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OBSERVATIONS.

WILLA SIBERT CATHER.

Schley's Accuser.

Mr. Edgar S. McClay who exploded a mine in the Navy department by his charges against Admiral Schley, seems to have followed the French editor's advice: "Say something bad enough about any one who is great, and tomorrow you will be as great as he is."

Certainly the public at large had never heard of Mr. McClay until he gathered together all the whispered gossip and covert charges against Schley and threw them in the face of the public. Mr. McClay's personal characteristics as told by a fellow journalist make him out a character stolen somewhere from the pages of Balzac. His life seems to have been a conflict between inclinations and ambitions; and that was the warfare the great novelist loved to chronicle.

McClay is the son of a clergyman and is about thirty-nine years old. He is under the average height, but of sturdy build. He is persistent and stubborn in character.

While at work on the first volume of his naval history, McClay was a reporter on the New York Tribune. At that time there were nine sons of clergymen on the Tribune; and McClay, like all of them, was fond of staying up in the morning after his work was done. But he at last decided that, as he had a life work ahead of him, he should practice economy. In order to divert his mind into another channel, he had a piano installed in his room; and there, instead of chafing about town with his colleagues, he would drum for hours at a time.

It was hard work for McClay to write. Words came to him slowly; and pen or pencil seemed always foreign to his hand. He wrote a small,

cramped, irregular hand, and was ever unpopular with the copy readers. When he was yet at Cornell he had conceived the idea of writing a naval history. He had a little money when he left the university, and he went abroad for data for the proposed work. He searched the libraries of France and Germany for points that would help him in this work.

One day McClay awakened in his absorbing pursuit to find himself in the interior of Germany with just enough money to pay his passage to New York. He had three days in which to get the steamer, and many miles to cover. How to live without eating for those three days, was a question; how to get to the coast was another. He stowed himself away on a boat, loaded with unroasted coffee, going down the Rhine. He cut holes in the coffee bags and lived on the unroasted beans till he reached sea board.

But in spite of his three days' fast, McClay had developed a taste for German cooking; and while he was on the staff of the Tribune he always patronized a little German restaurant around the corner. On the continent he had formed frugal habits, and he dined often on beer and rye bread. He saved what he could from his salary by cutting himself off from his colleagues, and by allowing himself only the bare necessities of life. His naval history was all that mattered much to him; he believed it to be worth every effort and sacrifice, as the libraries of America or Europe contained nothing of the kind worth mentioning.

In '94 McClay went from the Tribune to the Sun. On the staff of the latter he acted as reporter for the navy yard. At this time he was at work on the second volume of his history. He began to doubt his ability to write it even in a readable style. He took the first volume to several of his old friends on the Tribune, and they read it over and pronounced it well worth while. This gave him courage to take it up again with new vigor. A short time ago McClay was given a clerical position in the navy yard, which he has since held.

So far as Admiral Schley is concerned, this so called expose is the most fortunate thing that could have happened to him. The whispered charges against him in Washington for the last two years must have slain his self-respect altogether, had he heard them. The court of inquiry granted him will give him an opportunity to silence gossip by one means or another. If he cannot dispose of McClay's charges, he can at least give his own motives the best possible presentation; and even public disgrace would be less objectionable than the social slights and thrusts that have been inflicted upon him.

The actual wording of McClay's charge is as follows, the extracts being taken from various parts of the history:

"Schley, on May 28, 1898, sullied the brightest of American mottoes by penning:

'Much to be regretted, cannot obey orders,' and turned in caitiff flight from the danger spot toward which duty, honor and the whole American people were most earnestly urging him.

"Viewed in whatever light it may be, the foregoing dispatch cannot be characterized otherwise than as being, without exception, the most humiliating, cowardly and lamentable report ever penned by an American naval officer."

As to the reconnaissance of Santiago, Historian McClay says:

"This timid and nerveless attack on Cervera's ships is the more disappointing when we remember the elaborate and brave preparations Schley had made to 'get at the enemy' in earnest.

"Schley's farcical blockade cannot be described otherwise than as willful disobedience of orders."

As to the "loop" of the Brooklyn, McClay comments as follows:

"Schley hastily ordered the helm about. 'But that will carry us into the Texas,' said the officer. 'Let the Texas take care of herself,' was the heartless reply; and the shameful spectacle of an American war ship, supported by a force superior to the enemy's—a war ship whose commander had expended such vast quantities of ammunition on target practice in the presence of a fashionable hotel at Hampton Roads in order to meet a worthy foe—deliberately turning tail and running away was presented.

"Cervera nobly threw down the gauntlet. Schley cravenly declined to pick it up."

A Tragedy of Environment.

The tragedy of an unfortunate environment was never more strongly exemplified than in the life of the late Dowager Empress of Germany.

Probably no woman in Europe was ever more cordially disliked, and certainly no woman ever died anywhere so bereft of human affections. Yet Auguste Victoria possessed nearly all those qualities which made her mother happy, beloved, and a great sovereign. The difference was that one lived in England and ruled an empire, and the other lived in Germany and sat for nearly fifty years upon the steps of a throne.

When Auguste Victoria married the crown prince Frederick at seventeen, she was almost as popular in England as her mother had been as a young queen. Her physical resemblance to her mother was remarkable. She had either inherited, or acquired by association, Victoria's passion for politics, her policy of speaking out her mind, her intellectual activity, and her parsimonious frugality.

Had she remained in England there is no reason why she might not have

retained the devotion of the English people; but, as the German Chancellor said, views that were safe enough in a compact and settled kingdom like England were heresy in unformed Prussia.

Almost immediately upon her arrival in Germany she contracted the relentless hatred of the two greatest powers in the German Empire: Bismarck and the Emperor William. She never succeeded in diminishing it; and there is good reason to believe that she never tried.

One thing has been particularly marked about every ruler of the Hanovarian house; they were never known to modify in large or small degree the personality that they happened to be born with. He that was unjust continued to be unjust; still and he that was righteous was righteous still. Having once put their hand to any sort of plow, they never turned back.

Possibly it was this sublime stubbornness more than any other one quality that endeared their foreign monarch to the English people. George the Third had perhaps a better opportunity to exhibit this trait of the Guelph character than any of his successors; but his son was as persistent in the paths of folly as his father was in the paths of difficult and undiscriminating virtue, and he gambled with the same unreasoning obstinacy with which his father prosecuted the colonial wars.

Having declared herself a Democrat and stated her views on political economy when she first went into Germany, Auguste never retracted. Through the storm of bitterness and hatred that followed her year after year and even to the schloss where she went to die, she bore herself with a certain grim satisfaction. Any sort of material loss was easier for a Guelph to hear than a concession of opinion.

Remarkably well educated herself, she sought to procure for the women of Prussia the same privilege. She endowed scholarships for women in several of the universities and openly advocated the principles of John Stuart Mill.

"The English Woman," said Bismarck, "is not only a rights-of-man woman, but a rights-of-woman woman, which is worse. It is red revolution enthroned in Berlin, it is treason crowned." The Chancellor held a heated interview with the Princess in which he declared to her that for the best interests of her Prussian subjects it was absolutely necessary that she break off her correspondence with the English philosopher, whose friend and pupil she had been for years.

Germany is essentially a domestic nation, and the nation which takes the liberty to interfere with the most personal matters in the lives of its rulers. Irritated by their petty criticisms on trivial matters, the Princess once called her new subjects "a na-