BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC.

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The Spanish flag—Skull and crossbones.

As a pugilist would say, it is easy to "land on" Spain in Cuba.

And even if the Spaniards did discover us, didn't we find out Spain?

Manila straw hats will be the correct wear this summer in the United States.

A woman's idea of a personal devil is a neighboring woman who talks about her.

The outcome of baseball games and buckwheat cakes usually depends upon the batter.

There is a rumor that the United States is getting ready to quote prices on Canaries.

It's a good deal of satisfaction, at any rate, to know that Columbus wasn't a Spaniard.

Spain must fight to prevent revolution and save the government at home. She is between the devil and the deep sea.

The fact that Bismarck smokes ten or twelve pipes a day is not evidence that the old man is in bad health; but it is going to be.

Judging from the number of surgeons and nurses who have volunteered a very doleful view must be taken of the probable effects of a Cuban campaign.

Sagasta says it would cast a stain on Spain's honor to sell Cuba. Dear sir, there are so many stains on the thing mentioned that an additional one couldn't be recognized with the aid of a microscope.

Count Goluchowsky, Austria's prime minister, who some months ago proposed a European alliance against America on trade lines, has been heard from again. The count has recently learned that it is not an easy think to combine Europe against America for any purpose, more especially when there is fighting to be done in consequence.

James Madison's remark to Harriet Martineau that the United States had been "useful in proving things before held impossible" is especially applicable to the present war with Spain. European countries can scarcely understand that the United States has no selfish objects in view in expelling Spain from Cuba, but their inability to understand if does not alter the fact.

The thirty-one women who want to marry General Cassius M. Clay have no respect for the divorce laws and are indifferent to the terrors of old age. One can have no respect for the thousands of women who want to go to war on horseback, though they are tough enough. But as to the courage of the sex there can be no doubt. There is nothing they do not dare to do until they are generously given the opportunity.

Joseph Pulitzer says he wants a war that can be practically ended in forty-eight hours. That is the kind of war we all want, if it happens to be impossible to end it before it is begun. But it is well to omit too enormous expectations. It takes time to get properly into a scrape as well as time to get out of it. Mr. Seward thought of that quite frequently during the four or five years that it took to end a struggle that he said would be over in ninety days.

According to government reports the mortality of farm animals, both from exposure and from other causes, has been below that of the preceding winter; of horses 2 per cent are reported as having died from disease, against 2.1 per cent the previous year; of cattle, a mortality of 1.3 per cent from winter exposure, and of 3.3 per cent from all causes is reported, as against 1.6 per cent from exposure and 3.5 per cent from all causes the preceding winter; of sheep the deaths from exposure amounted to 2.7 per cent, against 3.2 per cent the previous year, and to 5.3 per cent from all causes, against 5.5 per cent the previous year. While hog cholera has been more or less destructive, the total losses of swine have amounted only to 9.3 per cent, against 14.4 per cent the preceding year. With regard to farm animals in general the department correspondents report them in good condition as the result of the generally mild and dry winter and the abundance of feed. In California the winter has been a severe one, and its effect is shown just as markedly in the mortality of farm animals as in the poor condition of winter wheat.

The age of the circuit-rider is not so remote as it sometimes seems. There is now living in Massachusetts a distinguished Methodist clergyman whose first "appointment," sixty-eight years ago, carried him over a circuit sixty miles in length. He preached five sermons every week; for his first year's salary he received ten dollars, besides his board; and this was not in the distant West, but in the state of Maine, where, we may add,—thanks to the labors of just such devoted men,—there are now about twenty-five thousand Christians of his communion.

Fitzhugh Lee intimates, and there is considerable evidence pointing that way, that Weyler is responsible for the blowing up of the Maine. The fact that Weyler denies it is further proof that he is thus guilty; and while it will be well to remember the Maine it will likewise be well to remember Weyler.

The Spaniards darkly intimate that something has happened at Manila. The impression has prevailed in this country for several days that something happened there.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"ALLEVIATIONS OF WAR" SUNDAY'S SUBJECT.

From the Text, Psalms 27:3, as Follows: "Though War Should Rise Against Me, in This Will I Be Confident"—A Reunited Country the Blessing.

