

feel that they had not fully appreciated the labor and intelligence involved in the undertaking, even if they had already been struck by the range, catholicity, and typical value of the selections. The editors do not make too high a claim when they say that in progressing with the "Library" they realized, after awhile, that they had builded better than they knew; that their "National Gallery" was presenting a rare conspectus of American life—yes, of American history, in all departments of imagination, action, and opinion."

The work that the editors have here performed is unprecedented in its field, and one the like of which will probably not be seen again in our day. Such copyrights as have been placed at their disposal have never been surrendered with such liberality to a literary enterprise of similar nature, the authors and publishers represented doubtless feeling an unusual interest in a series of selections prepared by such highly competent hands.

In surveying this record of American literature, with its gallery of engraved portraits, it has been a great pleasure to us to remark—at a time when we have been celebrating THE CENTURY MAGAZINE'S twentieth anniversary—that this periodical has been so closely connected with the remarkable development of our native literature during the past two decades. The readers of the Stedman-Hutchinson Library will find therein specimens of the literature as well as the "counterfeit presentments" of many men and women who have won public recognition in the pages of THE CENTURY. We are sorry to say that owing to editorial modesty they will miss examples of the fine and rare poetic genius of the junior editor of the "Library," as well as of the vigorous and illuminating prose and the clear, high, and accomplished verse of Mr. Stedman, one of THE CENTURY'S first and foremost contributors. The consolation for the loss of such extracts is in the knowledge that unusual and original talents have gone to the editing of the "Library"—and, as to that matter, any subscriber thereto can easily supplement in the directions named the present full and otherwise thoroughly representative collection.

Mr. Stedman and Miss Hutchinson have done American literature, American history, and American patriotism a great and lasting service.

New York as a Historic Town.

In the city of New York, as in the other great cities of the world, a large proportion of the population consists of men who have come to it late in life mainly because it is the metropolis of the country. Not having been born here, not being bound to the city by the ties of youthful acquaintance, these new-comers are often lacking not only in a proper civic pride, but even in a fair knowledge of the history of the town wherein they have chosen to dwell. They do not understand the forces which have been at work in the past to make the community what it is in the present. In New York, for instance, they do not know why the marble City Hall has a brown-stone back—that monument to the short-sightedness of its builders, who did not believe that the town would ever spread farther up the island. They are often alarmed by symptoms which seem to them strange and new, unaware that some of these things are not newly portentous since they have ex-

isted almost unchanged from the days when New York was New Amsterdam.

To set forth the story of the city of New York, of its founding and of its growth, of its struggles and of its success; to do this with a knowledge of the details of the past, and with an appreciation of the difficulties of the present; to tell the tale briefly, briskly, vividly—this is not only to write a good book, it is to do a good deed. And this is what Mr. Theodore Roosevelt has done in the volume he has just written for the series of "Historic Towns," edited by Professor Freeman.

For writing a history of New York City Mr. Roosevelt is exceptionally well qualified. A native New Yorker of the old Dutch stock, he has taken part in the public life of the city ever since he arrived at man's estate, and he has done yeoman service for the cause of good government. He has had a personal acquaintance with the practical part of politics, likely to be as useful to a historian as Gibbon declared that his brief service in the militia had been to him when he came to describe the evolutions of the Roman legionaries. Mr. Roosevelt's earlier literary labors have also stood him in good stead. His "Naval History of the War of 1812" helped him to understand the mercantile development of New York; his biography of "Gouverneur Morris" made him an authority on noted New Yorkers of the Revolution; and his "Winning of the West" gave him a sympathy with the pioneer, the settler, and the wandering trader, more akin in condition and not unlike in character to those who founded New York, and by whose efforts it gained its first growth.

Mr. Roosevelt is a master of vigorous narrative, with the faculty of telling a tale briskly, and of setting a figure before us firm on its feet. After reading his pages we know Peter Stuyvesant better, and Jacob Leisler; we understand George Clinton and Aaron Burr, as we see them presented amid the conditions which cause them and which they helped to create; and more recently we recognize in the etched outlines of the shabby figures of Fernando Wood and of William M. Tweed the result of conditions still existing and of causes still in operation.

For us who now see in New York a French quarter and an Italian quarter, a Chinese quarter and a negro quarter, and who know how small a part of the whole these four quarters are, it is well to be reminded that even when grim old Peter Stuyvesant ruled the city the population was very mixed—the Dutch being most numerous, then the English (from New England and from old England alike), then the French Huguenots, and the Walloons and Germans, and men of so many other stocks that sixteen languages and dialects were spoken on this island of Manhattan. At the head of affairs were good men and true; but deep down below there was danger then as now. Mr. Roosevelt tells us that imported bond-servants escaped to New York from New England and Virginia and found congenial associates from half the countries of Europe, "while even beneath their squalid ranks lay the herd of brutalized black slaves. It may be questioned whether seventeenth-century New Amsterdam did not include quite as large a proportion of undesirable inhabitants as nineteenth-century New York."

