FIGHTERS OF TO-DAY.

Gen. O. O. Howard Answers the Criticism That the National Guard Are Fancy Soldiers.

AS GOOD TIMBER NOW AS EVER.

Patriotism Actuates Regimental Young Men as Much as Social and Spectacular Pleasures.

QUALITIES OF THE MILITARY MAN.

General Schofield Would be the Best Leader in Case of War Next to Sherman.

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

Is it true, as foreigners freely assert concerning us, that the regiments of our cities that make up our National Guard are composed, to a great extent, of those young men who would be incompetent to act in case of peril? It is further asserted that they chiefly join regiments for social purposes and for the recreation given them during their summer vacation in camp life and in city parades. Can this be so?

In answer to the first question, the writer, having had a wide experience, asserts without hesitation that the declaration is not fair. There are doubtless some young men who would not prove hardy enough in case of action or continued exposure such as a lively campaign would bring upon them, but some of the weakest in constitution are ardent and ambitious. Two regiments with which I am well acquainted, in the city of New York, are filled with vigorous and hearty youth, most of whom represent good American families of good social position, and they are as competent physically, mentally and morally as any of the volunteers, which, at the time of the War of the Rebellion, belonged to the same organization.

FANCY UNIFORMS IN '61.

I remember distinctly a beautiful New York regiment (having at that time a fancy uniform) that encamped not far from my own. The first few days of June, 1861, the Colonel sat with me on the first court-martial that he and I attended at Washington. He was afterward ordered with his regiment to General Patterson, in West Virginia, while mine went with other regiments to the first battle of Bull Run. Out of that regiment came majors, generals, brigadiers, colonels and officers of every grade, as they came from the regular army to officer new regiments and to have a large leavening influence in making up a vigorous army to meet and withstand the solid forces embraced in the Confederate army of Northern Virginia.

True, I have taken but two regiments as samples, but from observations of others there is no reason to believe the young men to be incompetent. Surely they are not so physically, in any regiment from New York, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Boston or other city whose ranks were carefully observed as they passed in review last Centennial Day, on Broadway, New York, and if any are incompetent physically, surely they are drinking men, and why should we suspect them to be morally inferior to their gallant fathers, who never hesitated to carry the rifle and the cartridge box at the time of the nation's greatest peril?

THE MILITIA AND RIOTS.

There is one allegation that has some show of truth in it—it is that city regiments are unfit to cope with city riots. This is often true, but not because young men composing these regiments are incompetent, either physically, morally or intellectually. This arises from personal relationship with those who make the trouble. Sometimes in these riots, the men in the ranks are constantly called upon to fire upon fathers, brothers, and members of their own households. Of course, such a state of things can always be remedied more or less in an emergency by calling for distant regiments, or better still by asking the President for regular troops, which, in our country, recruited as they are, have never faltered in their duty upon any field of action.

Indeed, it would be better, as our cities are growing in population, for the purpose of keeping in check the criminal class and the terrible Anarchists, who would break all law and destroy all human social organizations, to increase the regular forces of the United States and have a reasonable body of men in or near every large concentrated population. The very presence of two or three companies or batteries in perfect condition is a menace to corrupt combinations and a strong preventive of difficulties, which all good men deplore.

NOT ALL ENJOYMENT.

In regard to the second point, to wit: the assertion that young men chiefly join regiments for social enjoyments, the fascination for camp life and for city parades, we answer there is no harm whatever in such a motive, even if that motive be the chief one. From inquiry and personal knowledge, however, the enjoyment is not the bottom motive. There is a patriotic feeling in the heart of most young men; they read the history of their fathers with pride, and they wish as far as they can to fit themselves to take their places. Many wish to be promoted to non-commissioned officers or officers of different grades. They see in this present advancement of present esteem and a fitness for useful work in case of difficulty within or without our ports.

Many believe the exercise of drill and discipline healthful and invigorating, not too violent, like that of football, nor too exciting, like that of baseball, nor too absorbing of time, like that of boating. It appears to them the least expensive, and at the same time most useful of any social combinations found within their reach. Again, as to the fascination attached to camp life. To learn guard duty, to be willing to be drilled hours every day and to accomplish all that an army camp demands, will produce weariness, sometimes depression, but in the end develops strength and fortitude and fits those subjected to it for the actual camp life of a hard campaign.

HARDSHIPS OF PARADES.

With reference to city parades, I believe they are never coveted by soldiers. The arms and the shoulders often ache, and the limbs become weary; it is no idling operation, and there appears even to the young men hardly a quid pro quo for the long exposure and the extreme fatigue. The fascination is for the lookers-on, the crowds who cheer them and the ladies who compliment them, but it is veritable work, this call to make an extended city parade. These parades are endured, because it is part of the obligation into which the city regiments enter; it is duty—often a thankless but a patriotic duty.

