

The Independent

Vol. L

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1898

No. 2613

SURVEY OF THE WORLD.

THE YEAR AT HOME.

An Eventful Year.

This has been a real *annus mirabilis* for the United States, the most eventful year since the surrender of General Lee. Its story is little other than that of our war with Spain. Remonstrance after remonstrance had been sent to Spain against the cruelties and the devastation caused by the civil war in Cuba. The methods of General Weyler and the orders which gathered the women and children into the cities, with no proper provision for their support, had excited great indignation. Our Government had set a time after which it would be at liberty, for humanity's sake and in the interests of our own citizens, to intervene. Spain had asked delay, had promised more humane conduct of the war, had proposed a system of autonomy which the Cubans could not accept, and had recalled "Butcher" Weyler and sent General Blanco in his place. Yet it was evident that Spain would be unable to suppress the rebellion and that we should have to intervene. While feeling was already excited came the sudden news of the blowing up of the "Maine" in the harbor of Havana on February 15. The battle-ship had been sent there against the request of the Spanish Government, and when it was destroyed it was immediately surmised that this was caused by the malicious explosion under it of a Spanish mine. Our people were immensely excited over it, but yet were calmed by the prudent dispatch sent by Captain Sigsbee, until the report of the Court of Inquiry declared that the explosion was due to an external mine. This, doubtless, hastened the decision of Congress to authorize the President to intervene in Cuba. The President, who had been vainly trying to persuade the

Spanish Government to grant full autonomy to Cuba, and who seems to have been desirous of postponing war measures until later in the year, now sent an ultimatum to Spain, April 20th, demanding that she evacuate Cuba. This was taken by Spain as a declaration of war.

The War Begun.

On April 22d the President proclaimed a blockade of the principal ports of Cuba. Congress put fifty million dollars in his hands for use in prosecuting the war. The next day he issued a call for 125,000 volunteers to serve two years, which was followed a month later by a call for 75,000 more. Orders were sent to Commodore Dewey, in command of the squadron in the China seas, to destroy the Spanish fleet near Manila as soon as possible, so as to prevent its preying on American commerce. On May 1 he sailed with his whole squadron into Manila, disregarding forts and mines, and destroyed the entire fleet without the loss of a man. This astonishing victory put Manila and all the Philippines in his power, but he delayed taking Manila, as he had no soldiers with which to garrison the city. Meanwhile Captain Sampson had been put in command of the blockading squadron in Cuban waters, assisted by Commodore Schley, these officers being promoted over their elders. But a Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera left the Cape Verde Islands April 29th, whether for Cuba or to attack our coast no one could tell. It caused much alarm, and offensive operations had to wait until it was known where this fleet would strike. The sending of a military force to Cuba was delayed, and a special squadron organized to protect our coasts from attack. At last it became known that Admiral

1895

of the man acting, and regard it more as a manifestation of the Yake who has taken possession of him.

The Icht is regarded with a feeling of fear, and no familiarity is indulged in.

If a person is sick and can afford to pay the sorcerer he will perform and exorcise the evil spirit which torments him. Settling the compensation is a matter of great particularity, as the Icht knows how much property the sufferer has, because the Yake tells him. If after repeated trials the patient does not improve but declines, the Yake reveals to the Icht that a witch is at work counteracting all the effects of the exorcism, and here is where the devilry of the whole evil cult comes in. The friends of the sick person seize the accused and tie him, and keep him in the room with him. He is not allowed water or food. Besides the pain of the thongs, he is tortured, and the sick person grows worse.

There is no longer an Icht at Sitka, but some persons have been consulting Ka-shu-da-klock, an old sorcerer who lives at Ahngoon, seventy-five miles from Sitka. Ex-Governor Swineford took this fellow to task once for his practices, and had his hair cut off and disgraced him. Since then he has been wary, and has kept away from the whites. It now appears that lately he has been consulted by Ka-jank, of Sitka, who has two wives, an old woman and her daughter. The daughter has consumption, and has hemorrhages frequently. It is reported that Ka-jank paid Ka-shu-du-klock thirty blankets.

Yesterday (November 22d) the young

woman had a bleeding spell, and, as Keepkane and his wife were passing, Ka-jank and his old wife rushed out and accused them of bewitching the dying woman. They were ordered to enter the house where she lies. An angry altercation arose, but order was restored by the timely interference of the three native policemen. A number of the old natives railed upon them for not binding the witches.

This has become a serious matter, and if it were not for the superior force here an outbreak could easily be stirred up by some of these agitators in the ranch. The people in the outlying communities are helpless, for the civil authorities have no means of transportation to visit them frequently and see that the lives of the helpless ones are protected.

The time has arrived to take these people vigorously in hand, and to compel them to obey our laws.

Witchcraft is practiced secretly, for if any one helps an accused person he is accusable, too. Two years ago a large, able-bodied Thlingit happened to stop with his wife and father-in-law at a neighbor's house in the Kake country, and to his astonishment he found his younger brother tied up and tortured for a witch. The young fellow pled for a drink, but he dared not give him a drop.

It is a horrible superstition, and many persons are innocently tortured and slaughtered by it every year in Alaska. The officers here are willing to battle with it and put it down, but Congress must provide them with the means.

SITKA, ALASKA.

AUGUSTINE'S PHILOSOPHY.

BY PROF. BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D.D.

"THERE is a place for everything,
In earth or sky or sea,
Where it may find its proper use
And of advantage be,"

Quoth Augustine, the saint.

"Our very vices, great and foul,
May haply ladders prove,
If firmly trodden under foot,
On which to climb above,"

Quoth Augustine, the saint.

The mocker quick, with curling lip:—
"Then there's a place for vice!"
"Yea, fitly 'neath our trampling feet,
May lie the cockatrice."

Quoth Augustine, the saint.

PRINCETON, N. J.