

IMPRESSIONS BY THE WAY

THE session of Congress that ended on the 4th of March was not productive of much that gratified the country; but one of its proceedings, at least, will win the general approbation of thoughtful and patriotic Americans. It made a larger appropriation for the navy than our marine service has received in any year since the war—a total sum of nearly thirty millions of dollars. Nearly half of this amount is to be invested in the construction of new vessels, including two first rate battle ships, six gunboats, and three torpedo boats. A third battle ship was authorized by the House, but the Senate declined to approve it.

The building up of a powerful navy may now be regarded as a settled part of the policy of our government. It has opponents, both in and out of Congress, but the great body of public opinion undoubtedly favors it. That was an excellent reply that Mr. Talbott of Maryland made to the adverse plea of Dr. Everett, during the debate in the House, by quoting words spoken thirty years ago by Edward Everett, the Massachusetts Congressman's father. "It was a navy," said the famous New England orator, "that gave Augustus the empire of the world; a navy that carried the Northmen from the polar circle to the coasts of France, to Sicily and Constantinople; and which made Venice and Genoa, alternately, the mistresses of the Mediterranean. It was her naval strength which prevented England from being crushed in the titanic struggle with Spain in the sixteenth century; by which, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, she laid the foundation of her vast colonial empire on this continent, in India and Australia, and by which, even now, she belts the globe with the sovereign girdle of her dependencies. For territory situated on the seaboard, naval skill and strength are the indispensable condition of national independence, safety, and power."

The report of the House naval committee cited such authorities as John Adams' saying that "the trident of Neptune is the scepter of the world," and Andrew Jackson's emphatic declaration in favor of a strong navy, in refutation of the argument that the maintenance of an extensive marine armament is a policy contrary to American traditions.

It is matter for wonder, not that the ad-

vantages of offensive and defensive strength at sea should be felt today, but that earlier generations do not seem to have realized them as fully. It may be set down as certain that the United States will be one of the great naval powers of the twentieth century.

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THE Fifty Third Congress spent, during its two years of life, almost exactly a thousand millions of the public funds. It looks as if there was truth in the defense offered four years ago, when our legislators were accused of extravagance because their total appropriations, for the first time in history, reached ten figures—that this is a billion dollar country.

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MR. HOLMAN of Indiana, long famous as "the watch dog of the House," is said to have summed up his thirty five years' experience at Washington with the statement that public life "doesn't pay," and that no young man ambitious of advancement should choose it for a career.

Many a cynical sermon has been preached on the vanity of human aims, hopes, and efforts. "Anthony," says an old book of aphorisms, "sought for happiness in love; Brutus in glory; Caesar in dominion. The first found disgrace, the second disgust, the last ingratitude, and each destruction." Mr. Holman may be said to have taken Brutus as his model, for the best years of his life have been devoted to the service of his country, with such singleness of purpose that even those who have not invariably admired his judgment have always respected his earnestness and integrity. And now, after half a lifetime in the harness, he shares the disgust of the Roman patriot who slew his friend rather than let that friend subvert popular liberty.

Perhaps we may be justified, however, in regarding the Indiana Congressman's remark as the expression of a feeling that was only transient—of a temporary depression that was but natural at the moment of leaving the scene of his life work. "I have nothing to show for my long service," he is reported as saying. Later reflection may tell him that such a view is a little too gloomy. It would be an unflattering comment upon American politics were such services as his to be set down as wholly unrewarded. If they do not bring a recompense that cannot

be computed in dollars and cents, this must be an ungrateful country, and the host of its ablest sons who stand ready to serve it are making a serious mistake.

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It seems as if the refusal of the New York constitutional convention to expunge the word "male" from the qualification of voters has been an influential precedent for the opponents of woman's suffrage. Following the failure of the movement's advocates at Albany there came another defeat in Kansas, where a proposition to abolish the existing discrimination of sex was rejected by the popular vote; then a third in South Dakota, and a fourth in New Hampshire, where suffrage bills were killed in the Legislatures. And as we write there comes the news of a fifth in Massachusetts, whose law makers have taken the same position. Such a result is especially significant in a commonwealth regarded as one in which women are particularly strong, both numerically and intellectually.

These successive reverses, however, are not likely to cause any cessation of effort on the part of the champions of the enfranchisement of women, or any diminution in their enthusiasm for their cause. They are used to fighting an uphill battle. Failure to secure immediate compliance with their wishes does not seriously discourage them, for they are confident that time is on their side, and that their ultimate victory is certain.

