

executive department should have the power of dismissal; this is essential to discipline and efficiency. The Civil Service Law is right in this respect. It is true that heads of offices take a mean and dishonest advantage of this power, as was done in Topeka, Terre Haute, Fort Wayne, and elsewhere. The remedy for that is public opinion and punishment by the President. Information, however, is an absolute necessity, and to this end the Civil Service Commission should have power to investigate every change in the public service within its charge, and to report the facts. Upon such facts public opinion and the President could act, and the time would speedily come when heads of offices would be ashamed to trick employees out of their places. It is unnecessary to repeat that every dismissed employee should be entitled at the time to an honest and fairly complete written statement of reasons, and that those reasons should be a part of the office records."

The question of the next step in Civil Service Reform—a question which is likely to attract no small share of public attention in the immediate future—amounts simply to this: Is it better to impair, possibly, to some small extent, the efficiency of government departments by depriving executive officers of the absolute power of removal? or is it better to leave "meritorious clerks" at the mercy of partisanship, when the removal of such clerks, and the consequent defiance of the spirit of reform, must also impair the *morale* and efficiency of the service? If one were sure of the interposition of that public opinion on which the "Civil Service Chronicle" counts, it would be easy to accept its view. But public opinion is slow to be aroused to the point of making itself felt. Meanwhile, the artificial checks which represent the best public opinion are its surest protection, even if at times they prove hampering and obstructive. For these reasons it seems probable that a majority of Civil Service Reformers will come to agree with Mr. Roosevelt in his view of the wisdom of limiting the absolute power of removal.

It seems not out of place, in closing this discussion, to cite two or three recent illustrations of the growth of the reform sentiment, though not bearing specially on the question at issue. One of these is the recent address made to the employees by Mr. Washington Hesing, the new Democratic Postmaster at Chicago, on assuming office. Mr. Hesing said, in part: "If any one of you fails in doing your duty, prompt retribution will follow. No influence, no delegation, no political 'pull,' will save you. On the other hand, if you do your duty and serve the Government faithfully and honestly, you will be retained in office, and no power on earth can remove you." Another is the announcement of the Milwaukee "Sentinel" that the platform on which the Republicans recently carried that city—a platform promising the further extension of the merit system—"means that purely clerical positions will, under Republican control of the affairs of the city, be conducted upon strictly business principles." A third is the recent announcement of Mayor Schieren, of Brooklyn, who is thus far proving his faith by his works: "I am here for the interests of the city. I am not here to give patronage to the Republican party pure and simple, or to any other party."

With Civil Service Reform made a live issue in local campaigns and in the management of local offices, the task of the reformers in arousing public sentiment to reform as a National issue at once becomes vastly easier. For the merits of reform are thus brought home to the people. They are thus familiarized with the practical aspects of a question which, as bearing upon departments in Washington, seems to concern them only remotely.



Gacinto Gallina, the Italian playwright and poet, has been granted a yearly pension of \$500 by the syndic and municipality of Venice to enable him to continue writing without continually facing the necessity of seeking other employment to keep the wolf from the door. For twenty years he has been writing plays which may rank some day alongside Goldoni's in mirroring actual Italian life, and his admirers will rejoice to know that his long struggle against poverty is practically ended.

The "Industrial Army" at Omaha

By the Rev. Joseph T. Duryea

On Sunday, April 15, at 8 A.M., a company of twelve hundred men, under command of "General" Kelly, arrived in Omaha by the Union Pacific Railway from Ogden. At the request of the railway officials the train was taken across the river into Council Bluffs. The men remained in the box cars at the depot, and were supplied with food by the people of Omaha. It was anticipated by the railway officials that they would capture an outgoing train. The Sheriff of the county was invoked to restrain them and protect the property of the companies. He was not confident of his ability to control them with the force at his command, and was advised to ask of the Governor of Iowa a detachment of the militia. Under the escort of a local company the men were removed to the grounds of the Chautauqua Association, situated about two miles east of the city. There the men found fuel for fires, and were supplied with food by the people of the neighborhood. On Tuesday, the 17th, a storm came on, with cold winds, rain, and flurries of snow. On the grounds there is an amphitheater with a capacity for seating six thousand persons. Although the owner of the grounds, Mr. Hart, had not been asked to permit them to be used, he went out in the afternoon to see what he could do for the comfort of the men. He found them corralled by the militia and exposed to the severe weather, and determined to allow them the use of the amphitheater for shelter. He returned to the city, sought and found Judge McCabe, and requested him to draw up an instrument granting the use of the building to General Kelly on condition that no fires should be made in or near the building. When the paper was drawn, the Judge read it to him and gave it to him for his signature. He put a limit upon the grant of forty-eight hours, and signed his name. By a singular mishap the Judge dated the document April 15, and did not detect the inadvertency, and accordingly the order reached the Sheriff without correction. When he read it, after nightfall, he said, "The time has expired." However, touched by the sufferings of the men, he examined the paper anew, and, concluding that there must be a mistake as to the date intended, asked the captain of the military company to allow the men to get under cover. This officer knew nothing of the character of the men, was timid, and refused consent, because it would bring the men too near his quarters. The men accordingly had to do what they could to screen themselves from torrents of rain and from a driving wind. Most of them were compelled to lie under the open sky and the falling water on the soaked ground.

