

vigor of the muscles from which youth has departed forever. Better were it that we rest content with the laurels already won, leaving the rising generation to penetrate into the deeper recesses, and bring forth the yet undiscovered treasures."

Occasionally simple refreshments were passed,—lemonade, and cakes ornamented with sugar hammer and pick.

Finally came the ladies' turn to receive their gifts. They were escorted to the table, where the presents lay heaped up. Each one being disguised, the lady selected any shape that struck her fancy, and removed the wrappings to find some exquisite article *de vertu*. The ladies were not required, as were the gentlemen, to address their thanks to the assembled company. Perhaps they thought that if we once got the floor the house would never be brought to order again. We did our best to appear grateful, casting thankful looks right and left.

A touching tribute was paid to the memory of their fellow-workers, who, after years of toil, side by side, had since the last Christmas-tide cast away their implements, and gone beyond those walls which, once scaled, are never more repassed.

The *grande finale* was the mimic torch-light procession through the galleries of the

"Mine." Adjoining the Society's rooms is a concert-hall, capable of accommodating three or four thousand persons. Its Egyptian darkness on that night was but little relieved, as the company, with wee Christmas candles in hand, wound round and round this immense space, the flittering fire-fly light of the tiny candles producing a drolly weird effect.

What else could be done? The night was far spent; so a wag suggested, for variety, that we should all go home. With deferential politeness the cavaliers pressed their lips upon the ladies' hands, thanked them for having graced the evening with their presence, and wished that they might be oftener among them. Why do they not invite them, then? One can hardly tell where the fault lies that the sexes are so much divided in their amusements. The German gentleman professes to like the society of ladies, but as he rarely seeks it, it would follow that he regards the time passed with them as in a measure wasted.

But I do not propose to write a treatise upon the condition of woman in Germany. It would be ungenerous and ungrateful on my part to pass any censures upon a people who have always been kind to me as a stranger, and have given me an evening's entertainment which I shall all my life remember with delight.

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

CHRISTMAS.

To the one hundred thousand families into which this number of SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY will go, we heartily wish A MERRY AND A HAPPY CHRISTMAS.

We pity the man who can find nothing in this holiday but an occasion of social merry-making, and the bestowal and interchange of gifts, and who fails to realize that it commemorates the beginning and the source of more blessings than he can count. The hat he wears, the coat that covers him with comfort and comeliness, the house that shelters him, the culture that gives him personal and social value, the books that fill his library and enrich his leisure, the institutions that organize his privileges in church and State and society, the pictures that adorn the walls of his dwelling, the gentleness of character and the harmony of social relations that make life so sweet and safe, in contrast with the conditions of savage existence, and even the quality

of the air he breathes—for climate is modified by the changes wrought through Christian civilization—are the result of the wonderful life that, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, drew its first breath in a stable, while the great star looked on, and the angels tunefully told of God's good-will to men. The life that began then and there became the way to happy immortality and heaven. The leader then born—himself perfection—took his place at the front of progress; and every excellence achieved by individuals and nations has been the result of a faithful following in his shining footsteps.

What are we, in all that is admirable and desirable in character and condition, that is not directly traceable to the manger of Bethlehem? The being introduced to an earthly existence there brought with him the means for the transformation and redemption of a race. The best civilization the world has ever seen was founded upon the principles of the religion which he

taught. All institutions have been good just in the proportion in which they have incorporated his spirit and his precepts. The noblest inspirations of art, in cathedrals and pictures and statuary, have been drawn from him. In ten thousand ways he is the fountain of the world's life; and those who contemn his person and his mission must do it dissuaded by the blessings which he bears to them during every moment of their lives.

Let the children wish each other "A merry Christmas;" and, in the gifts that come to them, realize a pleasure which no other day of all the year can bestow. They are young, and can know little more than the simple fact that their hands are full of good because Jesus Christ was born. But with us, who are older, the day should be one of profound gratitude and of sweet and solemn pleasure. We commemorate the birthday of a personal friend, or of a public benefactor, with gay festivities; but the birthday of the Divine Redeemer of a race calls for emotions deeper than merriment, and rites more dignified and significant than the eating of a dinner.

"A merry Christmas!" then, to the children, and a deeply happy and grateful Christmas to all!

THE EUROPEAN OUTLOOK.

