

of Switzerland. It is her failure to protest officially against the violation of Belgium and Luxembourg. They are not content that Switzerland support without a murmur the enormous burden of this war, which is costing her a million francs a day for the upkeep of her army, at the same time that it has paralyzed practically her entire industry; they are not content that she has proved toward refugee and interned and prisoner of war her generosity, her skill, her abnegation. They remember that Geneva offered security and a spiritual kingdom to the fugitive Calvin; that she gave birth to Rousseau and hospitality to Voltaire. To-day they miss the Mountains' "mighty Voice." "Who," exclaims Maurice Millioud, "who will utter the great resounding cry, who will make live again in the present the heroism of our past, who will kindle again the pride of our souls and give back to our thought its virile firmness? Confederates! We have to safeguard our title to nobility. Our immediate interest to-day is disinterestedness. History has willed that Switzerland should be a moral force. She must continue to be it more and more, or she will perish."

FLORENCE V. KEYS.

Geneva, February 15.

## Billy Sunday

**B**EFORE I heard Billy Sunday in Philadelphia I had formed a conception of him from the newspapers. First of all, he was a baseball player become revivalist. I imagined him as a ranting, screaming vulgarian, a mob orator who lashed himself and his audience into an ecstasy of cheap religious fervor, a sensationalist whose sermons were fables in slang. I thought of him as vividly, torrentially abusive, and I thought of his revival as an orgy in which hundreds of sinners ended by streaming in full view to the public mourners' bench. With the penitents I associated the broken humanity of Magdalen, dishevelled, tearful, prostrate, on her knees to the Lord. I thought of Billy Sunday presiding over a meeting that was tossed like trees in a storm.

However this preconception was formed, it at least had the merit of consistency. It was, that is to say, consistently inaccurate in every particular.

Consider, in the first place, the extraordinary orderliness of his specially constructed Tabernacle. Built like a giant greenhouse in a single story, it covers an immense area and seats fifteen thousand human beings. Lighted at night by electricity as if by sunshine, the floor is a vast garden of human

auditorium, with its forest of light wooden pillars and braces, runs a glass-enclosed alley, and standing outside in the alley throng the spectators for whom there are no seats. Except for the quiet ushers, the silent sawdust aisles are kept free. Through police-guarded doors a thin trickle fills up the last available seats, and this business is dispatched with little commotion. Fully as many people wait to hear this single diminutive speaker as attend a national political convention. In many ways the crowd suggests a national convention; but both men and women are hatless, and their attentiveness is exemplar.

It is, if the phrase is permitted, conspicuously a middle-class crowd. It is the crowd that wears Cluett-Peabody collars, that reads the *Ladies' Home Journal* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. It is the crowd for whom the nickel was especially coined, the nickel that pays carfare, that fits in a telephone slot, that buys a cup of coffee or a piece of pie, that purchases a shoe-shine, that pays for a soda, that gets a stick of Hershey's chocolate, that made Woolworth a millionaire, that is spent for chewing-gum or for a glass of beer. In that crowd are men and women from every sect and every political party, ranging in color from the pink of the factory superintendent's bald head to the ebony of the discreetly dressed negro laundress. A small proportion of professional men and a small proportion of ragged labor is to be discerned, but the general tone is of simple, common-sense, practical, domestic America. Numbers of young girls who might equally well be at the movies are to be seen, raw-boned boys not long from the country, angular home-keeping virgins of the sort that belong to sewing circles, neat young men who suggest the Y. M. C. A., iron-grey mothers who recall the numbered side-streets in Harlem or Brooklyn or the Chicago West Side and who bring to mind asthma and the price of eggs, self-conscious young clerks who are half curious and partly starved for emotion, men over forty with prominent Adam's apple and the thin, strained look of lives fairly careworn and dutiful, citizens of the kind that with all their heterogeneousness give to a jury its oddly characteristic effect, fattish men who might be small shopkeepers with a single employee, the single employee himself, the pretty girl who thinks the Rev. Mr. Rhodeheaver so handsome, the prosaic girl whose chief perception is that Mr. Sunday is so hoarse, the nervously facetious youths who won't be swayed, the sedentary "providers" who cannot open their ears without dropping their jaws. A collection of decidedly stable, normal, and one may crudely say "average" mortals, some of them

near the entrances, destined resentfully to catch a chill.