The distresses of the men touched the hearts of the people of both cities, and the next day great numbers went out to their camp, with abundant food, and such articles as might afford comfort to the men. All who visited them were surprised at the character of the men, and were moved to respect their leader. They were neither tramps nor vagrants. Most of them were skilled mechanics, some of them professional men, and the rest intelligent and well-disposed laborers. The greater portion had sought work, and had not been able to find it. There were some who had joined the company because of their interest in the demonstration, and their hope that it might induce the Government to begin a system of public work in connection with irrigation, and give employment to the hundreds of laborers in destitution on the coast. A few had left their employments in order to aid the movement. General Kelly proved to be a man of intelligence, sound judgment on ordinary matters, complete self-control, calmness, and patience, resolved to conform to the civil laws, and governing his personal conduct according to Christian principles. He has not committed a single unlawful act since the company started, nor have the men. During their march no liquor had been allowed in the ranks, and all improper language had either been suppressed or had not been prompted, since none had been heard by the chaplain. The Sheriff testified that the men were orderly and disposed to respect the laws. He himself informed

the Governor that there was no need of the presence of the militia, and accordingly they were removed.

The alarm of the railway officials had been, as it proved, altogether groundless. During the stay of the company at the Chautauqua grounds, generous and sympathetic Christian men and women visited them, fed and comforted them, and gathered with them in the amphitheater for worship. At one time two thousand persons were gathered, and the grove rang with the strains of "Nearer, my God, to Thee."

Efforts were made by the Governor of Iowa, the Mayors of Omaha and Council Bluffs, and the citizens generally, to induce the railway managers to furnish a train of box cars at the cost of drawing it to Chicago, where the labor organizations were prepared to receive the men and supply them with transportation eastward. But they were immovable. Their reasons were that they had no right to carry men without means of support into Illinois; and if they should, it would be an encouragement to other companies of men to move eastward, to the injury of the roads, the communities, and themselves. General Kelly had no intention of capturing a train. The people of Council Bluffs raised money to pay the cost of moving one. There seemed to be no way out of the deadlock, and so General Kelly prepared to take up the march across the State. Meanwhile the people of the two cities supplied the men with food, and the farmers in the suburbs also brought them supplies.

A meeting had been appointed by the Knights of Labor at their hall in Omaha for Wednesday evening—the first of a series which had been planned, the object of which was to diffuse knowledge of the principles of civil government and political economy. I had been requested to give an address upon a topic selected by myself, in furtherance of the design of the gathering. Some one suggested, before we assembled, that General Kelly be invited to narrate the history of his movements, make known his needs, and receive a collection. At the hour appointed the workingmen of all the labor organizations began to arrive, and it was resolved to adjourn to the public square hard by. A meeting was organized; General Kelly spoke in a simple, natural, and very quiet manner, telling his story, and explaining that the aim of the men was to impress the Government at Washington by their presence as mere petitions would not, and that the Government might understand and appreciate the condition of multitudes of laborers and devise some measures of relief. He was entirely free from excitement and passion, and advised all those present to cherish and manifest good will toward all classes of persons alike and equally, the rich and the poor, the master and the workman. A generous contribution was made for the immediate needs of his men and to assist in providing transportation in case the railway managers should be willing to furnish it.

During Thursday it was reported that one of the legal advisers of one of the companies had not only given advice to the managers, but had said, "If the men take a train, we will ditch it." The laboring men, who were displeased with the managers of the railways for withholding transportation at reduced rates, were inflamed by this report. They held a meeting on the square in the evening and resolved to go in a body to Council Bluffs and apply to the railway managers for the service of a train of box cars. On Friday morning there were twelve hundred men in line, with drums and fifes and National flags, marching to the bridge over the Missouri River. It was a movement of a serious character. There was great danger of undue excitement and rash action. These men were marching into a neighboring State; their sympathies had been moved by the sufferings of Kelly's men; they had been roused by the threat attributed to the counsel of the corporation. There was need of wholesome and powerful influences to forestall fiery speech and violent acts.

After consulting together, three of the pastors of Omaha resolved to pass over ahead of the men and seek the authorities of Council Bluffs and endeavor to procure a peaceful solution of the matter. One of them was temporarily injured by a slight accident, and had to return.