THE ring of battle-axes, and the clash of shields, and the tramp of armies, are heard all up and down the Old Testament; and you find godly soldiers like Moses and Joshua, and Caleb, and Gideon, and a dozen godly soldiers like Sennacherib, and Shalmaneser, and Nebuchadnezzar. The high priest would stand at the head of the army, and say: "Hear O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies, let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them!" and then the officers would give command to the troops, saying: "What man is there that hath built a new house and hath not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard and hath not eaten of it? Let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife and hath not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle and another man take her." Great armies marched and fought. In time of Moses and Joshua all the men were soldiers. When Israel came out of Egypt they were 600,000 fighting men. Abijah commanded 400,000. Jeroboam commanded 800,000 men, of whom 500,000 were slain in one battle. Some of these wars God approved, for they were for the rescue of oppressed nations, and some of them he denounced, but in all cases it was a judgment upon both victors and vanquished. David knew just what war was when he wrote in the text: "Though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident."

David is encouraging himself in stormy times, and before approaching battles administers to himself the consolatory. So today my theme is the "Alleviations of War." War is organized atrocity. It is the science of assassination. It is the convocation of all horrors. It is butchery wholesale. It is murder glorified. It is death on a throne of human skeletons. It is the coffin in ascendancy. It is diabolism at a game of skulls. But war is here, and it is time now to preach on its alleviations.

First, I find an alleviation in the fact that it has consolidated the north and the south. The long-continued strained relations. It is thirty-three years since our civil war closed, and the violences are all gone and the severities have been hushed. But ever and anon, in oration, in sermon, in newspaper editorial, in magazine article, on political stump, and in congressional hall, the old sectional difference has lifted its head; and for the first time within my memory, or the memory of any one who hears or reads these words, the north and the south are one. By a marvelous providence, the family that led in opposition to our government thirty years ago, is represented at the front in this present war. Nothing else could have done the work of unification so suddenly or so completely as this conflict. At Tampa, at Chattanooga, at Richmond, and in many other places the regiments are forming, and it will be side by side, Massachusetts and Alabama, New York and Georgia, Illinois and Louisiana, Maine and South Carolina, Northern and southern men will together charge the guns and rush upon the fortification and charge upon the enemy and shout the triumph. The voices of military officers who were under Sidney Johnson and Joseph Hooker will give the command on the same side. The old sectional grudge is forever dead. The name of Grant on the northern side and of Lee on the southern side will be exchanged for the names of Grant and Lee on the same side. The veterans in northern and southern homes and asylums are stretching their rheumatic limbs to see whether they can again keep step in a march, and are testing their eyesight to find whether they can again look along the gun-barrel to successfully take aim and fire. The old war cry of "On to Richmond!" and "On to Washington!" has become the war cry of "On to Havana!" "On to Porto Rico!" "On to the Philippine Islands!" The two old rusty swords that in other days clashed at Murfreesboro and South Mountain and Atlanta, are now lifted to strike down Hispanic abominations.

Another alleviation is the fact that in this war the might is on the side of the right. Again and again have liberty and justice and suffering humanity had the odds against them. It was so when Benhadad's Syrian hosts, who were in the wrong, at Aphek, came upon the small regiments of Israel, who were in the right, the Bible putting it in one of those graphic sentences for which the book is remarkable—"The children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids, but the Syrians filled the whole country." It was so in the awful defeat of the Lord's people at Gilboa and Megiddo. It was so recently when gallant and glorious Greece was in conflict with gigantic Mohammedanism, and the navies of Europe hovering about the Bosphorus were in practical protection of the Turkish Government, fresh from the slaughter of one hundred thousand Armenians. It was so when, in 1776, the thirteen colonies, with no war shipping and a few undrilled and poorly-clad soldiers, were brought into a contest with the mightiest navy of all the earth and an army that commanded the admiration of nations. It was so when Poland was crushed. It was so when Hungary went under. It has been so during all the struggles heretofore for Cuban independence. But now it is our powerful navy against a feeble group of incompetent ships, crawling across the Atlantic to meet our flotilla, which have enough guns to send them as completely under as when the Red Sea submerged Pharaoh's army. It is so in these times, when only a few thousand Spaniards at most can reach our hemisphere, and we go out to meet them with one hundred and twenty-five thousand armed men, to be backed up speedily with five hundred thousand more if needed. We do not have to ask for any miracle, but only a fair shot at the ships headed this way, and time enough to demolish them. This is one of the cases in the world's history where might and right are shoulder to shoulder.