In that month of all the year that has been specially consecrated, by tradition and religious observance, to the birthday of the Prince of Peace, the world is this year compelled to look forth upon a prospect of war, unparalleled in magnitude and uncertain in its course and conclusion. The Franco-Prussian contest still rages, and not only engenders its own woes and crimes, but embitters the new conflict now threatened in the Eastern countries of Europe. Should war actually break out between England and Russia, it would scarcely fail to become general throughout Europe, and, by so doing, materially to change its original shape and tendency. It would directly become involved with the war now raging in France; for, of necessity, England would then become the ally of France, as she was in the Crimean war; while Russia would ally herself with Germany. Nor could this struggle long continue without the result foreshadowed by Lord Clarendon in his secret despatch to Sir Hamilton Seymour, in March, 1853. The English minister, then holding the same place and the same sentiments that Lord Granville now holds, said, that "no great question can be agitated in the East without becoming a source of discord in the West; and every great question in the West will assume a revolutionary character, and embrace a revision of the entire social system." And we have the authority of no less a person than Count Bismarck that such revisions can only be accomplished by "blood and iron"—a remark which he has been illustrating, on a grand scale, since the first of August last.

It may be, however, that a general European war is not so imminent as many imagine. If the demands of Gortschakoff for a revision of the treaty of Paris are

persisted in, and if diplomacy cannot settle the matter, war is certain to follow,—but it may not be for months yet. It is probable, however, that, if the Franco-Prussian war does not soon close, this fact alone will compel hostilities between England and Russia; for in no way, except by war, can England and Austria make sure of checking the progress of Russia in Turkey. As "England's distress is Ireland's opportunity," so the humiliation of France is the opportunity of Russia. If the Czar really means to carry out the policy of his father Nicholas, and establish himself as the political head of the fifteen million Christians now under the Sultan's government, he can do so now with very little opposition, if England does not threaten war. He will not need the active co-operation of his kinsman, the King of Prussia, nor will he fear the military force of Austria and Turkey. England alone has the power to thwart him, either by actual war, or by such a menace of it as will persuade him that diplomacy is his best resort. The maintenance of general peace in Europe depends, therefore, to-day upon the firmness of Russia in pushing forward, and the resolution with which England opposes.

The immediate cause of quarrel is what is known as "the neutralization of the Black Sea." This phrase came into general use at the time of the treaty of Paris, in March and April, 1856, but the fact implied had existed by treaty ever since June, 1841. In that month a treaty was made between the five great powers of Europe—England, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia—by which the Sultan was allowed to exclude from the entrance of the Black Sea all ships-of-war. He might invite them to enter, but he was at liberty to exclude them. During the Crimean war Gortschakoff, now the Russian prime minister, but then ambassador at Vienna, proposed, as one condition of peace, that the Czar and the Sultan should both be allowed to maintain war vessels in the Euxine,—the number to be decided upon by the two powers between themselves,—while all other war vessels should be excluded. This, of course, was refused by the other powers, and the eleventh article of the Paris treaty, taken in connection with a special convention on the subject, fixed the number of war vessels of Russia and Turkey in the Black Sea at ten each, for coast service. All other vessels-of-war, of any nation, were to be excluded. It is this stipulation of 1856 that Russia now maintains the right to disregard. The answer made by Lord Granville is the obvious one,—that conditions imposed by a Congress of powers cannot be set aside at the will of a single nation. It is our secession movement over again,—Russia claiming the right to secede from the Paris agreement, just as South Carolina seceded from the Federal Union. In itself, however, the Russian demand for a revision of the treaty is not an unfair one; and it reopens the old question, whether the Western powers of Europe will maintain the Turks in possession of their decaying empire.

In his remarkable conference with Sir Hamilton Seymour in 1853, the Czar Nicholas asserted that it

was not for the interest of Europe that the "Sick man" of Turkey should continue there. "The Turkish Empire," he said, "is to be tolerated,—not reconstructed if it falls in pieces." England then thought otherwise; and so she does now. There is no point of her foreign policy so well established, none which she is so little likely to yield as this, and hence the danger of war now as in 1854. It might then have been averted but for the intrigues of Louis Napoleon, who wanted to strengthen his then recent usurpation by an alliance with England against Russia; it might now be averted, but for the ruin which Louis Napoleon has finally brought upon France. If that great nation is allowed to remain under the chastisement of Prussia, war between England and Russia, to be followed by a general European war, seems inevitable. Of this the English have gradually become aware, and the whole weight of that nation is now throwing itself, to some purpose, in favor of an armistice in France. And thus the Eastern menace of war may bring about peace in the West of Europe. This is the gleam of hope in the stormy sky of this sad December.

