

spirit upon the humane impulses, the passionately sympathetic thoughts, which spring quicker to the heart of probably every normal reader at sight of the lines on Lola's death than at the touch of the writer's finest prose. And with Arnold, as with the two men of genius whose names have been joined with his so often in this place, the purely humane mood was the common mood of his life, the one to which the reader most frequently

comes back in his letters. «The real inside,» that is the test, as Lowell insists; and though Arnold is in his books one of the rarest spirits of his time, it is not until «the real inside» of him has been apprehended, not until he has been studied at home, that the extraordinary charm of his individuality is fully known. In this he is the type and ideal of what a letter-writer, and, we may add, a man also, in the noblest sense should be.

Royal Cortissoz.



TOPICS OF THE TIME

The Outgoing President.

NO President of the United States has ever taken other than a serious view of his great responsibilities; but it may be said that few of our Presidents have devoted themselves as conscientiously and minutely to the details of executive duty as has President Cleveland. The paper on «Our Fellow-Citizen of the White House,» in this number of THE CENTURY, is therefore of peculiar interest as describing accurately and freshly not only the duties of a President, but the particular methods of a particularly hard-working chief executive.

The paper referred to makes no mention of the well-known fact that the regular and constant duties of President Cleveland in his second term have been interrupted by events of unusual gravity. Certainly not since Lincoln's Presidency has any President been confronted by problems of equal difficulty, or had to meet crises of such excitement and threat. It should be remembered, too, that early in this second term there was a period of illness, occurring at a time of enormous anxiety and pressure.

It is a fact that while the career of the retiring President has been exceptional from the beginning, the period of his second term has been especially so. We have no intention to describe in detail its successes and failures, and shall mention, in an unpartizan spirit, only certain large policies with which, for praise or blame, it is sure to be identified in history. As to which of these policies shall seem from the standpoint of the future most notable, it is impossible for contemporaries to determine.

While there is difference of opinion as to the wisdom of President Cleveland's Hawaiian policy, it has been held by some experts in international relations that an ethical standard was then raised which may be cited in the centuries to come as of value to mankind.

While there is difference of opinion as to the details of the management of the Venezuelan negotiations, there is no difference of enlightened opinion as to the incomparable value of the issue of that negotiation in a treaty of peaceful arbitration between the two great

nations which are the joint inheritors of the language of Shakspeare and of Hampden, and of those principles of justice which, through different forms, perpetuate representative government and human freedom.

Mr. Cleveland's first term was identified, among other things, with the advocacy of a lower tariff, with the attempt to regulate pension legislation, with interest in free art, international copyright, and the reform of the civil service. His second term has been marked by a heroic struggle for that standard of value in the national coinage which exists in the most civilized nations. It stands also for a protest against high tariffs; for economy in expenditure; for defense of our harbors; for the preservation of the national forests; and for the right of the National Executive to interfere in States in certain circumstances, and without gubernatorial invitation, in the interests of law and order.

Along with the great peace treaty, which will distinguish not only an administration, but an age, must be classed Mr. Cleveland's civil-service policy. It has been his good fortune to strike the decisive blow at the spoils system. He has not gone so far as to leave no large accomplishment for his successors; but his orders extending the scope of the merit system are the most sweeping, the most damaging to the old and crying evil of our politics, that any executive has yet been fortunate enough to make.

Mr. Cleveland, with others especially of our strongly individual Presidents, has been the subject of bitter calumny! What Washington was not spared, nor Lincoln, he, too, has suffered; but perhaps in this last case the growing sensationalism of some portions of the press has added somewhat of venom and fantastic invention to the usual abuse of the partizan, the disappointed, and the evil-minded. It may be that no chief executive in a country of such diversified interests and such enormous territory can hope to be generally understood in his term of office, or even in his lifetime. Such a public servant will never be omniscient, will never be free from mistake and error; but the time comes at last, before or after the long release, when good intent

is appreciated by all men of fairness and good will. In some parts of our country, perhaps, the misconception as to both man and motive has been so deep-rooted that with thousands of the present generation it may never be corrected. In answer to accusations of neglect of the claims of friendly obligation, it may be of no avail to point to numerous instances where the opportunity of reconciling public duty with private inclination has been eagerly seized. Those who charge sympathy with the «moneyed classes» rather than with the «masses» deny the necessity of promptly upholding the national credit, in the manner adopted, in behalf of all the people. Many who accuse the President of obstinacy may not acknowledge that a strong man's firm adherence to principle would be a more charitable, and in this case reasonable, explanation of conduct; and so on through the long list of animadversions.