Surely it is a beautiful object lesson to younger men who behold them, to see these fine regiments swinging the glorious old flag and tramping on to the sound of national airs; and many a veteran sheds tears as he beholds the new boys doing the work and making the show that he did and made but a few years before. Let not foreigners or pessimists discourage us in our work of developing a good, strong, patriotic, devoted National Guard. The cities, having more facilities to come together without detriment to business, will always lead in the race of national defense.

THE GREATEST FIGHTER.

I am asked a further question by my friend, who proposed that I should write in answer to the foregoing objections. It is this: In case of war, who would be the leader should General Sherman be no longer eligible? General Sherman is past 71 (71), and already upon the retired list of the army. There was upon him during the war a strain both mental and physical that was extraordinary, and to which few men have been subjected, yet, with the vigor of intellect as yet apparently undiminished, and his strength quite equal to an active campaign, he might be called again to the head of the armies of the United States in case of war with a first-class foreign power.

Next to him would naturally, among the living generals, come General J. M. Schofield, who is the present Commander in Chief of the Army. General Grant loved him, first, because he so cheerfully cooperated with Grant's own field operations, even to the stripping himself of needed forces. General Sherman trusted him, because he not only had the heart to help, but as Sherman always said, "an ability never disputed to make large combinations."

QUALITIES OF THE SOLDIER.

One more question—What are the real qualifications for a military life? They do not differ from the qualifications essential to any sort of outdoor work. We have over 600,000 men on our railroads; they are under the best possible discipline; never did an army obey with more promptitude than does the railway subordinate. I can conceive of no better fitting for all the hard work of an active campaign, than that of the great mass of railroad workingmen from conductors to switchmen, from the mechanics to the constructors and repairers of the track.

Notice again the vast armies of men working in the mines—coal, copper, iron, gold, silver, and so on. Their muscles have developed, they are capable of endurance, and they are well fitted for a hardy life, for such is their own. We found many regiments during the war made up of men who were accustomed to too great regularities in their eating and sleeping, always having had three meals a day and always sleeping in a bed at night. These men were not, if I may so speak, acclimated to their new life when they came into camp or devoted themselves to the activities of a military campaign. Many of them became ill and were particularly open to prevailing diseases; if anybody had the measles, they were the first to catch them; pneumonia and typhoid fever often tripped them up.

ACCUSTOMED TO IRREGULARITY.

But city men, who were accustomed to all sorts of irregularities as to sleeping and dieting, did much better. Western men, who in planting new farms had been called to endure all things in the way of privation, exposure and hardship, made up regiments of magnificent health and strength and fitness.

Even the bravery of our young men is called in question by some writers. There is no reason whatever for such an asseveration. Young men of different races, as a general rule, are about the same in this respect; cowards are an exception. I never have any fear of a regiment made up of young men, white or black, who are born and bred in this country; if their officers have reasonable courage and good sense, their men will go where they will lead. With regard to drunkenness and immorality charged against soldiers, I have seen no signs of it to any extent in our National Guard. There is some wine drinking at the festivals of the officer, but I do not think that there is any more of wine drinking among military men than among the other social organizations which I have chanced to observe.

DRUNK IN THE RANKS.

Drinking is a bad thing; it is always a hindrance in any company, regiment or brigade. A head clear of all confusion, able to take in the situation, give the proper commands and exact the proper obedience to orders, is much the best head for anything touching military life. Drunken leaders, drunken engineers, drunken artillerymen or drunken cavalrymen bring only confusion and loss. It is as necessary to be free from all the excitement and depression of strong drink in the army as elswhere.

In the regular army a few, a very few officers and soldiers, who occasionally become intoxicated, being seen by multitudes of our fellow-citizens, bring disgrace upon the uniform, but the majority are as well-behaved and as sober men as those are with whom they have to do in civil life. It is a great mistake to impute drunkenness or immorality to a man because he is an American soldier. We have tried hard to be rid of all such blots upon our escutcheon.

OLIVER OTIS HOWARD.

A TRAIN DISPATCHER'S STORY.

His Chief Made a Dangerous Lapse, but no Consequences Follow.

C. B. Wilson, who is now stationed at Chicago, has been a dispatcher for 24 years and is full of thrilling stories of train wrecks and hair-breadth escapes which have come under his personal observation. A few years ago he was assistant dispatcher on the Oregon Short Line at Halley, Idado, says a reporter of the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, who interviewed him. It was in the winter time, and there were three of the big rotary snow plows on the division for which provision had to be made, and which caused some complication. The head dispatcher one day made a "lapse;" that is, he gave a passenger train and one of the big rotaries right of way over the same piece of track, going in opposite directions.

"Of course when the telegraph operators at the two stations reported the rotary and passenger as having passed, we both knew that a mistake which would probably result in terrible loss of life had been made," said Mr. Wilson. "The old man never turned a hair. He sat at the instrument and waited, and never opened his mouth. We both knew the piece of road well. It was 30 miles long, and crooked as a ram's horn; the very worst piece on the division. There was but one little stretch of straight track, and that was only three miles long. It was the only place where it was possible for them to meet and not collide, and the chances were a thousand to one that they would come together head on at some other part of the track. The only evidence he gave of realizing the situation was his refusal to answer any operator except from the two towns at either end of the 'lapse.'

