

garment with rosaries, crucifixes and other sacred emblems. Such scenes were witnessed for five weeks from sunrise to sunset. It is reported that the season has been unusually profitable for the exchequers of both the cathedral and the pope.

In the December number of the *North American Review* Rear Admiral Luce, U. S. N., declaims upon "The Benefits of War". He regards it as a potent agency of human progress and without which our present state of civilization would have been impossible. It is a great factor in the formation of a nation, the shaping of a people's destiny, and the spreading of a civilization. The sword has ever preceded the banner of the cross, while commerce owes its very existence to the military arm of the people it represents. War was the only means of solving the question of the abolition of slavery. The science and art of war has never been so carefully studied as at the present time. It is to this state of preparation that we owe the peace of Europe to day.

Practical America should not forget that war is a calamity that may overtake the most peaceful of nations and that insurance against war by preparation for it is, of all methods, the most business-like, the most humane, and the most in accord with the teachings of the Christian religion.

It was not so very long ago that R. Kipling was saying some pretty mean things about America and the Americans. But now news comes that he has succumbed to the charms of a beautiful New York girl, Miss Balestier, who is at present in London. It is amusing to note the press comments upon the news. One paper calls it the irony of fate, and says that young Kipling either never meant what he said about us Yankees or has hastily repented of them. Another says that he will find out that matrimony is "another story," sure enough. Yet another calls the proposed marriage an apology, saying that the whirligig of time thus brings its revenge.

Carmen Sylvia is not the only poet born near the steps of a throne. According to the press reports, the Grand Duke Constantine of Russia, cousin of the czar, has recently published a book of poems. They have been translated into German by Julius Grosse and have been highly praised by the critics. The lines are rather unpretentious yet they show a depth of feeling and a way of looking at things quite foreign to one of his rank and station. The melancholy and pessimistic spirit that prevades them would seem to suggest that life under the shadow of the "white throne" is not as enticing and self-satisfying as poetic imaginations are wont to picture it.

It is announced that William Dean Howells will shortly retire from the editorship of *Harper's Magazine* and accept a similar position upon the *Cosmopolitan*.

CURRENT COMMENT.

There is one ruler in the nineteenth century who will go down in history as a capricious tyrant. That is the present czar of all the Russias. Without exception there is no more exacting and unreasonable autocrat over any nation to-day than he. His will is more than law. It is religion. As his will is, so the church goes, so the adherents of the church do. Witness how the English wife of one of the royal princes was forced to change her religion to the Greek faith, so-called. This mighty autocrat is the state far more really than Louis XIV of France ever thought of being. With an iron hand

he rules political affairs of his nation. His government officers hardly dare give council in opposition to what his wishes may be. But the czar's will governs not alone the political affairs of the empire. The private actions and affairs not only of those in high ranks, but even of the common people, are none too petty to be subject to his capricious temper. The Siberian exile system is a dreadful living reminder of this. There comes now the report of his selfish, inhuman tyranny in connection with the starving peasants of the drouth-stricken regions. It seems that some of the army officers joined together and agreed to surrender their pay for a time to the peasants. The czar not only refused to allow this generosity, but felt that his dignity was offended. He desires the reports of famine to be suppressed because he feels that they are reflections upon himself as an autocrat. The czar insists that there is no famine, but only a partial failure of crops. This he says in the face of circumstantial and reliable evidence that the world has received constantly for the last few months. Such an outrageous action on the part of the czar is worthy of an autocrat who lives but for himself. How terrible a prostitution of the energy and fruitfulness of so large a part of the population and surface of the world is this! It is the glaring anomaly of the nineteenth century.

Jay Gould has "lots of money and lots of railroad stock," but he cannot get rid of the cranks, nevertheless. One persistent gentleman of that persuasion has written repeatedly demanding one thousand dollars. His threatening demands for this modest sum were signed A. B. 33. So far there is no report that Jay Gould has waxed generous and acceded to A. B. 33's demand. This many millionaire, at least, is not that sort of a person. Another crank desiring money from Gould has just lately made his debut and his exit. While not so modest in the amount he wanted, he was milder in his asking. He was only a grocer's clerk, but his ideas and aspirations were great. He wanted Jay Gould to co-operate with him in a scheme he had of building an elevated railway in St. Louis. He casually remarked that Gould was sure to advance the money needed, which was only \$15,000,000. He added, moreover, that he was willing to marry Mr. Gould's daughter Helen whose consent he felt confident of obtaining. This erratic man was taken to the police station and examined. The doctor found him hopelessly insane and he was committed to the asylum. It is a little surprising how this craze for a millionaire's money is bringing to notice so many hopelessly insane people. It must be that New York is full of them ready to come forth on a moment's notice. The notice seems to have been largely received of late. The cranks seem likely to find, as other people before them have found, that the money of millionaires is held with never-tiring grip.

Whether General Booth has found the way out of "darkest England" is yet to be seen. A loud protest, one not unfamiliar to American ears, has lately arisen. General Booth in working out his plan, has set those who came to army quarters for relief at work cutting wood. Now it seems that in London there are a large number of men engaged in this same business. So large is the outfit by the army workers that the business of these men is being ruined. At least they claim this. They cannot complain that prices are being lowered for General Booth expressly declared in his book that he would not lower prices when he came into competition with other laborers. This complaint that the wood-cutters of London make is familiar to Americans in connection with the convict lease system. Here the problem presented