There is, however, a far better hope in the results of the conflict now raging. The basis of peace proposed by Bismarck—the cession of territory—can hardly be accepted by France. If forced upon her now, she will exact vengeance for it hereafter, when her turn comes. But the basis of peace suggested by Senator Sumner—the general disarmament of the European nations—is timely, practical, and of immense value to civilization. In the demonstration which Russia is now making, the shrewd ministers of the Czar have several objects in view; but one of them, no doubt, is such a general disarmament. And if a peace congress of the European powers should assemble to consider the propositions of Russia, we doubt not that one of them would look to the reduction of the standing armies. For such a result the way is now open. The French standing army is destroyed; that of Austria can with difficulty be supported from her bankrupt treasury; that of Prussia will no longer be needed, nor will the people tolerate the burden of it much longer. If Russia, then, comes forward and offers to disband half a million of soldiers, a European peace may yet be possible on the condition of a universal disarmament. This is the most hopeful view that can be taken of the present European complication.

The dethroned Emperor of France is cherishing the hope that he may be recalled to Paris when peace is declared, and be allowed to rebuild the throne of his son, if not his own. Probably there are many Germans and a few Frenchmen who believe such a restoration possible, but we think that they cherish a delusion. The republic may not endure; but it is not likely to be succeeded by a Bonaparte empire; so much seems to have been made sure by the events of the war. The virtual union of Germany under a single government is another of its good results. Indirectly, the deposition of the Pope as temporal sove-

reign has been caused by the war, the good effects of which have, so far, greatly outweighed its evils. A war between England and Russia would probably drive the Turk out of Europe and liberalize the whole political system of the Old World. The cause of the people in Europe is now in such a posture that it must advance by whatever takes place. It has had already some signal triumphs in the year 1870, and appears destined to other successes in 1871. But its hope now is in peace rather than in war, and the American people, as its most powerful representative, ought to offer their prayers and exert their influence for the restoration and continuance of peace.

WOMEN AND WINE.

WOMAN has never been associated with wine without disgrace and disaster. The toast and the bacchanal that, with musical alliteration, couple these two words, spring from the hot lips of sensuality, and are burdened with shame. A man who can sing of wine and women in the same breath, is one whose presence is disgrace, and whose touch is pollution. A man who can forget mother and sister, or wife and daughter, and wantonly engage in a revel in which the name of woman is invoked to heighten the pleasures of the intoxicating cup, is, beyond controversy and without mitigation, a beast. "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?" Ay, cakes and ale, if you will, but let it be cakes and ale. Let not the name by which we call the pure and precious ones at home be brought in to illuminate a degrading feast.

Of the worst foes that woman has ever had to encounter, wine stands at the head. The appetite for strong drink in man has spoiled the lives of more women—ruined more hopes for them, scattered more fortunes for them, brought to them more shame, sorrow, and hardship—than any other evil that lives. The country numbers tens of thousands—nay, hundreds of thousands—of women who are widows to-day, and sit in hopeless weeds, because their husbands have been slain by strong drink. There are hundreds of thousands of homes, scattered all over the land, in which women live lives of torture, going through all the changes of suffering that lie between the extremes of fear and despair, because those whom they love, love wine better than they do the women they have sworn to love. There are women by thousands who dread to hear at the door the step that once thrilled them with pleasure, because that step has learned to reel under the influence of the seductive poison. There are women groaning with pain, while we write these words, from bruises and brutalities inflicted by husbands made mad by drink. There can be no exaggeration in any statement made in regard to this matter, because no human imagination can create anything worse than the truth, and no pen is capable of portraying the truth. The sorrows and the horrors of a wife with a drunken husband, or a mother with a drunken son, are as near the realization of hell as can

be reached in this world, at least. The shame, the indignation, the sorrow, the sense of disgrace for herself and her children, the poverty,—and not unfrequently the beggary,—the fear and the fact of violence, the lingering, life-long struggle and despair of countless women with drunken husbands, are enough to make all women curse wine, and engage unitedly to oppose it everywhere as the worst enemy of their sex.

