



## CHAPTER XXXVI

# Clara Barton

1830—

OUR country has gained a high rank among the nations of the earth in many directions. Among them all we should not forget the great advantages it has given to women, and the famous exploits which have here been performed by women. America is celebrated throughout the world for its multitude of women who have distinguished themselves.

In literature, for one thing, the American woman has occupied a very high place. In former times, women never had, in any country, equal literary advantages with men. A generation ago it was very rare, even in our own country, that one could find a woman who had received a collegiate education. In the city of Boston, even the schools which we now know as grammar schools were open only to boys until long after the war of the Revolution.

In some towns, when Washington was President, the boys were sent home from school an hour earlier than the time for closing, both forenoon and afternoon, and then the girls came in; or, in other cases, the girls came for an

hour in the morning before the boys, and on Thursday afternoon, when the boys had a holiday. Even this concession to the education of girls occurred only during the summer months. Sometimes the reason which people gave why girls could not enjoy equal schooling with the boys was on account "of the female health."

Great changes have taken place since those days. Now we have colleges for women as well as for men, and colleges which both men and women attend. Almost all public schools are open alike to girls and boys.

In the early part of this century Mrs. Emma Willard gave a superior education to women in her seminary at Troy, New York. Miss Catherine Beecher educated many in her seminary at Hartford, Connecticut. A college course was opened to women at Oberlin, Ohio, as early as 1833. Three years later, Mary Lyon began her great work of educating girls in the Mount Holyoke Seminary, Massachusetts. To-day we meet in many communities almost as many young women who have been educated at college as young men.

Now let us see what some of these women have done. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote that wonderful story, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which stirred the hearts of the whole world as to the evil of slavery. It was not the work of leisure hours. Many of its pages were written beside the kitchen fire, while the author was attending to the family cooking. When the book was published it created the widest excitement, both North and South. Everybody read it who read books at all. The very next year it was translated into ten different languages. No other work of fiction in the English language was ever so widely sold.

In a similar way Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson aroused the

nation in behalf of the Indians by her wonderful story of "Ramona." Of Mrs. Jackson, one prominent critic said: "She is a Murillo in literature." Of the story she wrote this has been said: "It is one of the most artistic creations of American literature."

But the time would fail to tell what our distinguished American women have done in literature. Louisa M. Alcott, Mary N. Murfree, who calls herself "Charles Egbert Craddock," Mary E. Wilkins, Frances Hodgson Burnett, Maria Mitchell, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, Kate Douglass Wiggin, Ruth McEnery Stuart, Sarah Orne Jewett, Alice and Phoebe Cary, Lucy Larcom, Louise Chandler Moulton, Edna Dean Proctor, Margaret Preston, Harriet Prescott Spofford, and Margaret Deland are some of our brilliant authors. But there are so many of them that their names cannot be called. Let all honor be given to these wonderful women who have achieved such great success in the field of literature. Of one of them Whittier wrote:

"O white soul! from that far-off shore  
Float some sweet song the waters o'er;  
Our faith confirm, our fears dispel,  
With the old voice we loved so well!"

But not alone in literature has woman's great talent and pure character made a place in American history. On the platform, in music, with the brush and the chisel in the artist's studio, in associated charities, and in the home woman has won her way, earned her laurels and achieved distinguished success.

But it is in the field of philanthropy that we find among American women the most brilliant examples of sacrifice. Women have always been saying:

"Give me, dear Lord, some work to do,  
Some field to plough, some harvest rich to reap;  
Some mission to fulfil both grand and true—  
To feed Thy sheep."

In doing for others, woman has everywhere shown special talent and achieved worthy success.

Miss Dorothea L. Dix spent twenty years in studying the condition of paupers, lunatics, and prisoners in this country. She visited every State in the Union east of the Rocky Mountains, examining prisons, poorhouses, and lunatic asylums, trying to persuade the lawmakers and rich men to relieve the poor and needy ones. During our late Civil War she devoted four years to nursing wounded soldiers and improving hospital arrangements in connection with the army.

One day, in the year 1898, the telegraph flashed the news to all parts of the American continent, and the ocean cable told to the nations of the Old World, that Frances E. Willard was dead. That telegram carried grief to the hearts of millions. It is seldom that the death of one person brings sorrow to so many souls as in this case of Miss Willard. What had she done? Why was it that she was so greatly beloved the world over? It was her philanthropic spirit; her labors for the good of the race; her great deeds; her devotion in particular to the cause of temperance.

