

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

A Word or Two, By Your Leave!

WITH this number THE CENTURY completes a volume, and with November its twenty-fourth year will begin. The aims and accomplishments which give this magazine its individuality are so well known that it is hardly necessary to recall them to our readers. But with the march of the years new readers come forward and take the places of many of the old. To these, as well as to our old friends, we would now address a word or two, in pursuance of an old editorial custom.

THE CENTURY has always shown the courage of its opinions, and in the past year it has taken a firm stand editorially on some of the most exciting questions of our times. Eschewing narrow partizanship of every kind, it compliments its readers by the belief that they will respect the honest expression of opinion on matters touching our national life and national morals, even though these opinions may not be always acceptable.

It has been the avowed purpose of THE CENTURY to foster American literature and art, and to hold up a pure and workmanlike standard in both art and letters. It has kept in close touch with the new movement in both these lines, and has tried not only to minister to the instruction and entertainment of its readers, but to encourage and bring forward all that is best and most inspiring in the various arts—not only in the literary and plastic arts, but in those of architecture, landscape-gardening, etc. In addition to this, it has opened its pages to discussions by competent writers of great religious, educational, economic, and political questions.

One peculiar distinction of THE CENTURY has been the taking up of important matters, such as the Siberian exile system, in a thorough and influential manner; and the publication of important histories and biographies. THE CENTURY never had more numerous features of this kind in preparation than at the present moment. Some of these are announced in connection with the new year of the magazine. Others, upon which much work has been done during years past, are still in preparation, and will be announced later.

We would wish to speak especially of one feature of THE CENTURY'S new year which seems to us of great charm and value—namely, Mr. Cole's engravings of Old Dutch Masters. This is a work in which this distinguished artist is very deeply interested, and he himself thinks that he has achieved certain results here not fully attained in his remarkable series of Old Italian Masters. In such engravings as these, made part of a "popular magazine," the world's best art is indeed "popularized" in the best sense; that is, brought promptly and effectively, by means of the most artful and sympathetic translation, into the homes and hearts of great numbers of the people. It should be a satisfaction to remember that it is American wood-engraving, paper-making, and printing which have made this possible.

Do not Miss the World's Fair!

SOME weeks still remain in which those who have not seen the World's Fair may yet enjoy that never-

to-be-renewed privilege. In the general astonishment at the beauty of the housing of the exhibition, perhaps not enough has been said concerning the contents. That these are well worthy the attention of the student of every or any department of human enterprise, goes without the saying,—though in some departments much more than in others the truly instructional method has been observed; as, for instance, in transportation, piano-making, and the archæological and anthropological exhibits under the charge of Professor Putnam. In respect to this last-named feature of the Exposition, while circumstances rendered it impossible to make the ordered display early in the summer, it has finally assumed proportions of the most dignified character; and very properly—considering the occasion—has become doubtless the most thorough exhibition of the history and condition of the native races of America ever brought together. Indeed no great "group" of exhibits at the Fair is more impressive than that of the Columbus caravels,—floating near the delightfully reproduced Convent of Rábida, and near also to the dwellings of the living aborigines, as well as the relics of their ancestors.

It still remains true that the greatest feature of the Exhibition is the architecture and the landscape-gardening,—including in these all their sculptured and painted decorations and adjuncts. In these the deepest pleasure and the deepest instruction are to be found, as well as the largest and longest benefit to the country.

If the visitor can only be a single day at the Fair, or a single night, it is worth any sacrifice to enjoy this alone. And if it were to be a question between the daytime or the illumination at night, we would advise the latter; for surely no eyes now opened on this world are likely ever again to behold any sight so nobly beautiful.

A True Friend of the American Working-man.

IT is with a peculiar sense of personal grief and loss that THE CENTURY pays a tribute of affection and high esteem to the memory of Colonel Richard T. Auchmuty, who died in July last. The crowning work of his life, the establishing and building up of the New York Trade Schools, was one which from the outset enlisted the warm sympathy of this magazine, as expressed by repeated contributions on the subject—one of them from his own pen—which have been published by us from time to time during the past ten years. In fact, we think we can say now without impropriety what his modesty would not have permitted us to say while he lived, that the series of articles which have appeared during the present year in this department of the magazine, on the subject of American boys and American labor, owed their inspiration entirely to him. The facts therein set forth were drawn in large measure from records and documents which he had collected and preserved, and the proof-sheets of the articles were carefully read and revised by him. Almost the last work of his life was the writing of a kind of brief for a

closing article of the series, which he wished to have take the form of an appeal for the establishing of trade schools in various parts of the country.

