

WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

"The Red Badge of Courage" by Stephen Crane is a story of a farm boy's experience as a private in the civil war. The book of 231 pages tells of a few month's experience of camp and drill and of one battle. Thirty-six pages of camp life and one hundred and ninety-five that describe the battle, and its impression on a green soldier. Mr. Crane's description of the battle-field bears the same relation to the battle-field of romance and imagination that the instantaneous photograph of the "horse in motion" do to his representation on canvas and in bronze. It is difficult to believe this is not an old soldier's yarn, yet Stephen Crane was only a small boy when the civil war was over. The story is a restoration from hints received from real old soldiers. Max Nordau says that the signs of degeneration are abnormal acuteness of the senses. Mr. Crane shows a morbid tenderness for color. The Union army is a "blue demonstration," when the blood begins to flow, the private sees blue and red everywhere. He sees men and considers them only as bits of color. He might be an artist in the meadow with a bull trying to get the foreshortening right as he charges him, so far as his sense of the situation is concerned. The most of the book is a description of the impressions that the different stages of the battle made upon a private, a limited field and not worth 196 pages of paper and the time to read them. Mr. Crane is diffuse after the manner of Howells. It takes the genius of Goethe to make 196 pages of self-examination interesting. If these drawers of fine points and jewels of character wish an audience made up of more than reviewers and literary hacks they will learn to concede. It would be well to study composition of an artist, to learn how he groups people in a landscape securing variety as well as unity. A man must prove himself interesting before he can find a paying number of people who will listen to how he felt when the guns were turned towards him. But a few will listen through egotism. They might act so, feel so, think so on a battlefield themselves. So they will read this book. Subjectivity is a quality of the feminine mind. An ideal soldier is D'Artagnan, solving all puzzles and differences with his sword. The fighter who stops to consider the economic unwisdom of war is in danger of having his skull cut open by a sword and his philosophy laid bare to an unreflecting charge of soldiery, beside being of not much use to his country as a warrior. Those who like the windings of a psychological maze will like "The Red Badge of Courage." (H. W. Brown & Co.)

"Napoleon, lover and husband," by Frederic Masson, a translation from the French is a collection of testimony in regard to Napoleon's family relations. Anybody might collect the testimony, no one but a man and a Frenchman could conclude from it that Josephine's reproaches were undeserved, that Napoleon loved only her. The book shows him not worse than those who surrounded him. As emperor he might have set an example, but he was not setting examples. Mr. Masson is an unprejudiced critic, apparently his standards are not rocked by Napoleon's code; he is all the more likely to tell the truth of the man who is not a hero to him. His evidence shows the Corsican faithfulness to family, early benefactors and friends that Napoleon kept throughout life. His remotest and poorest relations were given princely revenues, no companion of his childhood, however unworthy ever appealed to him in vain. He had a kingdom at hand or in his mind for every one of his sisters and

brothers. His belief in the unity of family was his undoing. He never suspected his Austrian father in law of treason. When he married Marie Louise he looked upon her father as indissolubly connected with him. His Corsican heart would not allow him to believe that a father would sacrifice his daughter and his grandson for hatred of some one else. There is something too much of gallantry in the book but then that is the name of it.

There is work enough for a ministerial association in this place the devil knows. His horns were almost covered when he suggested to the once united association that the rain should no longer be allowed to fall on the Universalist minister's garden plot. When Mr. Chapin was expelled from the association Mr. Gregory and Mr. Hewitt withdrew also not from pique but because they could not belong to a body which disobeyed so flagrantly one of Christ's reiterated injunctions.

The real evils the association might fight, if it were able to withdraw its attention from doctrinal questions and the children who take the sugar from the pantry shelves, are growing like weeds under a tropical sun.

When I was a child I used to inquire of the grown-up wisdom about me what the Scribes and Pharisees had done to make Christ cry "Woe" unto them. I could not find out that they had killed any one or stolen or used bad language. They were only hypocrites and made long prayers with a professional quaver and advocated the death penalty for those who kept not the Mosaic law. They were good citizens so far as looks went and exhorting their neighbors to break away from sin. It is absolutely certain if any such people were alive today their names would appear on the remonstrance to Chancellor MacLean against the use of the armory by the students for any purpose but drill and athletics. Not that it would be any of their business. The Pharisee's strong hold was other people's business. Not that there is no impending danger but this one. There are municipal burdens that might be lightened by a long and a strong pull and a pull all together by the ministers and those they influence. The forces of evil—things that every sane mind admits to be evil—are united. They are almost as strong as the united forces that ought to work against them. Since the schism the old gentleman has an easy time. Since the scrap began his parish has flourished and doubled on his hands and now that the remnant is diverting itself with students hope he can lean back and rock. His parish will grow without his care. To be exact though, it is not that the ministerial association cares whether the students dance or not. It insists that it is wicked for them to dance in the armory. The distinction is unintelligible to one who has not had a full theological course.

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