And in this view they have our most sincere sympathy and admiration.

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MUCH has been said both for and against the proposal, before the New York Legislature as we write, to introduce the lash as a punishment for certain classes of violent assaults. At first sight, the suggestion may appear, as its opponents urge, to be repugnant to modern ideas of humanity. Its advocates, however, make out a very strong case on the other side.

Those best qualified to speak upon the subject agree that the present penal laws are inadequate preventives of those most cruel and detestable of crimes—brutal assaults upon women and children. It is stated that these offenses are increasing in frequency; it is certain that they are too frequent so long as they are committed at all. The facts given by prison officials, charitable workers, and others who come in contact with the lowest phases of city life, are too revolting to be cited. The main object of punishment is to deter from a repetition of crime; and experience shows that the de-

graded ruffians who make women and children their victims find no terrors in temporary confinement in a prison that provides them, in many cases, with the most comfortable home they have ever had. On the other hand, there is nothing that they dread as much as the prospect of enduring the physical pain they are so ready to inflict upon others. The police records of London are quoted as showing that a particular class of assaults—those of the garroters—was speedily stopped by the use of the lash when ordinary means had failed.

To the plea that the whip is a brutal instrument of torture, a relic of the dark ages, the reply is made that whether it is more brutal than other approved means of punishment is largely a matter of opinion; that it justly fits the offenses it is designed to avenge; that serious diseases demand heroic remedies; and that it is really a demonstrated necessity if we wish to prevent a phase of crime that is unspeakably revolting and shockingly prevalent.

With the restrictions that good judgment will readily suggest, we think that criminal courts should be empowered to order to the whipping post such fiends in human form as the wife beater and the child torturer.

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THE prospect of a really great public library for New York is one that we hail with satisfaction. We congratulate the trustees of the Astor and Lenox institutions, and of the fund created out of the property of the late Samuel J. Tilden, upon their reported intention to combine the resources they control. Their judicious and public spirited action promises to give the metropolis, for the first time, a worthy temple of literature and learning, an adequate center of reading and research.

With the splendid foundation of the Astor, the valuable collections and still richer endowment of the Lenox, and the ample addition of the Tilden fund, "The Public Library," as we understand it is to be simply entitled, will spring full grown into a magnificent prestige and maturity. It will be larger and better equipped than the fine institution that Boston already possesses, more useful and influential than the great Congressional establishment in Washington. It will be the foremost library in America.

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A CORRESPONDENT asks us to name "the five leading women of today in American literature." The question is an interesting and a puzzling one. Comparisons are proverbially odious; they are also difficult to make with justice. The list of American

women who have made their mark in literature is a long one, and it is not easy to select five who are by common consent worthy of preference above their sisters. There are many more than five whom we could not omit without regret.

By what standard, too, are the leaders to be selected? By the purely literary merit of their work, as judged by the most accomplished critics? By their success in gaining popularity? By the influence they have exerted upon their generation? None of these tests is satisfactory alone. The first is too technical, the second too mercenary, the third too much complicated with external considerations; yet none can be entirely neglected. For example, we should certainly have to mention Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, women whose pens have potently contributed to the history of their country. We could not well omit an author who has scored the popular success of Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett; nor those who have found such favor with the most critical readers as have Margaret Deland and Charles Egbert Cradock.

We have already given five names, although we have scarcely touched upon the subject. There are many other women who have won high honors in various branches of authorship. Especially in fiction is the roll a remarkable one, including as it does such clever novelists as Mrs. Burton Harrison, Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, Mrs. Mary Hartwell Catherwood, Mrs. Mary Hallock Foote, Miss Mary Eleanor Wilkins, Miss Maria Louise Pool, Mrs. Amélie Rives Chanler, Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger (Julien Gordon), Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford, Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin, and many others whose names will readily occur to the reader.

There have been some allegations of a decline in the production of imaginative literature in America, but when we come to review the field we find it abundantly occupied—so abundantly that we hesitate to attempt the task of naming five women writers who stand above their fellows.

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THE recent deaths of Canrobert, the last marshal of France, and of Professor Blackie,

the veteran Scottish scholar and author, remove almost the last of the famous group of great men born in the year 1809. Charles Darwin, Alfred Tennyson, and Oliver Wendell Holmes passed away before them; Gladstone alone survives, a patriarch among the leaders of the time.