Early in life she was a professor in college, and was earnest in her work; but she left that profession, and for a quarter of a century engaged, heart and soul, in the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, of which for nearly twenty years she was the president. As a speaker, as a writer, as a leader, Miss Willard gained rare credit. But after all, it was more her character, her unselfishness, her devotion

to a great cause, which won the love and admiration of the world.

We must hasten to speak of that distinguished person whose name stands at the head of this chapter. Everybody has heard of Clara Barton. What Florence Nightingale was to the Old World, Clara Barton has been to the New. Indeed, she has not been confined to the New World, for she has done the same work in France and in far-away Turkey, and then devoted her ceaseless activities to the relief of the starving Cubans and to the wounded and sick American soldiers in Cuba. We have chosen her name as a representative woman.

Let us see what a marvelous amount of work has been crowded into this one life. She was born in Worcester County, Massachusetts, in 1830. She early learned to earn her own bread. She was a thorough housekeeper, and as clerk and book-keeper for her brother she learned the rules of business. Educated in the public schools, she became a school teacher when very young. She was employed in the Patent Office at Washington for three years, but in 1857 she lost her place because she was suspected of holding anti-slavery sentiments.

When the Civil War broke out, she heard the same call to which Miss Dix responded. She went to Washington. The troops gathered rapidly and soon the hospitals were filled. The work which she assigned to herself was the care of the sick, visiting them daily, carrying to them reading matter, comforting them with delicacies, writing letters to their friends.

Soon her work became known and her fame rapidly spread abroad. For a time she remained at Washington, with no authority, with no rank, with no pay, and subject to the orders of no one. Then she followed the army to the battle-field.

She was at Fairfax Station after the second battle of Bull Run; she was at Antietam, at Fredericksburg. She organized a bureau of records of missing men in the army. The object of this bureau was to gather information concerning the missing and to communicate it to their friends. She was thus able to comfort thousands of families, having traced the fate of more than thirty thousand men.

In this work for the soldiers she expended her whole fortune of \$10,000. Then Congress voted her \$15,000 to reimburse her for her expenditures and to help her carry on her bureau, which had proved of great service.

After the war was over she went to Europe for her health. When the Franco-German War began in 1870, she joined the Red Cross Society and helped to organize and reorganize the German hospital service. The story is told that after the surrender of Strasburg there were twenty thousand people homeless and hungry, and Miss Barton, at her own expense, provided material for thirty thousand garments to be made by women, who were thus able to earn their own food.

Three years after this war, she returned to America and began a movement looking to the recognition of the Red



RED CROSS NURSE ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

Cross Society by our national government. She gained this recognition from our government in 1881, and became president of the American Association of the Red Cross. The constitution of this society says that its object is "to organize a system of national relief, and apply the same in mitigating



THE JOHNSTOWN FLOOD, AN OCCASION FOR RED CROSS RELIEF.

suffering caused by war, pestilence, famine, and by calamities." One article in the constitution of the American society reads as follows:

"That our society shall have for one of its objects to aid the suffering in times of great national calamities—such as floods, cyclones, great fires, pestilence, earthquakes, local famines, etc." Among the occasions of calamity when the services of the Red Cross have been called into requisition were the frightful forest fires which took place in Michigan and other sections of the great Northwest; the floods of 1882–84 in the Ohio and Mississippi rivers; several droughts in different sections; the Charleston earth-