"We were both trying to figure out where the trains would meet, and for my part I did not dare to think of the result. Presently the instrument began to work—'Train No. 2 passed west.' The suspense was over. The old man got up from his chair, struck a match, lit a cigar, and turning to me said: 'You can take the chair now. I am going to bed.' It was the most perfect exhibition of nerve I ever saw. The two trains had met on the straight track."

BLUFFED BY A DUMMY.

Clever Scheme of an Old-Timer to Ward Off the Law Minions.

The Trinidad *Chronicle* relates an incident of Joe Simpson, an old-timer, who recently died in that city. Joe owned a piece of land near town, on which he one day found a corps of surveyors running a line. He promptly drove them off with a 44-caliber revolver. A warrant was sworn out for his arrest, but the Deputy Sheriff who attempted to serve it was held up by the furious frontiersman, his gun and belt emptied and himself sent back to town quicker than he came.

Anticipating a visit from a posse of men, Simpson took an old suit of clothes, stuffed it with grass, placed the dummy in a chair at the door of his cabin, surmounted the figure with a wide-brimmed sombrero and arranged a broom to give the innocent effigy the appearance of preparing to send a bullet through anyone who might approach. Simpson then hid in an adjacent cornfield and awaited developments. The posse finally arrived, and, catching sight of the figure in the doorway, held a hurried consultation and finally beat a retreat. Simpson was a highly amused spectator of the performance and the next day he came to town and gave himself up.

England's Richest Church Living.

Spare Moments.]

The richest living in the Church of England, excluding bishops, is, according to the clergy list, Bloxham Vicarage, Oxford, with an income of £7,470; population, 16; patron, Eton College. The vicar, however, states that the net income is only £205, and that the population numbers 1,538. The "Clergy Directory" gives the two richest as Nether Broughton, £4,250, and Hawarden, £3,404. If we include bishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury heads the list with an income of £15,000.

CHRISTMAS CHARITY.

Howard Fielding Tells How He Ran the Gauntlet at New York.

NOVEL METHODS OF BLACKMAIL.

How a Large Fund for Home Consumption Was Rapidly Depleted.

ASSAULTS FROM THE WORTHY POOR

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

At Christmas time the gentle angel of charity walks abroad in New York City as elsewhere, but her actions have not that beautiful spontaneity which characterizes them when she fills the stockings of the poor in little towns and cities that lag behind us in the march of progress. We know better here than to wait until our worthiness is discovered. When we want Christmas presents we go right out and drum them up, just as we drum up trade when it is dull.

I shall illustrate this peculiarity of the New York Christmas by a little story of myself. In it I appear as the gentle angel of charity aforesaid, a part for which my virtues admirably fit me, but my income does not. Maude and I had made up our minds what we should give those whom we wished to remember at this season, and we had carfully counted the cost. I had decided to buy these things early, partly because I could thus avoid the crowd of shoppers, but more because, by a strange combination of circumstances, I happened to have the money. We were carefully concealing from each other the nature of the gifts we should exchange. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil ther of."

TRIED USEFUL GIFTS.

In the last Christmas season we had resolved to give each other none but useful presents. The memory haunts me still. We both felt compelled, by considerations of economy and mutual affection, to use the presents, and to do it conspicuously, in each other's sight. Oh, the discomforts of the chair which Maude bought for me to rest in after my day's work, while I smoked one of the cigars from the box which was also a present from her. Perhaps the reader may object that cigars are articles of luxury, and not strictly useful. He would reconsider his objection if he could smoke one of the cigars. They were useful as a means of mental and moral discipline, but they did not savor of luxury. Maude said they were "10-centers." She does not know that in New York that means a cigar possessing ten different scents, none of which is the odor of tobacco. I shall not describe my gifts to her because I am ashamed of my ignorance. We shall not be too useful to each other this time.

But to return to my subject. On Thursday morning I put into my inside pocket exactly the sum of money necessary to buy the presents I had decided upon. I took this precau-

Reminded That it is Xmas.

tion to prevent my liberality from running away with me. I am of a nature so generous, and at the same time so timid, that I would rather give a beggar $10 than ask him to change a bill.

IT WAS A COSTLY SHAVE.

On my way down town I stopped into a barber's shop for a shave and a "shine." I noticed that Mr. Torquemada, the proprietor, hurried through the ordinary subjects of conversation while he eroded my countenance with his case-hardened thumb. He did not give to his discussion of the President's message that length and breadth of statesmanship which usually distinguishes his political utterances when I am in a hurry. I almost dared to hope that topics of discourse would run out before he had shaved me.

