in quality," "feeble and distracted." Not least in importance of the occurrences at this meeting were the unanimous indorsement by the Department of the International Copyright Bill and the resolution calling for the reorganization of the National Bureau of Education as an independent Department, such as that of Agriculture used to be, and that of Labor now is.

The Lingering Duello.

THAT remnant of savagery, the single combat, including the duel, the street-fight, "posting," and every form of provocation to single combat, has had its day in most parts of our country, and that from influences of all kinds. There were times in New York City when the duel was an admitted possibility of politics; when De Witt Clinton could publicly style his opponent, Swartwout, "a liar, a scoundrel, and a villain"; when in the duel which followed, after five shots had been exchanged and Swartwout had been wounded in two of them, he sat up and pleaded vainly for another round; when it was charged publicly that the young men of the Burr faction were endeavoring to "pick off" their political opponents by relays of challenges. All this led up to the killing of Hamilton and the sermon of Dr. Nott thereon, one of those sermons which have stirred our people's hearts to the core. From that time, in this part of the country, every provocation to a duel has been largely neutralized by the knowledge that the jury's oath and the judge's charge would be conditioned largely by Dr. Nott's sermon. There have been duels among army and navy officers, until the

growth of public sentiment has suppressed them. There have been historical duels, such as those of Lincoln and Shields, or of Terry and Broderick; but Western legislation has found summary means for suppressing them.

In one part of the country public opinion is still too strong for either law or gospel, and maintains, in opposition to both of them, the right and duty of the individual to defend his own position, if need be, by some form of single combat. No doubt it is a remnant of militarism: just as the military classes of modern Europe insist upon the duel as a class privilege, the upper classes of Southern whites, who used to maintain slavery by a semi-military organization, retain this mode of militarism, though slavery is gone. Those of us who live in other sections of the country are beginning to learn something of the severity of the problems which slavery has left behind it, and the curious complication of forces which makes the solution of one of these problems seem for the time to be worse than useless. We have felt for a quarter of a century that the negro was not a political man until his place in the jury-box was assured to him. The influential classes of the South, to do them justice, have gradually come to the same conclusion, and we have had a spectacle well calculated to bring Governor Hammond out of his grave in protest—a "chivalrous" white man tried for his life in Charleston before a jury of which a majority were negroes.

And yet the immediate results were very far from good. The case only showed that the negro juror was quite as demoralized as his white colleague; that "boss" and "massa" were still as supreme with one as "chivalry" was with the other; and that the duello in the South rested not on the support of unthinking whites alone, but of unthinking blacks also. The brutal case of murder resulted in an acquittal.

Is this untoward event to close the efforts of those who have carried the negro thus far on the road towards equal manhood? Are they to decide that their own race needs conversion first, and that the negro must, until then, be left to himself? To do so would be to forget that every taint of slavery in the status of the negro means the survival of militarism and the duello among the whites. How much this means is well worth the serious thought of those who are remaking the South. Are they to rely upon the natural wealth of their region, upon its iron and other metals, upon its cotton and cotton-seeds, and upon the coming in of men from other sections to claim a share of all this wealth? They will be relying upon a broken reed. Bankers, mill-owners, superintendents of factories and railways, do not work, if they can help it, in an environment which compels the use of the pistol-pocket. Northern manufacturers and business men, who realize the intensity of the competition which is some day to come upon them from the South, will do their work with less present apprehension so long as any lingering remnant of the duello shall wind its tentacles around Southern business.

Of course there is no real belief or desire in the North and West that the welfare of their sections should be founded permanently upon the crippling of competition in the South; one section cannot be crippled but that the others shall feel it profoundly. On the other hand, the suggestions offered are to the thinking men of the