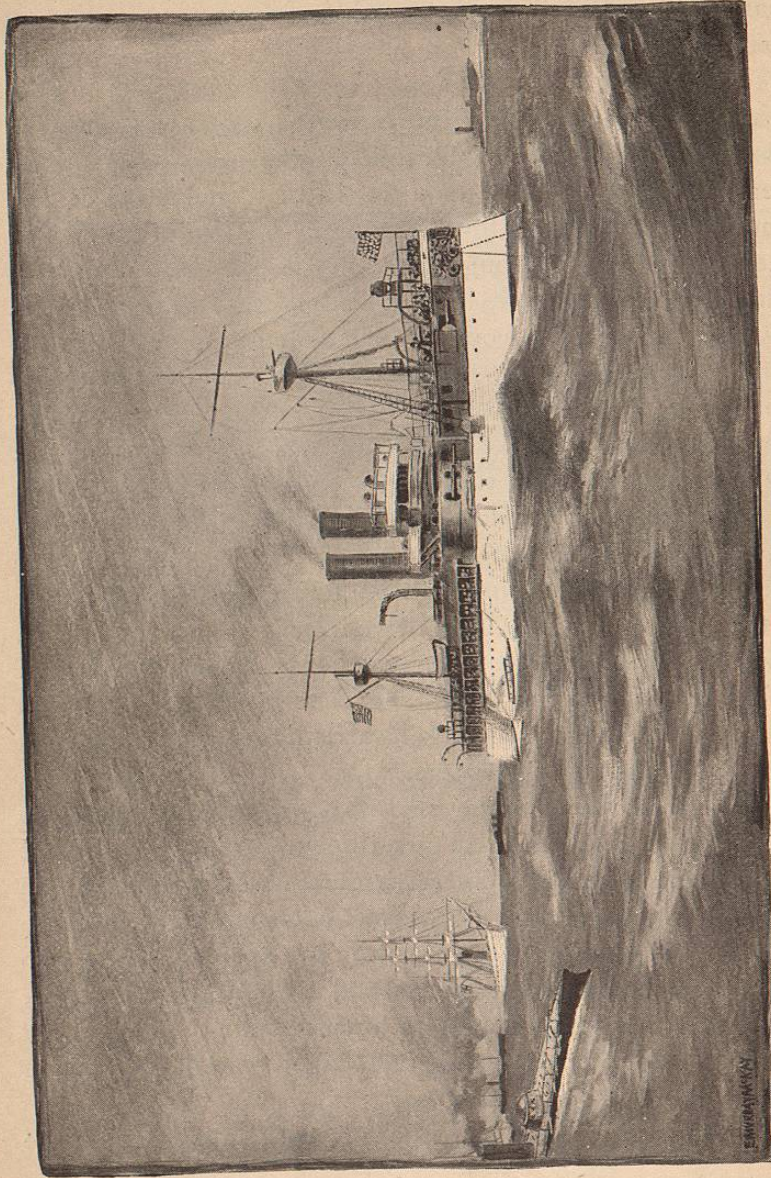
quake, and particularly the terrible Johnstown disaster in Pennsylvania.

This Johnstown disaster was almost the entire blotting out of the town by a flood. Houses were swept away, and the loss of life was great. This flood was occasioned by the breaking away of a dam upon the Little Conemaugh River, nine miles above the town, during a heavy rainfall. The waters swept down through the valley in one great wave, carrying utter destruction to the fated city. The calamity awoke sympathy all over the country, and a fund was raised for the relief of the sufferers. Much of this fund was put into the hands of the Red Cross Society. The city was soon rebuilt, however, and is to-day much more prosperous and has a larger population than before this disaster.

A few years ago occurred a cruel uprising of Mohammedans against the Christians of Asiatic Turkey. There were terrible massacres and immense suffering ensued, especially to the people who had been driven away from their homes. Clara Barton undertook to carry relief to the survivors, and, taking her life in her hand, she penetrated into that wild country, and like a good angel carried bread, clothing, and cheer to thousands of sufferers.

Now came the civil war in Cuba, when the Cubans rose in opposition to the Spanish government. That government adopted severe and cruel measures against the people of the unhappy island. Peaceful citizens, not connected with the army on either side, were forced by the Spanish soldiers to leave their homes, their farms, and their other industries, and to stay like prisoners within fortified towns. There they had no means of livelihood, and actual starvation soon began to carry them off by thousands.

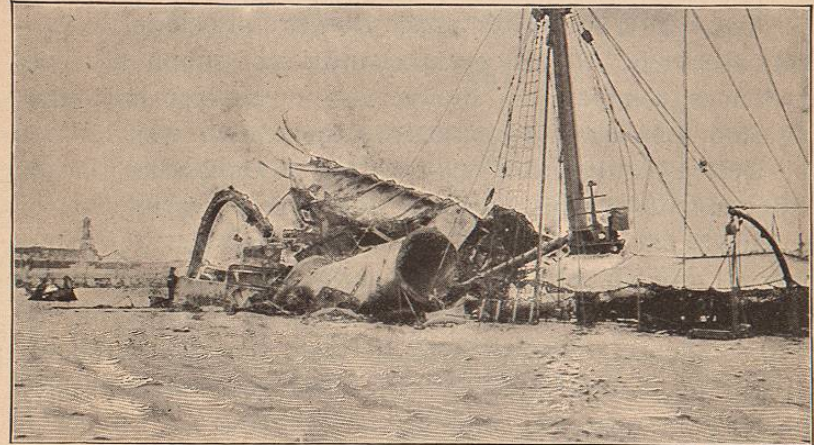
To their relief went Clara Barton, with supplies from the