As he drew my private razor out of its case and proceeded to take the edge off it by a few clever strokes upon his strap, he remarked:

"The Boss Barbers' Association is going to give a Christmas bazaar. Subscriptions from our customers will be received up to noon to-day."

I ventured to hope that they had proved satisfactory so far.

"No, they haven't," he replied, in a voice which held me responsible for the shortcomings of all men; "and we're humping ourselves this morning to bring them up to the mark. I suppose you'll give us a couple of dollars to help us along?"

"Sorry," said I, "but I'm flat broke."

He coughed and glanced up at a sign on the wall, which read: "Gents without money not wanted." I hastened to assure him that I had sufficient funds to pay for my shave, and I reminded him that I had been his patron for some months.

"Yes," said he, "it's our old customers

Horsecar Rides Come High on Xmas.

we're looking to at this time. Come now; what's a couple of dollars to a gentleman like you?"

I hesitated.

A DOUBLE TORTURE.

"This razor seems to be dull," he continued; "guess I'll try another."

He selected one which I think had once been a handsaw, and had been worn down to its present size by hard and persistent use. With the easy grace of his profession he wreathed the fingers of his left hand in my hair, and passed his terrible weapon once across my cheek. I hastily glanced into the glass, and was gratified and surprised to find that I still had two sides to my face. He jerked my head back into position, and sawed off another section of my beard and its vicinity. I groaned.

"Would a dollar be of any use to your association?" I asked.

"Well, hardly," he replied, and descended upon my throat where my beard grows in wonderful and fantastic forms, necessitating the utmost care in its removal. I felt that if something didn't stop him, he would soon be scraping the anterior surface of my cervicle vertebræ.

"I might go a dollar and a half," said I.

"Better make it an even two," he remarked, and he went on sawing with calm and awful precision.

"Well, suppose we say two," I gasped, "and for the love of mercy put up that razor."

"It's a go," said Torquemada, and he finished shaving me with only the usual tortures.

ROBBED BY THE SHINER.

I went over into the corner and climbed into the chair of the bootblack, who also officiated as "brush." There was a box nailed to the wall and decorated with evergreen. It also bore a card on which were the words: "Please remember the boy." I remembered him. He always dropped my hat on the floor, and trailed my overcoat in the dust, and brushed me very hard along the back of my neck with his straw broom as stiff as wire. Nevertheless, he so worked upon my feelings while he was blacking my shoes, and appeared so determined to keep on blacking them for ever unless I yielded, that I put a half dollar into the box, and hoped in my heart that it would turn out to be lead.

A Xmas Shave is Usually Expensive.

This evergreen box in the years gone by used to appear only upon the actual holiday, but the custom is now running back on the trail of the magazines, which will before long issue their Christmas editions on the Fourth of July.

The conductor of the street car which I boarded was also interested in a Christmas bazaar. He secured subscriptions from two men on the platform, and when he tackled me I was ashamed not to give something. I have since suspected that the two benevolent passengers were stool pigeons.

BOTH ENDS WERE LOADED.

After I had satisfied the conductor's avarice, I was so angry with myself for doing so that I went forward to the front platform and lit a cigar for consolation. There was a blockade. The driver twisted his reins around the handle of the brake, exchanged a few profane defiances with the driver of a wagon ahead of him, in a perfunctory sort of way, and then, having discharged his duty to the company and the public, he turned upon me, and before I fully realized what he was about he had extorted $1 for the Car Drivers' Grand Christmas Soiree.

When I got down to City Hall Square, it occurred to me that I wanted to see a man who used to be a friend of mine, but is now a collection agent. He has an office about the size of a fish-hawk's nest, and twice as high up in the air. It happened that I was the only passenger in the elevator, which was in charge of a precocious youth, whose conversation dealt principally with sporting events. He said: "De Youthful Sports, which I am de President of de organization, is goin'ter give a combined Christmas tree an' sportin' exhibition, over in Jersey. De tickets cost one bone. Howmanyjerwant?"

"Thank you," said I; "not any."

He leaned toward me mysteriously and said: "Not if I give yer a tip on the dog fight? Sure t'ing; on the dead inside? It's jest like findin' money."

A YOUTHFUL BLACKMAILER.

"My young friend," I remarked, "that isn't exactly my idea of the proper way to celebrate Christmas."

He stopped the elevator between two floors and began to argue this point. Somebody on the tenth floor, who was evidently in a hurry to get down, rang the bell. The boy went on with his argument. Then the seventh and third floors rang simultaneously.

"It'll be the best show you ever see," began the boy, despite impatient calls from two more floors. "Dem dorgs"—at this point all the landings were heard from, and the elevator bell jangled in a way that set my nerves jumping. I ordered the boy to proceed; threatened to report him, and wound up by buying two tickets as my only refuge from lunacy.