This has been called the day of young men, yet there are scores of septuagenarians who are prominent and active in practical and intellectual life. Here are a few of them, beginning with the youngest: Alexandre Dumas, Governor Morton of New York, George Macdonald, Senator Sherman, Goldwin Smith, Max Müller, Edward Everett Hale, Rosa Bonheur, Professors Pasteur and Virchow, Herbert Spencer, Susan B. Anthony, Queen Victoria, Signor Crispi, Senator Palmer, King Christian of Denmark, Justice Stephen Field, Russell Sage, and Sir Henry Parkes, the New South Wales statesman.

Then we come to the octogenarians, whose ranks Bismarck has just joined. Among others who have passed their eightieth birthday are Verdi, the composer; Professor Dana, the geologist; the Baroness Burdett-Coutts; Senator Morrill, of Vermont, and ex-Senators Payne and Thurman, of Ohio; two former cabinet ministers, Hugh McCulloch and Richard Thompson; and Pope Leo XIII, who is but two months younger than Gladstone.

There are some nonagenarians, too—Neal Dow, the temperance orator; ex-Senator Jones of Iowa; Sir Patrick Grant, one of the soldiers who helped to conquer India for England; Charles Villiers, who has represented Wolverhampton in Parliament for sixty years, and is past ninety three; the Bishop of Chichester; Sir James Bacon, a London judge, who is ninety six; an English admiral, Sir Lewis Jones, a year older; and many others less prominent, both in America and Europe. Not infrequently, too, we hear even of centenarians who have still their share of worldly honor and toil, though there are no men of great fame among them.

It looks as if modern life offers opportunities to its hale and hearty veterans, as well as to its ambitious and enterprising youths.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.—Do not subscribe to MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE through agents unknown to you personally. If you do, you may find that you have been victimized. Every few days we receive complaints from people in various parts of the country who have subscribed to MUNSEY'S through some swindler. The subscription, of course, never reaches this office.

DON'T FORGET THIS.—If you will show MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE to your friends and secure for us five new subscribers, sending us one dollar for each name, we will give you a year's subscription free for yourself for your trouble.

THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

WE HAVE GOT THERE.

WE have reached the half million point. The pace began hot and ended hotter—ended in a rattling gallop. 500,000 magazines—tremendous! And all the work of eighteen months. What shall the future be?

A NEW VOLUME.

THIS Easter issue is the initial number of Volume XIII of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE. The volume just closed has the distinction of having shown a greater gain—a vastly greater gain—in circulation than any single volume of a magazine in the whole wide world has ever had. It started with the October issue with a circulation of quarter of a million, and ended with the March issue with half a million. The increase in these six months alone, represents a larger circulation than that of any other magazine either in the old world or the new, while the total circulation of MUNSEY'S is in excess of the combined circulation of any other four magazines in America.

A BIT OF HISTORY.

MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE began its life February 2, 1889, as MUNSEY'S WEEKLY. It came into a field over which the hand of doom hung blackly. The weekly publication is no longer a factor in American journalism. Its death knell had already sounded when MUNSEY'S WEEKLY was launched. The publisher did not know this; he knows it now. The knowledge came high. The cost was one hundred thousand dollars, cash outlay, and quite five times this amount in various indirect ways. Briefly, this was the history of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE in its two and one half years of chrysalis stage.

As a magazine, then, it started frightfully handicapped. Two years more of struggle with the figures all on the wrong side of the ledger, and then the real career of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE began. This was in October, 1893. The four years and a half of fruitless effort—of persistent, stubborn application, without one rewarding ray of encouragement, were not wholly wasted, if wasted at all. They were years of training, in which the management got closer to the people—closer to the logic of the publishing situation. It had not been in the magazine

field very long when it became convinced that twenty five cents for a magazine (the figure at which MUNSEY'S then sold) was a price not in keeping with the age.

But the problem was, how could this price be reduced to a rational figure? Between twenty five cents and ten there was nothing but a way station, and the way station idea did not appeal to the management. It was express—lighting express—or nothing.

In the concrete, then, the question was this: could a magazine of the best grade be published and circulated at ten cents a copy, or one dollar a year? That the price was right there could be no doubt. But innovations are always met with stubborn resistance—radical innovations, with contempt and ridicule. To force through to success such an innovation means nothing short of bitter warfare—warfare on every hand.

Among these obstacles to the successful publishing of a magazine at ten cents stood one that seemed absolutely insurmountable—the American News Company. This corporation is one of the most powerful in America. It has branches in every important city in the United States and Canada. It handled, and still does handle, with the exception of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE, the entire periodical trade of the country. It was absolute, and in its absoluteness said, in effect, "No, no magazine of high grade can ever be sold in this country at ten cents." This was not the exact language used; but it amounted to the same thing when it said to the publisher that it would give him so much and no more for his magazine—a price so small that it was in fact absolutely prohibitive. This was the ultimatum of the middleman.