THE U. S. BATTLESHIP "MAINE" IN HAVANA HARBOR THE DAY BEFORE HER DESTRUCTION.

benevolent people of the United States, ministering to their necessities, saving life, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, conveying solace and cheer to those in the sharpest distress.

There she remained till after the American battleship *Maine* was blown up in Havana Harbor and the Spaniards grew so bitter toward all Americans that she could not longer continue her labors. Our government advised United States



THE "MAINE" AFTER THE EXPLOSION.

citizens to leave Cuba, for war between our country and Spain was likely to begin at any hour, and it would not be safe for Americans to stay.

Soon after her arrival in Washington our government declared war against Spain for her inhuman treatment of the Cubans. Then, while our warships were sweeping out to sea and while our soldiers were volunteering to fight the Spanish, Clara Barton began to organize a gigantic enterprise, by which, under the Red Cross banner, our sick and

wounded soldiers and sailors might be tenderly cared for, and also the poor, suffering, starving people of Cuba might receive the relief which had been interrupted.

Thousands of brave and good women wanted to enlist under her in this service, but only those who had some preparation in trained nursing could be accepted. The government had previously recognized the Red Cross Society, and now gave it every facility for carrying on its noble work and beautiful service for the sufferers in the war.

Miss Barton secured from the Red Cross societies in various parts of our country great quantities of supplies,—food, medicines, comforts, and delicacies,—for the sick and suffering, and soon again embarked for the seat of war. When the United States forces took Santiago de Cuba, Clara Barton and her faithful assistants were at the front, caring for the wounded and dying, even when the shot and shell were dropping all around them. Indeed, our generals thought it was not a fit place for women, there in the thick of the fight, and tried to persuade them to go to the rear; but they absolutely refused to go, and went on with their good work without flinching or apparently minding the danger at all.

Thus this "minister of mercy" braved every danger, and with force of will and kindness of heart relieved to the utmost the horrors of war, comforting the smitten, writing letters for them to their friends at home, and by every possible means mitigating the sufferings of the neglected, the sick, the wounded, and the dying.

The war is over, but Miss Barton and her lieutenants still continue at their humane service, bringing comfort to friend and foe alike.

Miss Barton's thrilling career from the beginning to the present time is that of an angel on earth. She has opened a

way by which multitudes of others, great-hearted like herself, can now imitate her in effectively and wisely carrying out the Golden Rule—giving water to the thirsty and food to the hungry, weeping with those that weep, helping those in distress, comforting the sorrowing, while remembering the Saviour's injunction: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

What a beautiful life is that of Clara Barton's—still active, earnest, vigorous, diligent! Soldiers are exempt from war at forty-five years of age; Miss Barton does not exempt herself at sixty-eight.

But there are many noble women in America, busy in various directions, in literature, in education, in medicine, in religious work, in science, in journalism; women distinguished as reformers, as philanthropists, on the platform; women successful in music and art; in associated charities; but especially and everywhere women effective and great in the home. The women of America have fully kept pace with the men in the making of our history and in the making it noble.

Describe the education which girls received a hundred years ago. Give an account of women's work in literature. Tell the story of Dorothea Dix. Give an account of the life of Frances E. Willard. Describe the work of Clara Barton during the Civil War; in the Franco-German War; in Armenia; in Cuba. Explain the purposes of the Red Cross Society.

What made Florence Nightingale famous the world over? Do you think Frances Willard deserves a higher place in the regards of the people than Clara Barton? Why? Why not? What do you think of the great work done by Miss Barton? "Resolved: That a philanthropist like Miss Barton can do more good in the world than a millionaire." Would you take the affirmative or the negative of this question? Give briefly the arguments you would present in support of your opinion.