I reflected with joy, as I escaped from the elevator, that my friend the lawyer would have no bazaars or other charitable enterprises on his hands. I found him engaged in a conversation with a tall, elderly man who had succeeded in getting my friend into a corner, and was slowly but surely talking him to death. It is an unusual thing for a lawyer to get caught this way. But in the process of greeting me, my friend escaped from his corner, and when I came to seat myself there was no other chair for me than the one he had been occupying. Then my friend excused himself, and left me to my fate. This is not an unusual thing for a lawyer.

ONCE MORE A VICTIM.

I listened for half an hour to the merits of a plan for distributing something (I forget what, but it was of no use to anybody) among some people whom I had never heard of. I contributed.

After this series of painful experiences I dropped into a little down-town club of which I am a member, in order to get a stimulant. The steward called my attention to a long document which looked like a petition to the Board of Aldermen. It was in reality a list of subscribers to a Christmas tribute to the steward. I recorded my name with a trembling hand.

By this time fully half my fund for Christmas presents was exhausted. I did my best with the other half, and I started home about 4 o'clock. On my way I met a gentleman who is much interested in a children's hospital. I am under some obligations to him, and when he mentioned that he was arranging for a Christmas tree for the children, I yielded without protest, and gave him a rocking horse which I had bought for my sister-in-law's little boy.

YIELDED UP EASILY.

I met several other charitable gentlemen. They were all interested in Christmas trees. My force of will was gone. It is the first step which is dangerous. If I had refused the barber I might have had courage to say no to the others—though I might not have had any jaw to say it with—but as it was I was helpless. I reached home without a cent, and bearing in my hands nothing but one tin soldier, which I had intended for my washerwoman's little boy. I told my story to Maude in that subdued and tearful voice which I employ in family confessions.

"Never mind, Howdy," said she, cheerfully, "here's an early Christmas present for your. It came by mail."

The shape of this article suggested a jewel box, and I had visions of scarf pins and diamond studs as I opened it. I found only a little pasteboard box, of which the cover was securely glued down. There was a hole in the top large enough to admit a coin. The address of a well-known church society was printed on the box, with this direction for its use:

"Drop a nickel in the slot and see a heathen saved." HOWARD FIELDING.

Impromptu Justice in Iowa.

Chicago Times.]

Des Moines Justices of the Peace are very accommodating. The other night Justice Johnson and three constables made a descent on a gambling-room and captured 38 gamblers engaged in the exciting games of faro, craps and draw-poker. As the catch was a little too numerous for successful transportation to the office of the magistrate, he determined to administer justice on the spot. He took up his position in the dealer's chair behind the green table and opened court. Nearly all pleaded guilty, and for over an hour the judge dealt out justice at $8 per deal. When he rose from the table the game had to be postponed on account of lack of funds to continue.

THE CHRISTMAS DAY.

What St. Paul Meant by Referring to the Fulness of the Time.

NO CENTURY BEFORE OR SINCE

Was So Suited to the Spread of the New Religion as the First.

THE WORLD RIPE FOR THE ADVENT

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

To-day is the third Sunday in Advent. To-morrow will be the 15th day of December. Christmas is near at hand. The windows of the stores are decked out with temptations for Christmas purchasers. The common attitude of these weeks is the attitude of expectation. In the almanac, in the street and in the church we are pointed forward. There is a general stir of preparation. We are anticipating an anniversary.

I want to take you back this morning, behind all the anniversaries, past the long procession of the centuries, into the year before Christmas. The world for ages had been keeping Advent. Winter after winter the snow fell upon the branches of the fir trees, but they never brushed it off to make Christmas trees out of them, for Christmas never came. But at last it was the year before Christmas. People began to look forward. There was a stir of preparation. And then, when everything was ready, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His son." That is what I ask you to think about. I want you to see how amazingly true that is, that Christ came just at the precise time when everything was most ready for His coming. There has never been such another era of opportunity in all the world's history. St. Paul did well to entitle it "The fulness of the time."

THE WORLD AS IT WAS.

There were three great nations in the civilized part of the world into which Christ came. They were the nations in whose language was written that inscription which was set up over Christ's head in the hour of the crisis of that great purpose for the sake of which He came. They were the Hebrews, the Romans, and the Greeks. In the history of each of these great nations it was the fulness of the time. Century by century, in a way wonderful to think about, Hebrew religion and Roman law, and Greek letters, had been making ready for Christ's coming. And now it was the fulness of the time.

Christ came, let us notice in the first place, in the midst of the expectations of Hebrew religion.

Nothing is plainer in history than that when Christ came the whole nation of the Jews was in an attitude of anticipation. They were expecting somebody. And the expected one was the Messiah, the Christ. The first question which came into the people's minds when John the Baptist stood preaching at the fords of Jordan was, "Is this the Christ?" "Art thou He that should come?" they asked the Prophet of Nazareth. Somebody was evidently coming. All Judea was awake with expectation. It is true, that when the Christ did come they did not recognize Him. They had formed a false idea of what manner of person He should be. They were almost as much mistaken about Him as those wild Indians are, who at this moment are keeping their strange and portentous Advent alone the borderlands of our Western settlements; keeping it with ghost dances and the sharpening of tomahawks and the cleaning of guns and expecting a Messiah who shall lead them in a great unconquerable army and sweep the whites into the Eastern sea.