In a short time the other two were, with General Kelly, in presence of the Governor of the State, the Mayor of the city, and representatives of the courts and the citizens. The Governor soon made it evident that all the authorities had tried to do their best in dealing with a difficult situation. The citizens of Council Bluffs invited the company to return to the city and receive cordial hospitality. (They had by this time marched to the town of Weston, a few miles eastward.) The Governor offered to send them, as soon as conveyance could be provided, by the river to Kansas City. It would have been possible from that point to take boat up the Mississippi and the Ohio, and reach Pittsburg without friction with any community.

By this time the workingmen came up, and were met by a body of members of local labor societies. A committee of these were met by us in a room adjoining the room occupied by the Governor and the Mayor. We informed them of the results of the conference of the Governor and General Kelly, and that the latter had expressed his satisfaction with the intention and efforts made on behalf of his men, and had taken the Governor by the hand, thanking him for his kindness, though expressing his preference to go to Chicago, and nevertheless promising to allow his men to decide whether they would accept the offer of conveyance by the river to Kansas City. The committee, being informed that they had no contention with the Governor, the Mayor, or the citizens, decided to proffer a request to the railway companies to accede to a fresh appeal from the citizens of Council Bluffs for a train of box cars.

The result of these deliberations was announced to the workingmen, now assembled in the city park, and, by request, I addressed them, explaining the attitude of the Governor and people of Iowa and Council Bluffs toward General Kelly and his men, and counseling calmness, patience, good will, and regard for the honor of the flag under which they were marching, and strict obedience to the Constitution of the United States and the laws of Nebraska and of Iowa, within the bounds of which they were standing. Later a large addition was made to the mass of workingmen, but they returned in the middle of the afternoon as peaceably as they came. They certainly behaved in a manner creditable to their intelligence and self-control. For there were not wanting some few—very few—turbulent spirits, who might have cast sparks had they observed tinder exposed.

Meanwhile a reply was received from the managers of one of the railways, that, as common carriers, they would take the men on a passenger train at ordinary rates. This would have required the sum of about \$15,000, which it was impracticable to attempt to raise. It is said and generally believed that a train was captured under the direction of a body of impulsive women and offered to General Kelly on Friday evening, and was *declined by him* on the ground that he would not on any account do an unlawful deed.

An attempt was made by certain excited men to find a train in Omaha, but it was, fortunately, unsuccessful.

On Sunday General Kelly resumed his march eastward, assured by the people on his route that they would provide him with food and shelter, and with wagons for his supplies, his blankets, and as far as possible for his men. The same tenders are coming to him from the whole route of his intended march to the State line. The pilgrimage will be one continuous ovation. Everywhere the houses are adorned with flags, and the people are pouring out to meet him and proffer aid.

There can be no doubt that, while there has been formed no definite judgment concerning the wisdom of the projects of the Industrial Army, the spectacle presented by these men has kindled the imagination and fired the hearts of multitudes of people of all classes.

Sober, thoughtful men, familiar with demonstrations of this character as recorded in the history of older nations, cannot suppress great solicitude, nor can they refrain from expressing the conviction that there will be need of great wisdom, patience, forbearance, and kindness on the part of the civil authorities throughout the country, and especially

at Washington. There is unrest among the workingmen; they have suffered privation and want; they are in deep sympathy with their brethren everywhere, and cords are strung throughout the land which vibrate quickly and broadly at a touch. If these men had been treated with harshness, and severity had been allowed to assume the phase of cruelty, there would have been a whirlwind.

There is a call to the noblest men in the land to come to the front, and need for the exercise of the wisest statesmanship we have. If these men reach Washington, they should not be met with a show of physical force, however prudent it may be to hold it in reserve and under cover. The menace of it here was unnecessary, and the event has proved that it was quite superfluous. If there is need of a firm hand upon these suppliants, it should be a tender hand. Let them be gently treated, gathered in safe places, while the most intelligent of them are asked to state their condition and present their plea. Let time be gained, that wise measures may be used to correct visionary ideas, and show the impracticability of too high expectations. It will be the part of wisdom as well as of mercy.