Another alleviation is in the fact that such an atrocity as the destruction of two hundred and sixty-six lives in Havana harbor in time of peace cannot with impunity be wrought in this age of the world's civilization. The question as to who did that infernalism is too well settled to need any further discussion. But what a small crime it was compared with the systematic putting into their graves of hundreds of thousands of Cubans, or leaving them unburied for the buzzards to take care of! If Spain could destroy two hundred thousand men, women and children, the slaughter of two hundred and sixty-six people was not a very great undertaking. But this one last deed will result in the liberation of Cuba, and the driving of Spain from this hemisphere and the overthrow of that government, which will soon drop to pieces if it does not go down under bombardment of insulted nations.

There was danger that the long-continued oppression of our neighbors in Cuba might be continued from generation to generation without sufficient protest on our part and the pronounced execration of people on both sides of the Atlantic, but that bursting volcano of destruction in the harbor of Havana fired the nation and shocked the whole civilized world. All nations will learn that such an act cannot be repeated without the anathema of all Christendom. "As individual criminals must be punished for the public good, and we have for them courts of oyer and terminer, and penitentiaries, and electric chairs, and hangman's gallows, so governments committing high crimes against God and humanity must be scourged and hung up for the world's indignation. When in Spanish waters our battleship, looking after our commercial interests and intending nothing but quietude, was hurled into destruction and the men on board, without time to utter one word of prayer, were dashed into the eternal world, the doom of the reigning house of Spain was pronounced, in tones louder than the thunder which that night rolled out over the sea.

Another alleviation is the fact that we have a God to go to in behalf of all those of our countrymen who may be in especial exposure at the front, for we must admit the perils. It is no trifling thing for 100,000 young men to be put outside of home restraints and sometimes into evil companionship. Many of the brave of the earth are not the good of the earth. To be in the midst of those who have little or no regard for God or home; to hear their holy religion sometimes slurred at; to be placed under influences calculated to make one reckless; to have no Sabbath, except such Sabbath as in most encampments amounts to no Sabbath at all; to go out from homes where all sanitary laws are observed into surroundings where questions of health are never discussed; to invade climes where pestilence holds possession; to make long marches under blistering skies; to stand on deck and in the fields under fire, at the mercy of shot and shell—we must admit that those thus exposed need especial care, and to the Omnipresent God we have a right to commend them, and will commend them. Postal communication may be interrupted, and letters started from loved ones or homes may not arrive at the right destination, but however far away our loved ones may be from us, and however wide and deep the seas that separate us, we may hold communication with them via the throne of God.

A shipwrecked sailor was found floating on a raft near the coast of California. While in hospital he told his experience, and said that he had a companion on the same raft for some time. While that companion was dying of thirst he said to him: "George, where are you going?" and the dying sailor said: "I hope I am going to God." "If you do," said the rescued sailor, "will you ask him to send some water?" After the death of his companion, the survivor said, the rain came in torrents, and slaked his thirst and kept him alive until he was taken to safety. The survivor always thought it was in answer to the message he had sent to heaven asking for water. Thank God we may have direct and instantaneous communication with the Lord Almighty through Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, and in that faith we may secure the rescue of our imperiled kindred. Is not that a mighty alleviation?

Until this conflict is ended let us be much in prayer for our beloved country. Do not let us depend upon the friendship of foreign nations. Our hope is in God. Out of every misfortune he has brought this nation to a better, moral and financial condition, and so let us pray that he will lift us out of this valley of trouble unto a higher mountain of blessing.

It is a mystery that just as this country was recovering from a long season of hard times, so many of our industries should now be halted; that just as business men who thought they could see their way to pay their debts and build up more prosperous enterprises and endow their homes with more advantages should have to halt and wait until the perfidious oppressor of Cuba shall be turned back. But individual and national life is always clothed with mysteries, and we may make ourselves miserable by stabbing ourselves with sharp interrogation points, and plying the everlasting questions of "Why?" and "How?" and "What?" and "When?" While we must, of course, try to be intelligent on all public affairs, it is a glorious thing to do our duty, and then fully and confidently trust all in the hands of God, who has proved himself the friend of our country from the time when the Spanish government fitted out an expedition to discover it, to this time, when Spaniards would like to destroy it.

Morning, noon and night let us commend this beloved land to the care of a gracious God. That he answers prayer is so certain that your religion is an hallucination if he does not answer it. Pray that in reply to such supplication the farmers' boys may get home again in time to reap the harvest of next July; that our business men may return in time to prepare for a fall trade such as has never yet filled the stores and factories with customers, and that all the homes in this country now saddened by the departure of father or brother or son may months before the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays be full of joy at the arrival of those who will for the rest of their lives have stories to tell of double-quick march, and narrow escape, and charges up the parapets, and nights set on fire with bombardment, and our flag hauled up to places from which other flags were hauled down.