And now what shall we see on the New-Year's Day, 1871? Women all over the city of New York—women here and there all over the country, where like social customs prevail—setting out upon their tables the well-filled decanters which, before night shall close down, will be emptied into the brains of young men and old men, who will go reeling to darker orgies, or to homes that will feel ashamed of them. Woman's lips will give the invitation, woman's hand will fill and present the glass, woman's careless voice will laugh at the effects of the mischievous draught upon their friends, and, having done all this, woman will retire to balmy rest, previously having reckoned the number of those to whom she has, during the day, presented a dangerous temptation, and rejoiced over it in the degree of its magnitude.

O woman! woman! Is it not about time that this thing were stopped? Have you a husband, a brother, a son? Are they stronger than their neighbors who have, one after another, dropped into the graves of drunkards? Look around you, and see the desolations that drink has wrought among your acquaintances, and then decide whether you have a right to place temptation in any man's way, or do aught to make a social custom respectable which leads hundreds of thousands of men into bondage and death. Why must the bottle come out everywhere? Why can there not be a festal occasion without this vulgar guzzling of strong drink?

Woman, there are some things that you can do, and this is one: you can make drinking unpopular and disgraceful among the young. You can utterly discountenance all drinking in your own house, and you can hold in suspicion every young man who touches the cup. You know that no young man who drinks can safely be trusted with the happiness of any woman, and that he is as unfit as a man can be for woman's society. Have this understood: that every young man who drinks is socially proscribed. Bring up your children to regard drinking as not only dangerous but disgraceful. Place temptation in no man's way. If men will make beasts of themselves, let them do it in other society than yours. If your mercenary husbands treat their customers from private stores kept in their counting-rooms, shame them into decency by your regard for the honor of your home. Recognize the living, terrible fact that wine has always been, and is to-day, the curse of your sex; that it steals the hearts of men away from you, that it dries up your prosperity, that it endangers your safety, that it can only bring you evil. If social custom compels you to present wine at your feasts, rebel against it, and make a

social custom in the interests of virtue and purity. The matter is very much in your own hands. The women of the country, in what is called polite society, can do more to make the nation temperate than all the legislators and tumultuous reformers that are struggling and blundering in their efforts to this end. At any rate, if they will try, they shall have SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY to help them.

SOCIAL TAXES.

THE typical American is not an unsocial person. Indeed, he is very far from being anything of the kind. Foreigners regard the American as one who has a particular fondness for living with his windows up and his doors open. Yet it is doubtless true that there is a notable lack of freedom and ease in the intercourse of American society, and that the coming together of men and women for the interchange of thought and feeling is attended with difficulties that only the rich may successfully encounter. If half a dozen friends are invited to dinner it is deemed necessary to crowd the table with superfluous viands and dainty and costly dishes. If the same number are invited to tea, there is hardly less expense and trouble incurred. Instead of the simple tea, and the light food that appropriately accompanies it, in the ordinary life of the family, there is a supper, in which salads and solid dishes, cold and hot, and all expensive, are crowded upon the jaded appetite. Even this is not enough. Before the guests depart, they are often beset again with dainty offerings of ice and fruit and coffee. When we come to more ambitious gatherings we encounter more preposterous folly. An ordinary social party is a huge feast, which begins at the time when people ought to be going to bed, ends when they ought to be getting up, and crowds the stomach with luxurious and burdensome food and drinks at the time when it ought to be in its profoundest rest. One such party exhausts the resources of the family which gives it for a year or two, unless they are people of abounding wealth, turns their house upside down, and breaks up their whole family life for a fortnight. The payment for entertainment, in music and dainties and flowers, makes the purse-carrier groan, and wrings from him the glad declaration that his duty is done for a twelve-month, at least! One party is just like every other party, except that one is more or less expensive than another. There is rivalry of dress among the women, to be sure, and such new toilets as they can afford to make from time to time, and often such as they cannot afford to make; but there are the same old fiddles, playing the same old quadrilles and waltzes; there is the same caterer and the familiar ices and salads; the same "How do you do?" and the same "Good Night," and "We have had such a splendid time!"