Even in the early days the lines of political cleavage were determined rather by caste than by race: social distinctions were more potent than differences of speech.

Perhaps this was due in part to the fact that no nationality was put at a disadvantage. It is now more than two hundred years since New York, "in line with that policy of extreme liberality toward all foreign-born citizens" which it has always followed, "conferred full rights of citizenship upon all white foreigners who should take the oath of allegiance." This special act was to benefit the Huguenots, then being expelled from France by tens of thousands; and the accession of a Dutch king to the English throne was yet another force working in favor of the fusion of races in this city—a fusion which "follows but does not precede," so Mr. Roosevelt tells us, "their adoption of a common tongue." To those who look with fear at the enormous influx of foreigners of late years it is encouraging to be told, as Mr. Roosevelt in effect tells us more than once, that probably there has been no time when those whose parents were born in New York have formed a majority of the population, and certainly there has been no time when the bulk of the citizens were of English blood. In public life the two chief men of the city in the last century were of non-English stock—Hamilton of Scotch and Creole descent, and Jay of Huguenot and Holland. So in this century the men most prominent in affairs were Astor, a German, and Vanderbilt, a Dutchman.

Despite this admixture, there has been no lack of patriotism here, no unwillingness to take the initiative. It was New York that called the first council of the colonies in 1690, it was in New York that the Stamp Act Congress met in 1765, and it was in New York that the first blood of the Revolution was spilt—for the Liberty Pole fight of 1770 took place six weeks before the Boston Massacre. It was New York that issued the call for the Continental Congress; it was in New York that "The Federalist" was published; and when trouble came again at last under the rule of the Constitution which "The Federalist" had explained and made possible, it was a New York regiment of militia which was one of the first to reach Washington.

Peace hath more victories than war, and of these quieter triumphs New York has had her share. Many men had sought to propel boats by steam; it was a citizen of New York who showed the way. Many men had tried to send messages by electricity; it was a citizen of New York who devised the best means to this end. And later the city of Fulton and of Morse was chosen for his home by Ericsson, the inventor of the screw steamship, who here added during a long life to the list of his important inventions, including the *Monitor*. In 1820, when Sydney Smith asked "Who reads an American book?" there had been written here but two books which any American need read now; these are "The Federalist" and "Knickerbocker's History of New York"—and both were written in New York. Irving was the first American author to be accepted in England, and another New Yorker, who soon followed him into literature, James Fenimore Cooper, was the first American author to be accepted throughout Europe.

It is well to be reminded of these things. A pride in the past helps us to take heart for the work of the present. The condition of the city is improving in many ways. There is, for instance, no ruffian in public life to-day as brutal as Isaiah Rynders; there are

fewer riots, and these are sooner controlled; and it is not in New York now that the successor of Bill Poole would be honored with a public funeral. Notwithstanding some grievous set-backs, the city is slowly and surely advancing, though still scandalously behind many other large cities of the world in the art of self-government.

Protection for the Red Cross.

THE objects of the Red Cross International Association are not so well understood in this country as its merits warrant. The popular knowledge extends but little further than an understanding that the Red Cross is the badge of a humane institution which does relief work in war abroad and in calamities at home, such as the Johnstown disaster and the Mississippi floods. In reality the society is a far-reaching organization, ramifying through all the civilized nations of the world, except perhaps two or three, banding them together in the effort to make war less horrible and sudden calamities less disastrous. It originated in Switzerland, and its emblem, for the protection of which in this country a bill is now before Congress, is the flag of the Alpine republic with the colors reversed. The organization took the name of the symbol, and both became known as the universal sign of war relief among the armies of the civilized world. By the terms of the Geneva treaty, under the regulations of which the society has been internationally organized, there is now no other military hospital flag, and all hospital supplies, all attendants at a field or military hospital, must bear it as a sign of neutrality. It renders sacred from molestation every person or thing wearing or bearing it. It relates to the preservation of life on the greatest scale, and in the direst necessities known to mankind. Can any sign be higher or more sacred? Can mankind afford that it be trifled with by the mercenary and unscrupulous?

Yet this is what is being done, not only in our country but in all others, for everywhere governments are finding it necessary to protect from the spirit of commercialism a symbol sacred to the cause of humanity, in order that its fair fame may not be used, as it is being used, to advance the sale of cigars, washboards, whisky, and medicines. Under its protection serious frauds have been perpetrated. When the hearts of the people have been stirred by the knowledge of some great calamity, irresponsible persons have set up a so-called Red Cross Agency and have collected moneys for their own use, of which the true Red Cross has never had a cent. Such tricks defraud the people at a time when their generosity is not only most open-handed but most needed.

The organization was originally designed for service in war, but by a clause inserted in its constitution by Miss Barton, president of the American Red Cross Association, its forces have been brought to bear in times of elemental as well as human warfare. This provision has become known abroad as the "American amendment," and has been officially adopted by the other nations who are parties to the treaty.

The work which has fallen to the American association in the last eight years makes a somewhat startling record. The Red Cross has done what it found to do on twelve fields of national disasters, including one