The most extreme partizan opponent of the retiring President must acknowledge, if he knows the history of the man and if he has any fairness in him, that through Mr. Cleveland's entire public career he has taken and firmly held one position after another believing it to be right, and in total disregard of the effect of his action upon his own political fortunes. Surely no American statesman has ever more conspicuously exhibited the rare and saving virtue of civic courage.

But, as already intimated, it is not intended here carefully to weigh achievement, but rather to express those kindly sentiments which all but the most intense partizans must feel at the retirement to private life of a distinguished American, after a disinterested public service in which, often against tremendous odds, he has accomplished some things which will be «writ large» in the history of these United States.

And at such a time even an opponent should not refuse, at the very least, the meed of honest intention, and the greeting of good wishes. It was of the President who is now leaving the White House that Lowell wrote:

Let who has felt compute the strain
Of struggle with abuses strong,
The doubtful course, the helpless pain
Of seeing best intents go wrong.
We who look on with critic eyes,
Exempt from action's crucial test,
Human ourselves, at least are wise
In honoring one who did his best.

The Incoming President.

ASIDE from partizan questions and those relating to the tariff, it is gratifying to find in the record of Mr. McKinley's service in the House of Representatives, and in certain utterances of his during the recent campaign, abundant basis for the expectation that he is likely to rise above that dead level of provincialism which increasingly in Congress has been the constant foe of progress. After all, only a small part of the questions to which a President is compelled to address his attention are related to the antecedent division of opinion which we call partizanship, and it is greatly to be desired that a chief executive should be open to the influence of that body of expert and cultivated citizens which in the last resort must shape and order events in a democracy, if they are to be shaped and ordered for the public good. The intelligence of the few is the safeguard of the many, and the chief necessity, as well as the chief difficulty, of a

President is to know upon whom he may rely for such intelligence. But it is much to feel that an incoming President is animated not only by high motives, but by respect for learning and experience—a quality which, humiliating as it may be to confess, has been conspicuously wanting in recent Congresses, due partly to our machine system of nomination, and partly to the poor legislative timber brought down in recent years by unexpected and overwhelming freshets of public opinion.

Examples of Mr. McKinley's support of measures of progress are found in his votes upon the questions of civil-service reform, free art, and international copyright. On the last-named measure he voted constantly with those who took the side of civilization as against that of barbarism. With his coöperation, free art was incorporated in the original McKinley Bill as it left the Committee of the House of which he was chairman, though it was not enacted until the passage of the Wilson Bill. On the fundamental question of the merit system against the spoils system he has been aggressively right. In every platform of his party since 1872 there has been a declaration in favor of the reform, and in several national conventions he has been chairman of the Committee on Resolutions. In his letter of acceptance he said:

The pledge of the Republican National Convention that our civil-service laws shall be sustained and «thoroughly and honestly enforced and extended wherever practicable» is in keeping with the position of the party for the past twenty-four years, and will be faithfully observed. . . . The Republican party will take no backward step upon the question. It will seek to improve, but never degrade, the public service.

This course was foreshadowed by his speech of April 24, 1890, in the House of Representatives, in which he said in part:

Mr. Chairman: In the single moment that I have I desire to say that I am opposed to the amendment of the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. Houk], to strike from this bill the appropriation for the execution of the civil-service law. My only regret is that the Committee on Appropriations did not give to the commission all the appropriation that was asked for for the improvement and extension of the system. If the Republican party of this country is pledged to any one thing more than another, it is to the maintenance of the civil-service law and its efficient execution; not only that, but to its enlargement and its further application to the public service.

The law that stands upon our statute-books to-day was put there by Republican votes. It was a Republican measure. Every national platform of the Republican party since its enactment has declared not only in favor of its continuance in full vigor, but in favor of its enlargement so as to apply more generally to the public service. And this, Mr. Chairman, is not alone the declaration and purpose of the Republican party, but it is in accordance with its highest and best sentiment—ay, more, it is sustained by the best sentiment of the whole country, Republican and Democratic alike. And there is not a man on this floor who does not know that no party in this country, Democratic or Republican, will have the courage to wipe it from the statute-book or amend it save in the direction of its improvement.

Look at our situation to-day. When this party of ours has control of all the branches of the Government it is proposed to annul this law by withholding appropriations for its execution, when for four years under a Democratic Administration nobody on this side of the house had the temerity to rise in his place and make a motion similar to the one now pending for the nullification of this law. We thought it was good then, good