My Study Fire

The Lowell Letters

It has long been the habit of many people to speak of letter-writing as a lost art, and to intimate that its disappearance is a phase of that deterioration of mind and manners which is constantly charged upon the spread of the democratic idea. Suits of armor having been relegated to the Tower, and the splendid dress of the Renaissance period no longer charming the eye save on festive occasions, the habit of exchanging confidences and opinions at length between friends has gone the way of all the earth! That there has been a change in the manner of letter-writing is beyond question, but that the change has been a deterioration is more than doubtful. When Madame Scudéri wrote "The Grand Cyrus," nothing short of the most stately figures, the most elaborate style, and a long row of volumes would suffice for a dignified romance; to-day we have some very humble people, some very simple speech, and a single volume of moderate size for the story of "Adam Bede." Will any one say, therefore, that the novel has lost dignity, power, or reality? In these days friends no longer constitute themselves reporters and newsgatherers, as in the time when the news-letter, written over a cup of chocolate in some London coffee-house, was the principal means of communication between the metropolis and the provinces. Changed conditions involve changed methods and manners, but not necessarily worse ones. French women have a genius and a training for social life, for living together in a real and true way, from which women of the English-speaking race are, as a rule, debarred. Our strong and persistent sense of personality has certain fine rewards, but it costs a good deal on the side of free and intimate relationship with others. There are half a dozen groups of letters written by French women which may be said to fix the standard of this kind of writing; but those who know the France of to-day intimately declare that this art was never practiced with more skill and charm than at this moment.

However the case may be in France, it is certain that this century has been peculiarly rich in this kind of literature among English-speaking people, and some of the very best modern writing in our language has taken this form. When it comes to the question of literary quality, there is nothing in letter-writing, from the time of Howell down, more admirable than that which makes every bit and fragment from Thackeray's pen literature. In those estrays, to which he probably attached no value, and to which in many cases he certainly gave little time or thought, the touch of the master is in every line: that indefinable quality which forever differentiates writing from literature. This quality, which is personality plus the artistic power, is quite as likely to discover itself in the briefest note as

in the most elaborate work; indeed, the careless ease with which a man often writes to his friend is more favorable to free and unconscious expression of himself than the essay or the novel over which he broods and upon which he works month after month, perhaps year after year. The suspicion of toil is fatal to a work of art, for the essence of art is ease; and for this reason the letters of some writers are distinctly the best things they have given us. Unfortunately, even letter-writers do not always escape the temptation to write with an eye to the future, and to put one's best foot forward, instead of opening one's mind and heart without care or consciousness.

Mr. Lowell's letters¹ are not free from faults, but their faults spring from his conditions and temperament and not from proximity to a large and admiring audience. The letters are simple, frank, and often charmingly affectionate; they reveal the heart of the man, and perhaps their best service to us is the impression they convey that the man and his work were of a piece, and that the fine idealism of the poet was but the expression of what was most real and significant to the man. The self-consciousness of the young Lowell comes out very strongly if one reads his letters in connection with those of the young Walter Scott; but it was a self-consciousness inherited with the Puritan temperament rather than developed in the individual nature. The strong, quiet, easy relations of Scott to his time and world are very suggestive of a power which has so far eluded our grasp; a power which, could we grasp it, would make the production of great literature possible to us. Lowell had so many elements of greatness that one is often perplexed by the fact that, as a writer, with all his gifts, he somehow falls short of greatness. May it not be that all that stood between Lowell and those final stretches of achievement where the great immortal things are done was his self-consciousness? He was never quite free; he could never quite let himself go, so to speak, and let the elemental force sweep him wholly out of himself. But it is not probable that any one could have grown up in the New England of his boyhood and possessed this last gift of greatness. "I shall never be a poet," he wrote in 1865, "till I get out of the pulpit; and New England was all meeting-house when I was growing up." A generation later this unconsciousness had become possible, for Phillips Brooks possessed it in rare degree; it was the secret of that contagious quality which gave him such compelling power whenever he rose to speak.

Lowell's letters have the great charm of frankness—a charm possessed only by natures of a high order. One is constantly struck with his simplicity—that simplicity which is so often found in a nature at once strong and rich. Life consists, after all, in a very few things, and no one knows this so well as the man who has tried many things. There was in the heart of the old diplomatist the same hunger and thirst that were in the heart of the young poet. Leslie Stephen says of him: "He was one of those men of whom it might be safely said, not that they were unspoiled by popularity and flattery, but that it was inconceivable that they should be spoiled. He offered no assailable point to temptation of that kind. For it is singularly true of him, as I take it to be generally true of men of the really poetical temperament, that the child in him was never suppressed. He retained the most transparent simplicity to the end." And this comment is delightfully confirmed by an incident reported by the "Universal Eavesdropper": "Passing along the Edgeware Road with a friend two years ago, their eyes were attracted by a sign with this inscription: 'Hospital for Incurable Children.' Turning to his companion with that genial smile for which he is remarkable, Lowell said, quietly, 'There's where they'll send me one of these days.' He professed not to know of what Fountain of Youth he had drank, but he could hardly have been ignorant that there was such a fountain in his own nature. The "exhaustless fund of inexperience" which he said was somewhere about him was simply the richness of a nature which never reached its limits and flowed back upon itself with that silent but

¹ *Letters of James Russell Lowell*. Edited by Charles Eliot Norton. Harper & Brothers, New York. 2 Vols. \$8.