A storm such as had never swept the coast of England or aroused the ocean, swooped upon the Spanish Armada. Most of the ships soon went down under the sea, while others were driven helplessly along to be splintered on the coasts of England, Ireland, Scotland and Norway. Another Spanish Armada is crossing the Atlantic, and we are ready to meet them. The same God who destroyed the Armada in 1588 reigns in 1898. May He in His might, either through human arm or dumb element, defeat their squadron, and give victory to the old flag of Admiral Farragut and David Porter!

Yet what the world most wants is Christ, who is coming to take possession of all hearts, all homes, all nations; but the world blocks the wheels of his chariot. I would like to see this century, which is now almost wound up, find its peroration in some mighty overthrow of tyrannies and a mighty building up of liberty and justice. Almost all the centuries have ended with some stupendous event that transformed nations and changed the map of the world. It was so at the close of the fourteenth century; it was so at the close of the fifteenth century; it was so at the close of the sixteenth century; it was so at the close of the seventeenth century; it was so at the close of the eighteenth century. May it be more gloriously so at the close of the nineteenth century! "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Amen, and Amen.

COLONIES DESCRIBED.

One Bowl of Soup and Three Napkins for Six People.

Tolstoi colonies are the natural result of Tolstoi. They are increasing in Russia, which is and ever will be the laboratory of all the Utopias, and some notes which have recently been published of a Tolstoi settlement on the Black sea are interesting to the philosopher of the curious and the merry, says the Pall Mall Gazette. The Tolstoians, of course, live together, having constructed their own houses and their own furniture; there is nothing new in this; the tale has been told before.

What is remarkable is the arrangement of the mutual dining table in the Tolstoi table d'hote. The bowl of the community—a bowl of soup—is shared among six persons, each dipping into the same dish, but having the right of personal property in the matter of a wooden spoon and salt. Bread also is private to the individual. Thus the six consumers get a fair start and then they are off all together. But one would have thought this a fatal arrangement. Age, teeth and digestion are sadly unequal. What is there to prevent the venerable grandmother from being left hopelessly behind by Ivan the Terrible, her youthful grandson, who treats the whole course as a point-to-point race, and so shows forth the eternal inequality of things? It is added that there is a beautiful simplicity and decency in these repasts and that there are three napkins to each symposium. Thus we have six consumers to one bowl and three napkins to six consumers. But some will do well to avoid the table d-hote a la Tolstoi.

For Second Thought.

If ever, in the heat of future political excitements, any youthful citizen of our land should feel the temptation to resort to violence and appeal to arms, let such a one contemplate this terrible picture of the scene at the battle of the Crater, near Petersburg, toward the close of the civil war, as described by a confederate officer: After the first moment of panic, following the explosion of the mine, the southern soldiers, rallied and inflicted on the advancing federals a severe and bloody defeat. It was as gallant a charge as ever I saw. We recaptured all our works, driving the enemy out of the vast crater formed by the explosion, like a herd of frantic buffaloes. Then ensued such a scene as I hope never to see again. The crater was filled with a seething mass of men, hundreds and thousands of them, some firing back upon us, all struggling wildly to escape. Shattering volleys were fired into the thronged abyss till it became a veritable slaughter pen. The frantic mass heaved and struggled like demons. Hand-grenades were hurled down upon them, and as these exploded, you could see heads and arms and legs go up into the air! Our men at length sickened of the carnage and stopped. The federals lost that day more than four thousand men. They left the crater choked with dead. No attempt was made till long after to take the bodies out for burial. The earth was thrown upon them where they lay, covering the hideous sight from the face of heaven.

Apprehensive of Rivalry.

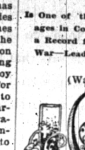
"I can see through the whole scheme in a minute," said the baseball magnate. "Everybody knows that one of the most interesting things on earth is a fight. It comes mighty close to being unprofessional." "What is the difficulty?" "Just as soon as we announce that we're not going to have any more disorder on the baseball grounds these congress people get together and try to attract attention to themselves!"—Washington Star.

Take time, and go apart for a season; withdraw into thyself, and discover the evolutions of thine own thought. Thou must take thy stand on principles, as perceived within thee. —Trinities and Sanctities.

