

of its members a love and understanding of the doctrines of Christ which are at once the inspiration and the guiding principle of democratic civilization." Then, too:

"The Sunday-school is more democratic than the public school not only in administration but also in its social side. The difference arises from the very nature of the work of the two institutions.

"The public school is for children of legal school age. The Sunday-school admits every member of the family, young and old. It is to a vast population the chief agency through which acquaintance, friendships, and social relations may be safely formed. It is the center of that social contact which unites large numbers of families and individuals, gives them a common interest, and inspires in them fidelity to American democracy and Christian civilization.

"But the American Sunday-school has the disadvantage that necessarily accompanies the volunteer system.

"While the public school is State-supported and attendance is compulsory under the law, the Sunday-school depends on free gifts for its support and on the voluntary effort of a large army of earnest workers for its administrative and teaching forces. Even attendance is dependent on the volunteer principle.

"Our public schools have behind them the force of public opinion and the support of the public press. On the other hand, the Sunday-school, tho a great democratic institution and a powerful democratizing force, is virtually ignored by the secular newspaper because of a sensitiveness toward the religious background of the Sunday-school.

"The Sunday-school is the only great institution in the country whose possibilities are not fully utilized in the defense of democracy against those forces which have declared implacable war on the democratic ideal.

"In this important work we ask the earnest support and cooperation of those who regard the Sunday-school as the normal gateway to church affiliation.

"But with equal earnestness we plead for the cordial help of those who are without church relationship, but who agree with us that the Sunday-school is a prodigious factor for the promotion of social health and democracy, a factor which should be employed to the utmost in meeting the attacks of those evil forces bent upon the destruction of democracy, the American ideal, and Christian civilization."

WHY CHURCHES SHOULD BE BEAUTIFUL—"What an unattractive place the average church is!" complains a preacher in Philadelphia, and the *Pittsburgh Post*, remarking that the statement contains a measure of truth which should receive careful consideration, observes that money is not ill-spent on beautifying our houses of worship. Tho the church occupies a field different from that taken up by the movie-house and the theater, it should be no less clean, attractive, and sanitary. In addition, "a church should give some regard to beauty, not only from the standpoint of making it a worthy temple to the Most High, but also from that of the value of esthetic surroundings as an aid to putting a congregation into a frame of mind to make the most of the spiritual truths given them in the services." It is against human nature to rise to its height amid dismal surroundings, and "it is but common sense that the temples erected to the worship of God should be fitting."

"To those who argue that it would be better if the money put into adornment of churches were given to the poor, it may be replied simply that while the Church is constantly mindful of its duty to the needy it also has a duty to maintain itself as an inspiring place of worship. . . . The point is that the needs of both charity and the esthetic are to be met. Care for the poor and likewise keep the churches as nearly as possible to the ideal of temples of God.

"No beautiful church is erected in vain. Even to those who may not worship in it—who may see it merely in passing—it has the effect of an inspiring picture. It helps the cause of religion just as a fine governmental building gives a good impression of a nation or state. No tumble-down or musty building gives a good impression. Thus, while it is the words spoken in a church that count most, the value of impressive surroundings as an aid to the inspiration of the services should not be overlooked."

THE WELLS HISTORY AS RELIGION

THERE IS SO MUCH RELIGION in Mr. Wells's history of the world that a Methodist editor called it appropriate reading for Religious Book Week, and an Episcopalian weekly earnestly recommended it for study during Lent. But the mere fact that Mr. Wells makes much of religion in his history does not, of course, mean that what he says commends itself to all leaders of religious thought. The historian's attempt to reduce Christianity to a few simple teachings which might easily be accepted by good Buddhists and Confucianists and Mohammedans, is not unnaturally met with praise by Unitarians and scorned by Catholics. One Catholic writer calls the treatment of Christianity "ludicrously inadequate." But Dr. Samuel M. Crothers, writing in *The Christian Register*, calls "The Outline" the most influential book of religion among recent publications, in which Mr. Wells "states the Unitarian attitude toward Jesus, without flinching," and in which he makes the history of the world "a plea for a new and more serious attempt on the part of man to direct his ways"; "it is a call for repentance." It seems to the undenominational *Christian Work* (New York) that one can forgive some omissions and imperfections in the light of the fact that "throughout these portly volumes the author labors for the enlargement of social relations and the definite establishment of world-peace." A writer on history who makes an eloquent call for a great religious revival to save the world may be expected to win Methodist applause. And so Bishop Francis J. McConnell, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, declares in the *New York Christian Advocate* (Methodist) that the view-point of Wells is "essentially, tho not formally, Christian"; "there is a veritable fire of Christian passion here." Bishop McConnell considers Wells "finely reverent" toward the spirit of Jesus and toward the historic Jesus himself; "and there is no better statement anywhere of the Christian principle of human and world-wide brotherhood than in this book." The Wells history, says the *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate*, is most certainly "a religious book," because it is "a witness to the imperative demand for a world-wide revival from above." And in support of this statement the Methodist weekly quotes these sentences from the last chapter of "The Outline":