LIKE THE INDIAN MESSIAH.

That was very like what the Jews were looking for. Caiaphas shared the hopes of Sitting Bull. The Jews were awaiting another Moses, or Joshua, or Solomon, a ruler or a fighter, with a sword in his hand or with a crown upon his head. They let the Christ pass unreverenced, dishonored, bearing His grievous burden of persecution to His death upon the cross. That is all true. Nevertheless the fact remains that they were looking in their blind way for the Christ, and with their faces turned in quite the opposite direction, were expecting Him to come. By and by, when a man did come, patterned after their low idea, probably the creature of it, the leader of a company of brigands, the "Son of a Star" by title and the Christ by claim, you know how such multitudes of credulous people followed him that the Roman power was shaken from end to end of the Jewish provinces by the shock of a dangerous insurrection. That shows what sort of spirit was in the air when Christ came. It was the fulness of the time. Everybody was aware of that.

Nothing is plainer in literature, than that in the pages of old authors, dead and gone centuries before, certain mysterious predictions stood written down, which inspired and justified this expectation. When Herod the King, called the scribes together and asked where Christ should be born, they knew very well what the question meant, and they knew exactly where to find the answer. They turned to a well-known page in the ancient prophecy and read what had, ages back, been written there, that Christ should be born in Bethlehem. Everybody knew the reason for that universal expectation of Christ's advent. It grew out of the pages of these old books. That Christ should come, that He should be born of a virgin, of the family of David, in the town of Bethlehem, before the scepter should depart from Judah, and while the Temple should be standing, and at a time in some sort corresponding to the actual date of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth—we can read to-day the words which they read. There they stand. Written at different times, and by different men, and wonderfully meeting here beside this cradle in Bethlehem, eighteen hundred and ninety years ago.

FULFILLED THE PROPHECIES.

The time came; the predictions were fulfilled; the time passed. Here are the mysterious prophecies; no other man in all history, save Jesus of Nazareth, has ever even pretended with any show of probability to have fulfilled them. And now the day has gone by, centuries since, when a fulfillment might have been possible. Even the Hebrews have long ago given up hope. Jesus of Nazareth did fulfill those prophecies. At the very moment when all was ready, at the fulness of the time, Christ came.

Christ came—and here is the second point—at a time when the whole civilized world was united by the two-fold bond of a common government and a common language. The government was the sovereignty of Rome; the language was the tongue of Greece. From the golden milestone in the forum roads reached out, like modern railways, into all parts of the known world. There had never before that century been a time when travel was anything like as expeditious, as safe, as easy. There has never since that century until these days in which we live been a condition of things like it. Before that all had been war. You could not go 100 miles without running into some kind of ambuscade.

After that the plague of war fell again upon the empire. Presently the barbarians came down and cast all civilization into chaos. In the Middle Ages every man carried his bow or his spear, and every stranger was an enemy. But somehow there was a pause in the fighting when Christ came. There was a power in the world so strong that every other power was held in check. There was a new spirit abroad.

A COSMOPOLITAN SPIRIT.

The old provincial lines had been battered down. Men looked out over a wider reach of country, and had wider thoughts than in any day till our own. It was the fulness of the time. It was the moment for the preaching of a religion which was meant not for a tribe, not for a province, not even for an empire, but for a world. There was some chance just then that such a religion would find disciples who could understand it. There was, at least, an opportunity such as had not been before, and was not for hundreds of years to be again, for such a religion to be preached. Over the broad Roman roads, under the strong protection of Roman law, apostles and missionaries could pass in safety with this message.

And there was a language in which they could speak that message and be understood. In every town throughout the Empire everybody who had any education was acquainted with Greek. This again was a unique condition of things. Here was a language particularly fitted for the expression of the most subtle thought, a language which the profoundest philosophers of the world had already made the vehicle of the profoundest thought, and a language which when a man knew he could go anywhere and find a congregation who could tell what he was talking about. There had been no such universal speech before, and there was not to be again for ages. Even to-day there is no language which takes the place which Greek held in the century when Christ was born. It was the fulness of the time.

THE MOST SEASONABLE OF ALL.

We begin to understand what that phrase means. We are in a position to know more about it even than St. Paul did who used it, because we can see both the past and the future which lay about the century when Christ came. If a man were to look all the world's history over searching for the ideally perfect time for the bringing in of such a religion as Christ came to teach, I cannot think of any other age which he could reasonably choose than just that in which Christ came.