CHAIRMAN J. A. T. HULL

HEAD OF MILITARY COMMITTEE IN HOUSE.

Is One of the Most Important Personages in Congress Just Now—Has Made a Record for Himself During the Civil War—Leader in Politics in Iowa.



(Washington Letter.)

CONGRESSMAN John A. T. Hull of Iowa, who, as chairman of the committee on military affairs, is looking after the army affairs in congress, is now serving his fourth term. At present the committee of which he is the head is one of the most important organizations in congress, and the Iowa statesman will be prominent until the Cuban question is settled definitely. Mr. Hull is the most picturesque member of the Iowa delegation. For the past decade he has been the center of the fiercest political battles in the state, and has come out of all of them victoriously. He is a ready and eloquent talker, ripe in experience, and one of the most popular men on the floor of the house. Mr. Hull is a good man to have at the head of the committee on military affairs. He has had no small experience in actual warfare. When the war broke out he enlisted in the Twenty-third Iowa infantry, and was promoted to a captaincy before he retired, which he did only after having received a desperate wound. He has been prominent in Iowa politics for twenty-five years, and was secretary of state in that commonwealth in 1878. In 1887 he was elected

CHAIRMAN HULL.

lieutenant governor. Mr. Hull is now 57 years old, strong, patriotic and able.

PHILATELISTS WIN A FIGHT.

They May Keep, Buy, or Sell Newspaper or Periodical Stamps.

The controversy between the government and the philatelists and stamp dealers as to whether newspaper and periodical stamps may be kept in collections and bought and sold was decided by United States Circuit Judge Lacombe.

The government asserted that no newspaper or periodical stamps had ever lawfully come into the possession of stamp collectors or dealers. The stamp collectors and dealers said that the postoffice department had offered the newspaper and periodical stamps for sale on several occasions. Judge Lacombe finds this assertion to be true, and in his decision says:

"In 1875, under the signature of the third assistant postmaster-general, a circular was issued stating that the department was prepared to furnish specimen sets of newspaper and periodical stamps at their face value, back to the issue of 1847.

"Now the government claims that these stamps were stolen, purloined, and embezzled, because some years after an order was issued to postmasters forbidding the sale of newspaper and periodical stamps. The claim is preposterous. The records show that more than 700 sets of these stamps have been sold openly to the public."—New York Sun.

ENGLAND'S WHEAT SUPPLY.

London Letter: From the accompanying diagram the position of the United Kingdom's wheat supply can be seen at a glance. The statistics upon which it is based are from the reports of the board of trade and the board of agriculture for 1897. Briefly summarized, they amount to this—that last year 73.5 per cent of the wheat and wheat flour requirements of the United Kingdom were obtained from over sea, only 26.5 per cent being grown in Great Britain. Of the imported supplies, it is noteworthy that only 6.3 per cent were grown in British colonies and possessions. The great bulk of the supplies, viz., 67.2 per cent, or more than two-thirds of Britain's

A STRIKING DIAGRAM.

whole requirements, was produced in foreign countries. From the United States Britain imported 43.9 per cent, from Russia 13.6 per cent, and from other foreign countries, 9.7 per cent.

Mush Girls Lost No Time.

That the name of the rose certainly would not affect its fragrance in Givensville, Idaho, has been demonstrated by the experience of the three Misses Mush, who went there from Centerville, Iowa, to teach school. The first Miss Mush married at the end of her first term, and her sister, who took her place, married in the middle of the following term. The third sister finished out this term, and then she, too, was joined in the holy bonds, and the strong past tense of mush in Givensville now is mush.

It requires a good-sized closet for some family skeletons.

How to Prepare Kneipp Coffee.—Take three heaping teaspoons full of ground Kneipp Malt Coffee for one quart of water). Boil the water add the Coffee, then let it boil slowly under cover at least five minutes. Take it off the fire, let it stand a few minutes to settle and pour it through a fine sieve into the coffee pot and it is ready to serve. Use cream and sugar to suit your taste. If milk is used instead of cream, it should be boiled first.

How to Use Kneipp Malt Coffee in addition to other Coffee.—For six cups of coffee (2 1-2 pints of water) take two heaping tablespoons full of ground Kneipp Malt Coffee and after boiling the same five minutes as above indicated, add two tablespoons full of ground coffeebeans, let it boil up for a few seconds longer, then let it settle about five minutes. This mixed coffee will settle slower than pure Kneipp Malt Coffee. Use cream and sugar or boiled milk to suit your taste.

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