"Out of the trouble and tragedy of this present time there may emerge a moral and intellectual revival, a religious revival, of a simplicity and scope to draw together men of alien races and now discrete traditions into one common and sustained way of living for the world's service. . . . Religious emotion—stript of corruptions and freed from its last priestly entanglements—may presently blow through life again like a great wind, bursting the doors and flinging open the shutters of the individual life, and making many things possible and easy that in these present days of exhaustion seem almost too difficult to desire."

The most severe criticism of the Wellsian view of Christianity comes from the Catholics. We quote from an article written by Dr. Henry A. Lappin for *The Catholic World* (New York):

"He refuses all interpretation of Jesus Christ that would transcend the limits of human experience. The tremendous and unique claim of Christ upon the loyalty and submission of mankind, he simply will not recognize. He misses the central fact of all pre-Christian history: that it was a divinely ordained preparation for the adorable mystery of the Incarnation, and that with the coming of Christ and his Death upon the Cross, the sum of human life and human aspiration was instantly carried up to a new and infinitely higher level; that, in short, the Incarnation of the Son of God was a unique and emphatic remedial intervention. Believing Christians will passionately repudiate the whole temper and mind of these chapters. Reason and common sense and human experience reject them. Mr. Wells's arguments will neither wear nor wash. Of the whole exquisitely beautiful and intricately wrought yet sublimely simple structure of the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, and of the sacraments, and of the Divine Constitution of the Church, Mr. Wells has no faintest glimmering of understanding or appreciation. Far from being Christian, Mr. Wells's optimism is the shoddiest sentimentalism."

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CURRENT - POETRY

Unsolicited contributions to this department can not be returned.

SEVERAL volumes of verse stand to the credit of "B. L. T.," whose career and influence are sketched in the department of "Letters and Art." We append several specimens of his poetical compositions taken mainly from a column in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, but also credited to the volumes where they may be found. They show, says the editor of the selection, "his fine seriousness and quick response to good causes, his gentleness toward human weakness, his rare sense of beauty and the distinguished expression in which his thought and feeling took form."

INVOCATION

By "B. L. T."

O comic Spirit, hovering overhead,
With sage's brows and finely tempered smile,
From whose bowed lips a silvery laugh is sped
At pedantry, stupidity, and guile—

So visioned by that sage on whom you bent
Always a look of perfect sympathy,
Whose laugh, like yours, was never idly spent—
Look, Spirit, sometimes fellowly on me!

Instruct and guide me in the gentle art
Of thoughtful laughter—once satyric noise;
Vouchsafe to me, I humbly ask, some part,
However little of your perfect poise.

Keep me from bitterness, contempt, and scorn,
From anger, pride, impatience, and disdain.
When I am self-deceived your smile shall warn,
Your volleyed laughter set me right again.

Am I inspired to mirth or mockery,
Grant, Spirit, that it be not overdrawn;
And am I moved to malice, let it be
Only "the sunny malice of a faun."
—From "Motley Measures."

SILVER BIRCHES

To M. C.

By "B. L. T."

The fire-god with his flaming brand
Has passed this way and worked his will,
And still the silver birches stand,
A ghostly huddle on the hill.

But wraiths of birches, tempest-blown,
Yet all their glory is not fled.
I love them for the "beauty flown,"
And will not think that they are dead.

The flame has scorched, the gale has bent,
The elements have had their will,
Yet all their beauty is not spent,
The silver fingers on the hill.

When of our youth we are bereft,
We love, I heard a woman say,
The chastened beauty that is left
When time has worn the bloom away.
—From "Motley Measures."

SONS OF BATTLE

By "B. L. T."

Let us have peace, and Thy blessing,
Lord of the Wind and the Rain,
When we shall cease from oppressing,
From all injustice refrain;
When we hate falsehood and spurn it;
When we are men among men.
Let us have peace when we earn it—
Never an hour till then.

Let us have rest in Thy garden,
Lord of the Rock and the Green,
When there is nothing to pardon,
When we are whitened and clean.
Purge us of skulking and treason,
Help us to put them away.
We shall have rest in Thy season;
Till then the heat of the fray.