For we have not yet said all that can be said to show how true it is that precisely at the moment "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." Christ came into a world which needed Him more than any age before had needed help from God. This is the third point which I ask you to consider. The Hebrews have an excellent proverb: "When the tale bricks is doubled, Moses comes." When all seems at the worst, and lost, God helps. And the world was beyond question in a bad way when Christ came. It had, as I said, the two-fold possession of a common government and a common language; but it had also a two-fold lack. The world into which Christ came nineteen centuries ago, had no religion and no morals. The religions of the world had fallen dead. Partly through evil living which dulled the spiritual sight of men, partly through the wide-spread conquest which broke the images of the gods of defeated provinces, and debased and discredited them in the estimation of their worshipers. The world had almost universally lost faith. Whatever survivals there was of the old religion of mankind stayed in its place by the aid, among the ignorant, of superstition, among the educated, of politics. Religion was useful, some thought, to ward off plagues and earthquakes. Religion was useful, others thought, to keep their fellow citizens in order. But

RELIGION WAS REALLY DEAD.

There has never, in any age, been anything approaching the universal belief which held the minds of men when Christ came. Even in Judea, where more faith lingered than could be found anywhere else under heaven, we know very well to what a pass religion had come. The religious people of Judea were led by scribes and Pharisees. Religion had become degraded into ritual. Hebrew religion crucified Christ. It was time that God should speak. It was time that Christ should come when Christ came.

And with religion, men had put away morality. The condition of things in Greece, in Rome, was too dreadful to tell of. Read the last part of the first chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans. The world was dead in trespasses and sins. Things had come to such a pass, such a sadness and despair had settled upon men, that life itself ceased to be desirable. It was the age of suicide. Into such a world, where upon all hands faith and morals were dead or dying, into an age without strength, without hope, remote from heaven, drawing near into perdition—into such a condition of things Christ came. It was the fulness of the time, and God sent forth His Son.

ST. PAUL WAS RIGHT.

You see what a true word St. Paul wrote when he said that. It was the hour toward which the prophecies pointed. It was the hour when all was ready which a common law and a common language could do for the spreading of the gospel. It was the hour when the world lay, as it seemed, in its last extremity—religion dead, morality dead, waiting for the coming. Then Christ came.

I can believe, when I understand this, that He who came was really, as the text says, God's Son. He for whom all this preparation was made, for whom the world was looking and whom the world was so sorely needing, was no such man as we are. He was man, indeed, but far more. His simple advent into such a world was in itself a marvel. In such an age, how came He to be such a man as He was, so different from all other men, of a temper so remote from everything about him, a man standing absolutely alone? How can there be such a man, among the peasants of Galilee, a man who was able to minister to the sick world, and make the kind of world out of it which we live in, and better still after us? The angels answer, singing their Christian message over the fields of Bethlehem. "Unto us is born a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." St. Paul answers, looking about him with clear sight in that strange age into which he came, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son."

GEORGE HODGES.

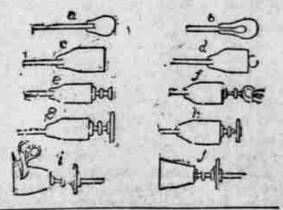
East and West.

Winter is on deck in the East, says the Corvallis, Ore., *Gazette*. The wires bring sorrowful tales of boys breaking through the ice and drowning. But is this not delightful summer weather we are having in the Willamette Valley? And to think only one more month and the winter season will be half past. We have every reason to be thankful that we are living in God's country.

MAKING A WINE GLASS.

An Insight Into One of the First Industries of Pittsburg.

Here, from Champlin's "Common Things," is a plain account of how a wine glass is made: The glassmaker takes out of the melting pot on the end of his blowing tube glass enough for one wine glass, as shown at a in the picture. He then blows through his tube and makes a bubble of glass at b, and, after rolling it on the marver, flattens its end with a wooden tool called a battledoor, as at c. A



lump of melted glass is next stuck on the flat end, as at d, and the workman gives it the form shown at e by rolling his blowing tube over the arm of his bench and shaping the hot glass with a kind of shears called "pucellas."

A little globe of glass is now fastened to the end of this and opened with the points of a tool, as at f, which makes it flat, as at g. A little hot glass is then taken up on the punty, by which it is stuck to the bottom of the wine glass, as at h, and the other end, to which the blowpipe is still fastened, is cut off across the dotted line. The top is then trimmed with the shears, as at i, and the glass is finally finished as at j. It is then knocked off from the punty and carried by a boy on a forked rod to an oven, where it is heated with many others and then allowed to cool slowly. This process tempers the glass.

VALUES OF PLANTS.

Shirley Dare Surprises Her Readers by Changing Her Pen.

ECONOMIES OF MODERN BOTANY

And Sense and Romance About a New England Pharmacologist.

AN ODD LETTER FROM AN OLD FRIEND

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

Ministers are allowed to change pulpits, why should not correspondents change pens? As the subject of this letter is not likely to see it I make no scruple in giving it to my readers.

