

IV. "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP!"

IN the article in the December CENTURY entitled "Laurels of the American Tar in 1812," in speaking of the engagement between the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon*, the writer states that doubt has been cast upon the accuracy of the report of Captain Lawrence's last words. As bearing upon this matter I offer the following evidence.

My father, Dr. William Swift, was one of the surgeons on board the *Chesapeake*, in her engagement with the *Shannon*, and was in attendance on Captain Lawrence after he was wounded; and my mother has often heard him tell the story, and quote the last words of the dying commander: "Don't give up the ship!"

Before his death, Captain Lawrence gave his belt to Dr. Swift, who presented it to the Naval Lyceum at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, accompanied by the following memorandum:

Dr. Swift has the honor to present to the Naval Lyceum the belt worn by Captain Lawrence in the action between the United States Frigate *Chesapeake* and the British Frigate *Shannon*, on the 1st of June, 1813, and which was loosed from his waist the moment previous to his uttering the memorable words, "Don't give up the ship!"—*Naval Lyceum*, BROOKLYN, February, 4, 1834.

Dr. Swift was made a prisoner, and sent to Halifax, whence he returned home with the wounded.

In 1820 he was detached from the *Ontario* and sent as acting consul to Tunis, where he remained sixteen months. In 1836 he was on the *North Carolina* as fleet surgeon of the Pacific squadron, and on his return in 1839 was stationed at New York, Boston, and Newport for different periods. In 1862 he was at his own request placed on the retired list, having spent fifty-one years in the service of his country. He died in 1865 at the age of eighty-four.

William J. Swift, M.D.

Mr. Kennan's Reply to Certain Criticisms.

[WE presume upon the intense and continued interest in Mr. Kennan's Siberian papers which many of our readers have manifested, to make the following extracts from the preface of his forthcoming volume.—ED. C. M.]

Some of the criticisms that have been made upon the articles on Siberia and the exile system published in THE CENTURY MAGAZINE have been based apparently upon the assumption that a survey of any one particular department of national life must necessarily be incomplete and misleading, and that the fair-minded investigator should supplement it by taking into the field of vision a quantity of unrelated facts and phenomena from a dozen other departments.

"Your articles," certain critics have said, "give a false impression. Your statements with regard to Russian prisons, indiscriminate arrests, and the banishment of hundreds of people to Siberia without trial may all be true; but there are in Russia, nevertheless, thousands of peaceful, happy homes, where fathers and brothers are no more in danger of being arrested and exiled to

Siberia than they would be if they lived in the United States. Russia is not a vast prison inhabited only by suspects, convicts, and jailers; it is full of cultivated, refined, kind-hearted people; and its Emperor, who is the embodiment of all the domestic virtues, has no higher aim in life than to promote the happiness and prosperity of his beloved subjects."

The obvious reply to such criticism as this is that it wholly mistakes the aim and scope of the work criticized. I did not go to Russia to observe happy homes, nor to make the acquaintance of congenial, kind-hearted people, nor to admire the domestic virtues of the Tsar. I went to Russia to study the working of a penal system, to make the acquaintance of exiles, outcasts, and criminals, and to ascertain how the Government treats its enemies in the prisons and mines of Eastern Siberia. Granted, for the sake of argument, that there are thousands of happy homes in Russia; that the Empire *does* abound in cultivated and kind-hearted people, and that the Tsar *is* devotedly attached to his wife and children; what have these facts to do with the sanitary condition of a tumble-down *étape* in the province of Yakútsk, or with the flogging to death of a young and educated woman at the mines of Kará? The balancing of a happy and kind-hearted family in St. Petersburg against an epidemic of typhus fever in the exile forwarding-prison at Tomsk is not an evidence of fairness and impartiality, but rather an evidence of an illogical mind. All that fairness and impartiality require of the investigator in any particular field is that he shall set forth, conscientiously, in due relative proportion and without prejudice, all the significant facts that he has been able to gather in that selected field, and then that he shall draw from the collected facts such conclusions as they may seem to warrant. His work may not have the scope of an encyclopedia, but there is no reason, in the nature of things, why it should not be full, accurate, and trustworthy as far as it goes. An investigation of the Indian question in the United States would necessarily deal with a very small part of the varied and complex life of the nation; but it might, nevertheless, be made as fair and complete, within its limits, as Bryce's "American Commonwealth." It would, perhaps, present a dark picture; but to attempt to lighten it by showing that the President of the republic is a moral man and good to his children, or that there are thousands of happy families in New York that have not been driven from their homes by gold-seekers, or that the dwellers on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston are refined and cultivated people who have never made a practice of selling intoxicating liquor to minors, would be not only illogical but absurd. If the gloominess of the picture is to be relieved, the proper way to relieve it is to show what has been done to remedy the evils that make it gloomy, and not by any means to prove that in some other part of the country, under wholly different conditions, a picture might be drawn that would be cheerful and inspiring.

In the present work I have tried to present impartially both sides of every disputed question, and to deal as fairly as possible both with the Government and with the exiles. . . .

George Kennan.