Now we protest that there must be some better way than this. The great multitude are those who, in some calling or profession, work for their bread. To furnish a dinner and tea such as we have described,

would be felt by them as a severe tax. No matter how intellectual and socially valuable these people may be, they shrink from entering society that imposes such burdens. As they feel it to be impossible for them to return in kind the expensive civilities which a wealthy neighbor extends to them, they shrink back into their own houses and go nowhere. Everywhere, and all the time, these costly entertainments, at dinner and tea and social assembly, operate as a bar to social intercourse. Indeed, they have become, in the full, legitimate meaning of the word, a nuisance. To those who give them they are not pleasant in any respect. They are provided with no expectation of a compensating pleasure; and few besides the young—to whom any opportunity for dancing and frolicking is agreeable—take the slightest satisfaction in them. They are glad when their toilet is made, glad when the refreshments are offered, glad when the show is over and they can go home, glad when they get safely to bed, and particularly glad the following morning if they can look over their coats and dresses and find that they are not ruined.

Have we exaggerated in the least in these representations? Nay, have we not told the exact, notorious truth? We protest again, then, that there must be some better way. Here is another opportunity for woman to do good; for it is woman, in her social pride and in her pride of house-keeping, who has more to do with this thing than man. The woman who can make her drawing-room attractive by informal gatherings of men and women, who shall not be put through the tortures of the toilet, nor burdened with a sense of obligation by the luxuries prepared for their entertainment, is the real social queen. The essential vulgarity of the phase of social life which we are considering is decided by the simple fact that the great question of the hostess concerns the stomachs of her guests, and the great question of her guests relates to the decoration of their own backs. It elevates nobody, it refines nobody, it inspires and instructs nobody, and it satisfies nobody. Yet we go on year after year upholding these social usages which we despise. Let us find the better way, and follow it!

THE OLD CABINET.

VERY different from the interest manifested elsewhere in this country in the war which has dethroned Napoleon, is that felt in a certain old town on the banks of the river Delaware. There they read of and gossip about the career and misfortunes of this or that prince and noble lady as you would about those of your own neighbors and acquaintances who had gone into far lands, and to whom strange things had happened.

The old people will tell you how one day, long ago, as the Doctor's gig was swinging along the White Hill road, it was hailed by a passing coach, whose inmate, a mild-eyed, middle-aged "foreign gentleman," made polite inquiry concerning some property for sale in the borough. They will tell you of the wide tract of woodland that the rich stranger from Philadelphia bought along the Crosswicks Creek, where it empties into the Delaware at Bordentown,—and the beautiful lake he fashioned, and the boat-houses and the observatory overlooking the grand sweep of the Delaware and the pretty Pennsylvania farms,—of the hundreds of men he had at work, cutting pathways through the forest, and building roads that ran for miles and miles into the thick woods, winding through ravines and over bridges, and down by the dark, cool river. Yes, and they will tell you of the mysterious underground passages leading out to the lake and the river, through which (it was whispered) he had prepared a way of escape from the big-moustached Spaniards, who were said to be ever prowling around, waiting for a chance to clap him into a close carriage and whisk him away, while they took possession of the treasures of which he had despoiled their land.

"The Count," they called him; for when Joseph

Napoleon Bonaparte, ex-king of Naples and of Spain, came to Republican America, he dropped all his grander titles and assumed the humble one of Count of Survilliers.

And much beloved was this kind old Count in Bordentown. The children of those days—the men and women of to-day—have very pleasant memories of his benign face (so like, and yet so unlike, that younger brother of his) and gentle, affectionate manners, and sweet broken English, and dainty bon-bons. Often they would meet him strolling through the shadowy avenues of the park with that memorable hatchet in his hand, without which he was never seen (ah, those wicked Spaniards); he would stroke their curls and say fatherly words to them. And sometimes the children were led into the grand house; and O, such pictures and statues and pastry; a king's palace indeed!

When the lake was frozen over he would have royal fires built on the island in the centre, and he would pour heaps of oranges and of goodies upon the ice, and stand and laugh while the skaters scrambled for them; and what beautiful prizes for the swiftest in the race!

Then there was the Prince Lucien Murat, son of the magnificent Marshal and of Caroline, the sister of Napoleon. He lived on Park Street, quite near the Count—a lazy, good-natured prince he was, fond of gunning and cock-fights, and boon companions, and a famous teller of stories. You might have seen him lolling of an afternoon in his hammock, hailing Tom, Dick, and Harry (for he knew them all) as they passed along the road; or telling his marvellous yarns in the village tavern. Open-handed and generous he was as long as