"I wanted to tell you about my visit to your pharmacist among the hills, but there was no time when I got back to Boston, and since I came the tariff on Belfast linens, with questions rising from it, has engrossed my mind. What a fine thing it is to be an importer of fine goods these times? It gave me two hours' hunt to find the place, but what a glorious nooning it was among the splendors of your New England autumn! All the air was sun and spice, and the woods were painted in variations in amber and warm yellows that held the sun. The house itself charmed me, set in its nice grass plot and snug in its garden, cozy enough for Old England. The front entry has no smell of mildew or potatoes in the cellar, as small houses, and large ones too, sometimes, have in this part of the country; but scent of something dry and rich hung faintly and pleasantly about it. I like a house that smells warm and good when you enter it. I suppose the odor must have come from Miss Annie's mats and bunches of French lavender and bergamot, sent over by a friend, and woven and tied with ribbons in every pretty sort of way.

HOME OF A PHARMACOLOGIST.

"I pushed on for the pharmacien, and found him in his working room—the long, bare chamber in the ell, refited for its novel use. It attracted at a glance—the exceeding neatness of everything, the white walls, the roof cut by windows which gave a wide prospect of hilly chain and evergreens made by, the long work tables and shelves of new pine, whose scent, mingled with that of drugs and essences, ranged with laboratory implements and bottles of queer shapes; an old fashioned airtight stove, a Shaker chair and tip-table keeping company with a revolving bookshelf in the corner, and the sunshine from the broad casements drawing the eye to the slopes outside.

"It looked the haunt of a man who knew and enjoyed his work—made it his pleasure instead of his task. Doors opened across a tiny back entry to an equally sunny chamber, where better furnishing betrayed a feminine presence; everything quaint, bright and exceedingly tasteful, with great bunches of pine, berried cedar and autumn leaves setting off the shining old mahogany tables and shelves. Everything was the soul of comfort and strict taste and inviting at a glance. Before I got through with the afternoon I wished I were doomed to $1,200 a year, no business and a home like this in a slightly remodelled farmhouse.

THEY WERE TWIN ENTHUSIASTS.

"The pharmacist came forward from his work with that slight gesture of tossing back his hair and an impatient blaze of the eyes which recall the Rubinstein of years ago. He anticipated some idly curious interruption, but your note made that all right, and before I knew it we both were at the bench, Blanque lecturing on his favorite studies with enthusiasm, which found a delighted hearer.

"It is good to find a man who lives for something beyond mere money making and supporting his family, and who finds his labor yield results worth having for himself and others. There are so many pussy men, who dose and yawn through an art or science, and fancy they are devoting their lives to it, with nothing to show at the end. This one lives and thinks to the point. In the first place, he knows his subject, has a practical handling of it and makes it interesting to others.

"Chemistry is really a grand science, even to a common man like me. I forgive you that smile at the sentence. But why are we not allowed to learn something worth knowing about this world we live in at school, something beyond a few dozen break-jaw names, which is all I carry away with me from the laboratory at old Brown? If they had not battered my ears with dimethyl ethers of thymohydrequiquinone or cynnamates of cynnamyls and seventeen syllabled derivatives I, too, might have had glimpses of the curious, beautiful things which Blanque finds in his world.

SOME DELICATE PROCESSES.

"Blanque does not seem to exist to pull it to pieces like too many other chemists, but to study new combinations and the means of heightening the value of what exists. I saved scraps of his talk to tell you, but cannot write it all. There absolutely is such a thing as pelargonic acid. I thought you were guying me about it. Blanque has been trying at odd times to separate it from the skins of wild grapes, but it beats watchmaking for long drawn, delicate processes. To catch the fragrant spirit of rose geranium or vine blossom or to isolate—that is the right word, I believe, the fragrant principle of rue, for instance, from its bitterness needs an Ariel for laboratory assistant. You never would believe what powerful perfumes he separates from his bitter herbs or what aromatic camphor he distills from chrysanthemums—only a few drops in a tiny vial, but priceless on account of the difficulty of extracting it.

"By the way, your pharmacien tells me not to call him pharmacist, but pharmacologist—that is, one who studies the history and qualities of plants and drugs, not merely compounds them by rote. His only ambition for money would be to have an estate where he could grow quantities of plants for distillation to show what could be done with them. I had a very good lesson in economic botany the hour or so when we went walking out to Blue Hill. I felt we were discovering a new Indies along the roadside thickets.

PROSAIC AND DESPISED TREASURES.

"Do you know that the cotton grass which covered the country in the time of the Indians, now nearly disappeared, has a fiber invaluable for paper making if there only were enough of it? The dead leaves lying in heaps would tan a finer and more fragrant skin than Russia leather. The berries of the squaw root in a marshy spot have the taste and properties of coffee. The old field balsam, or life everlasting, of which the fields were full, yields a pleasant aromatic water which has virtues for lung diseases and the complexion. The common magnolia of the swamps has aromatic bark which cures fevers when quinine fails,