"Is it for any one man, or any body of men, to say what we shall do and what we shall not do?" reasoned the management of MUNSEY'S. "Is it the province of a single organization to name the price at which this great republic, with its seventy million people, shall buy its literature?"

"Is it not the people who buy the magazines, and is it not for them to say what they shall have? If the whole machinery of circulating periodicals combines against a publication, and the people demand it, are they not going to have it?"

This is the way the problem presented it-

self, and the management of MUNSEY'S followed its conviction regardless of all precedents, all ridicule, all predictions of disaster. The result is the establishment of a right price for magazines—a price to which all magazines of large circulation must come, and the people are the gainers thereby.

HERE IS THE SECRET.

"How do you account for the success of MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE?" is a question everywhere asked. It is asked among publishers, in the club, in the home. It is asked of us every day. The secret is simply this: *We are making a magazine for the people and at the people's price.*

The fact is, as we have said before, that there is scarcely a family anywhere to which money means so much—*ten cents means so much*—that it cannot well afford to exchange ten cents a month for the art and the refinement and the pleasure that a copy of MUNSEY'S will bring to the fireside.

WE WANT STORIES.

WE want stories. That is what we mean—*stories*, not dialect sketches, not washed out studies of effete human nature, not weak tales of sickly sentimentality, not "pretty" writing. This sort of thing, in all its varieties, comes by the car load every mail. It is not what we want, but we do want fiction in which there is a story, action, force—a tale that means something—in short, a *story*.

Good writing is as common as clam shells, while good stories are as rare as statesmanship. We get thousands of manuscripts, alleged stories, in which the "story" is not worth the telling—meaningless, flat, inane; and yet these "stories" are carefully, cleverly told. They only lack one thing, and that is the story itself. This magazine has published far too many such stories. It has published them because we have been unable to get better ones. But we have gone just as far as we are going on this road. We are going to stop, and stop short. After this issue there will be no more stories in MUNSEY'S MAGAZINE unless they seem to us to be worth reading. We realize that a story that will interest one person will not necessarily interest his neighbor, but we feel reasonably safe in assuming that a story of *good, strong, human interest* will appeal to the great majority of readers.

Acting on this decision, we have gone to press without even a serial story in this issue. We went to press without it because we had none worth putting in. What we have

done in the matter of the serial this month we shall do with the short story next month. But we want stories, both serials and short stories. We are ready to pay as high a price as any publication in the world for stories of the grade and character we desire for MUNSEY'S. In a word, price is no object. We want the best for MUNSEY'S, and the best we shall have, if money will buy it.

THE MUNSEY WINDOW.

A UNIQUE feature of the development of this magazine is the "MUNSEY Window." On the first day of each month newsdealers all over the land open their stores with their choicest window draped and decorated and devoted exclusively to the MUNSEY MAGAZINE. So far as we know, Mr. F. A. Easton, of Worcester, Massachusetts, was the first man to give prominence to this idea. It was on the February issue of last year that he tried the experiment, giving up his large corner windows exclusively to MUNSEY'S. This was the first time, we believe, that any magazine in the whole history of the world ever received a like compliment at the hands of a merchant. It was a master stroke, and at once became a permanent feature with Mr. Easton. The success of the plan will be seen when we say that Mr. Easton is now selling two thousand (2,000) copies of MUNSEY'S a month. This is the number he sold of the March issue, and his sales are still growing.

Beginning thus, the MUNSEY Window has multiplied until today it is a regular monthly feature with the enterprising dealers throughout the United States and Canada. "MUNSEY'S is a great business bringer," is the expression of all dealers.

Brisk trade appeals to the dramatic instinct in man. It sharpens his mind, quickens his ambition, and stimulates him to bolder action, and as the hundreds of customers flock in for MUNSEY'S, he sells right and left of other goods.

Great is the MUNSEY Window.

A BETTER MAGAZINE.

A BETTER magazine is what we aim to make from month to month. We are spending more money for art, letterpress, and engraving from month to month. We are getting better press work from month to month. We are steadily trending towards that magazine of our conception—the best magazine in the world. And when we reach this degree of perfection we shall continue to sell MUNSEY'S for ten cents. The price is right.



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"Little Red Riding Hood."

From the painting by G. Ferrier.