

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

fire, four floods, three cyclones, one epidemic, one famine, one earthquake, and one pestilence. It has attended two international conferences abroad as representative of the United States Government, and it is most noteworthy that it has neither received nor asked aid in any form from the government, not even the cost of arranging the treaty.

What it now asks in justice to the people, as well as for our credit with other nations, is official protection for the name and insignia adopted by the treaty, to the extent of making a false use of either a penal offense, punishable by fine, or imprisonment, or confiscation of the goods on which it appears. Within the last eighteen months a successful effort has been made to do this in nearly all other countries, each nation having found abundant proof of the necessity for this step within its own borders.¹ The resolutions of recent

international conferences, the official action of other governments, and the direction of the committee of Geneva, have rendered it incumbent on the American association to take similar action.

The bill also seeks to incorporate the National association under the charter of the United States, since international regulation requires that there should be one national organization, and one alone, in each country, through which the Geneva committee may communicate with each government. The bill asks less rather than more power than that already possessed by the present association. The insignia and the institution belong to the government, and not to any society whatsoever, and the bill only proposes that the government through its officers shall take care of its own and prevent the unwarrantable intrusion of mercenary enterprises.

OPEN LETTERS.

A World-Literature.

THE other day I happened to drop into a small book-store here in Europe, and to my great surprise found there some numbers of THE CENTURY. Among others was that for April, 1890, in which I discovered the article on "World-Literature" as a basis of literary training. The article seemed to me so well said and so opportune withal, that I at once felt impelled to write you of my pleasure in reading it.

It is a very noticeable fact that the science of philology, great as have been its advances in this century, has less and less made itself felt upon literature. In the United States there is not, I believe, a single powerful writer who knows anything about philology—or, to put it better, there is not a single philologist who is a powerful writer. And this is the case the world over. One can think of men who have become intellectual forces in the modern world because of their knowledge of biology, of chemistry, of history, of political economy, of philosophy; but of no one (with the apparent exception of Renan) who has become so by his knowledge of philology. Indeed, it is a curious fact that modern philology, which now rejects as unscientific everything savoring of the belles-lettres, owes its own original impulse to literature, and not to its own inherent force. Thus the founder of Romance philology, Diez, was a devotee of Byron, and did his first literary work as a translator of Byron's verse. Thus the founders of Germanic philology were in the first place men under the influence of Goethe and his friends, and in the second place the Romanticists. To these men, laboring primarily because of a literary impulse, we really owe the foundation of modern philology. But now this same philology affects to cast off literature, and one finds at every turn invectives against what the German philologists love to call the *Belletristen*. Every day, that is, philology becomes more and more separated from literature—that is, from

life. It has already ceased to have any real influence upon the opinions of mankind.

We cannot hope, then, that philology will give us in education material for the formation of writers. It has now fallen into the hands of men who have ends of their own, apart from the intellectual needs or desires of the world at large. They criticize according to their own standards, and he who ventures to work apart from those standards finds himself overwhelmed with ridicule and abuse. There is no way, then, but to cut loose from them, leave them to follow their own course, and for one's own part simply to use what of their results has practical value.

But whither shall we turn for that new conception of knowledge, that new adaptation of science to life, to the needs of men in general, which may fairly be expected to yield some fruit in practice? It seems to me that this article indicates with precision the direction we have to take. The first necessity is return to life, which philology has abandoned. To return to life is to turn to literature as the expression of life, to search in literature for the conceptions which have proved themselves really vital, and to study the expression given to these conceptions, wherever they have assumed final and adequate form. It is to follow in peoples the growth of perceptions needing expression, and to endeavor to make out that *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, which in life, in literature, in religion, constitutes the catholic faith. It is to study that parallelism which Wordsworth remarked between true literature and life, that mysterious power that the forms of art possess of working in harmony with the eternal forces of the universe, so that, apparently, men cannot help adopting as their own, in the long run, all that is both founded on fact and adequately expressed in literature. In short, it is to study literary expression, intellectual impulses, artistic and spiritual movements, as all having fundamental laws, intelligible to man if only they can be properly set forth.

MADRID, SPAIN.

M.

¹ The Emperor of Japan and the King of Belgium have accepted the active presidencies of national associations, in order

to uphold the organization with all the authority of their respective governments.