It would be impossible to exaggerate his devotion to this cause. From the time when he first took it up, soon after closing a career of honorable service in our civil war, down to the final hours of his life, it absorbed all his time and thought, and his zeal in its prosecution became steadily more intense and exalted. He gave his life to the cause, with the deep conviction that he was grappling with an evil that threatened the welfare of the nation, and he fought for it with an indomitable will that was equaled by nothing save his modesty. There was never any public disturbance about what he was doing. He founded his trade schools, taking liberally from his private fortune in doing so, and had them firmly established before the general public knew anything whatever about them. In the course of time, a personal friend, Mr. Pierpont Morgan, who had been quietly observing the good work so modestly going forward, endowed the schools with a munificent gift of a half-million dollars, placing them forever beyond the experimental stage, and giving to their noble founder assurance that the work of his life had not been undertaken in vain.

We shall give in the closing article of our labor series such an account of these trade schools that it is not necessary to go into more detailed mention of them at this time. We prefer to dwell now upon Colonel Auchmuty's personal relations to them. These were always those of a fond father for his children. He was never weary of talking of his "lads," as he called the pupils, of showing photographs of his graduates, and of tracing their careers in the world. He was firmly of the opinion that the American people needed only to be informed of the facts about the condition of the American labor field, as we have set them forth, in order to realize both the injustice involved toward our own sons and the grave peril to us as a nation. He was equally convinced that once they had realized these things, the people would see to it that the remedy was supplied.

His patriotism, as pure as it was deep, was at all times inexhaustible and unmistakable. He was, in the fullest and best sense of the term, an American. He was the model citizen, embodying more perfectly than almost any other man of his time what Mr. James Bryce has aptly called the "home side of patriotism," the "sober and quiet sense of what a man owes to the community into which he is born, and which he helps to govern." His heart beat warm and strong for his country, and especially for the youth of his country; to see them growing up in idleness, and thus going directly and surely to crime, gave him as keen a sense of pain as a father would feel over the errors and misdeeds of a worthless son. In the last year or more of his life, when he was suffering unceasing and torturing pain, sitting practically helpless in his home, his mind was always on his beloved schools and their future, and his chief solace in his anguish, expressed over and over again, was that he had been shown before he died that the schools were so well organized and so firmly established that they would continue and would flourish after he had gone.

Surely a life like this, so modest, so gentle, so noble, so full of beneficence for all the people, is a national

legacy of priceless value. In a time, too, much given over to strident patriotism of a demagogic and pernicious character, this record of the unostentatious but powerful and far-reaching work of a simple, generous gentleman comes like a benediction. It ought to be more than this. It ought so to arouse patriotic instincts that in every part of the land American citizens will imitate the example of Mr. Morgan, and make the trade schools of New York the models for a national system of similar institutions.

Substitutes for the Extinct Apprentices System.

We have endeavored to show in previous articles of this series that American boys are no longer learning useful trades, for reasons which it is not necessary to recapitulate here; that while American boys are growing up in idleness, and are filling our prisons, American trades are controlled by foreigners whose sympathies are not with American institutions and customs, and whose influence upon American society is in the direction of turbulence and even anarchy.

This being the situation,—and we are confident that the evidence we have adduced in support of our contention proves it to be as we have stated it,—the pressing question is, What is the remedy? In this as in all other matters of national concern we shall find our surest and safest guides in the experience of the human race in other countries which have been called upon to solve similar problems.

It should be borne in mind that in this matter we are following in the footsteps of European nations. Prof. John D. Runkle, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is one of the most zealous and intelligent advocates of industrial education in this country, says in one of his valuable reports on the subject:

There is common testimony to the fact of the decay of the system of apprenticeship, and the causes, with only slight modifications, are the same the world over,—the conflict between labor and capital, the rapid introduction of machinery, and the changed conditions resulting in all the producing and manufacturing industries.

The same authority sustains the view that we have endeavored to establish of the results of the changed labor conditions, by saying:

With the gradual and almost total extinction of apprenticeship, labor has become not only unskilled, and nearly dead to all sense of professional pride and ambition, but too often dishonest, demoralized, and brutal.

As to remedies, Prof. Runkle adds:

The consequences are serious and far-reaching, and thoughtful persons everywhere are beginning to seek a remedy. As the system of apprenticeship was based upon a form of education, we naturally seek the remedy through the same agency.

It is through this agency that all the leading nations of Europe have found their remedy. They have been during the present century constantly increasing their number of technical schools, until at the present time nearly every country in Europe has a comprehensive scheme of industrial education, which ranges from the manual-training instruction of children up through apprentice and artisan schools to the high polytechnic or scientific institutions which take rank with the great