Let us have peace in Thy pleasure,
Lord of the Cloud and the Sun;
Grant to us sons of leisure
When the long battle is done.
Now we have only begun it;
Stead us!—we ask nothing more.
Peace—rest—but not till we've won it—
Never an hour before.
—From "A Line o' Verse or Two."

A BALLADE OF SPRING'S UNREST

By "B. L. T."

Up in the woodland where Spring
Comes as a laggard, the breeze
Whispers the pines that the King,
Fallen, has yielded the keys
To his White Palace and flees
Northward o'er mountain and dale.
Speed then the hour that frees!
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

Northward my fancy takes wing,
Restless am I, ill at ease.
Pleasures the city can bring
Lose now their power to please.
Barren, all barren, are these,
Town life's a tedious tale;
That cup is drained to the lees—
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

Ho, for the morning I sling
Pack at my back, and with knees
Brushing a thoroughfare, fling
Into the green mysteries:
One with the birds and the bees,
One with the squirrel and quail,
Night, and the stream's melodies—
Ho, for the pack and the trail!

L'ENVOI

Pictures and music and teas,
Theaters—books even—stale.
Ho, for the smell of the trees!
Ho, for the pack and the trail!
—From "A Line o' Verse or Two."

ONE more of his poems shows the homely nature of his innermost feelings. It appeared in his column on October 27, 1917, and was prefaced thus:

When the wounded in hospital came to die,
said a British officer, their last request in many cases was for the prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

SUNDOWN

By "B. L. T."

When my sun of life is low,
When the dewy shadows creep,
Say for me before I go,
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

I am at the journey's end,
I have sown and I must reap,
There are no more ways to mend—
Now I lay me down to sleep.

Nothing more to doubt or dare,
Nothing more to give or keep;
Say for me the children's prayer,
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

Who has learned along the way—
Primrose path or stony steep—

More of wisdom than to say,
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

What have you more wise to tell
When the shadows round me creep . . .
All is over, all is well . . .
Now I lay me down to sleep.

SOMETHING of a competitor with Leonardo's "Mona Lisa" seems this portrait which Clive Bell has sketched in *The Nation and Athenæum*. She is a woman upon whom all the inheritances of a sophisticated world have come, and the eyelids are a little cynical:

THE LAST INFIRMITY

By CLIVE BELL

Then tell me this, how must I praise you, dear
And desperate doubter of all pleasant things—
Infidel to yourself—who neither clear,
Untroubled truth, nor checkered flatteries,
Nor love's tried tales and trusted sorceries,
Will hear?

In vain the throstle sings,
Roses are red in vain, and sunlight fair:
For all that amorous armory of words,
Which poets forge themselves from ecstasy,
For all youth's uncontrived *niaiseries*,
Melodious smiles of flowers and birds,
For well-found compliment or unfeigned prayer,
You do not care.

You are the last word of a thousand years,
Fine fleur of Europe's slow civility:
And subtlest product of her ceaseless toils
The middle ages' mystic gaiety,
The gorgeous *lubris* of Italian dawn,
The slow maturing vintage of its spoils.
What Titian dreamed of, what Velasquez guessed,
Rambouillet played with, Versailles half exprest
You are the heir to: and to you have gone
Voltaire's thin smiles and Prévost's prettiest tears.

Listen! You are that mystery,
That still life that just lies
Below the surface. Sometimes you'd surmise,
So smooth, so silently, the stream goes by,
That it were dead: but, peering past the brink,
An inch below the glass you catch a wink,
A twist, the thrilling sense of flow.
And there! And there! And see the green weeds
blow

And strain against the strong, subaqueous wind.
So, just beneath that faint, diaphanous snow,
Your skin, it flutters pulsewise: now behind
That bright brown eye stays frozen: now afar
Mocks the dull inquisition that would know
What life is, what you are.

AN overmodest versifier drops this anonymously into the columns of *The Westminster Gazette* (London), and we have no one to thank:

DUSK

The red sun dips. Long shadows grow
To one rich gloom as homeward go
The scuttling hares; whose white tails gash
The dark green banks where by they flash.
Old neighbor horse lends his rough tongue
And licks a dozing mare. Nigh sung
Is the last lullaby of birds—
A dreamy song of nonsense-words.

And sleepily I seek my home,
Who ask from day's distemper some
Dear refuge at the dusk of night,
Still haven from harsh seas of light . . .
Tired senses all to sleep are curled,
Their doors fast shut upon the world:
And friendly stars like tapers shine
With guardian light on me and mine.