Very simple and pleasant is the beginning. Mr. Sunday's small platform is a bower of lovely bouquets, and the first business is the acknowledgment of these offerings. As a means of predisposing the audience in Mr. Sunday's favor nothing could be more genial. In the body of the hall are seated the sponsors of these gifts, and as each tribute is presented to view, Mr. Rhodeheaver's powerful, commonplace voice invites them to recognition. "Is the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company here?" All eyes turn to a little patch of up-standing brethren. "Fine, fine. We're glad to see yeh here. We're glad to welcome yeh. And what hymn would *you* like to have?" In loud concert the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. delegation shout: "Number forty-nine!" Mr. Rhodeheaver humorously parodies the shout: "Number forty-nine! It's a good 'un, too. Thank yeh, we're glad to have yeh here." Not only immense bouquets, but gold pieces, boxes of handkerchiefs, long mirrors, all sorts of presents, mainly from big corporations or their employees, are on the tight platform. One present came from a mill, a box of towels, and with it not only a warm, manly letter asking Mr. Sunday to accept "the product of our industry," but a little poetic tribute, expressing the hope that after his strenuous sermon Mr. Sunday might have a good bath and take comfort in the use of the towels. Everyone laughed and liked it, and gazed amiably at the towels.

The hymns were disappointing. If fifteen thousand people had really joined in them the effect would have been stupendous. As it was, they were thrilling, but not completely. The audience was not half abandoned enough.

Then, after a collection had been taken up for a local charity, Mr. Sunday began with a prayer. A compact figure in an ordinary black business suit, it was instantly apparent from his nerveless voice that, for all his athleticism, he was tired to the bone. He is fifty-three years old and for nine weeks he had been delivering about fifteen extremely intense sermons a week. His opening was almost adramatic. It had the conservatism of fatigue, and it was only his evident self-possession that cancelled the fear he would fizzle.

The two men whom Sunday most recalled to me at first were Elbert Hubbard and George M. Cohan. In his mental calibre and his pungent philistinism of expression he reminded me of Hubbard, but in his physical attitude there was nothing of that greasy orator. He was trim and clean-

been a letter referring to Billy Sunday's great work, "the moral uplift so essential to the business and commercial supremacy of this city and this country." As he developed his homely moral sermon for his attentive middle-class congregation, this gave the clue to his appeal. It did not seem to me that he had one touch of divine poetry. He humored and argued and smote for Christ as a commodity that would satisfy an enormous acknowledged gap in his auditors' lives. He was "putting over" Christ. In awakening all the early memories of maternal admonition and counsel, the consciousness of unfulfilled desires, of neglected ideals, the ache for sympathy and understanding, he seemed like an insurance agent making a text of "over the hill to the poorhouse." He had at his finger tips all the selling points of Christ. He gave to sin and salvation a practical connotation. But while his words and actions apparently fascinated his audience, while they laughed eagerly when he scored, and clapped him warmly very often, to me he appealed no more than an ingenious electric advertisement, a bottle picked out against the darkness pouring out a foaming glass of beer.

And yet his heart seemed to be in it, as a salesman's heart has to be in it. Speaking the language of business enterprise, the language with which the great majority were familiar, using his physical antics merely as a device for clinching the story home, he gave to religion a great human pertinence, and he made the affirmation of faith seem creditable and easy. And he defined his own object so that a child could understand. He was a recruiting officer, not a drill sergeant. He spoke for faith in Christ, he left the rest to the clergy. And to the clergy he said: "If you are too lazy to take care of the baby after it is born, don't blame the doctor."

It was in his platform manners that Sunday recalled George M. Cohan. When you hear that he goes through all the gyrations and gesticulations of baseball, you think of a yahoo, but in practice he is not wild. Needing to arrest the attention of an incredibly large number of people, he adopts various evolutions that have a genuine emphatic value. It is a physical language with which the vast majority have friendly heroic associations, and for them, spoken so featly and gracefully, it works. Grasping the edge of the platform table as if about to spring like a tiger into the auditorium, Sunday gives to his words a drive that makes you tense in your seat. Whipping like a flash from one side of the table to the other, he makes your mind keep unison with his body. He

out the name of Christ as if he were sending a spitball right into your teeth, you realize it is only an odd, apt, popular conventionalization of the ordinary rhetorical gesture. Call it his bag of tricks, deem it incongruous and stagey, but if Our Lady's Juggler is romantic in grand opera, he is not a whit more romantic than this athlete who has adapted beautiful movements to an emphasis of convictions to which the audience nods assent.

The dissuading devil was conjured by Sunday in his peroration, and then he ended by thanking God for sending him his great opportunity, his vast

audience, his bouquets and his towels. When he finished, several hundred persons trailed forward to shake hands and confess their faith—bringing the total of "penitents" up to 35,135.

Bending with a smile to these men and women who intend to live in the faith of Christ, Billy Sunday gives a last impression of kindliness, sincerity, tired zeal. And various factory superintendents and employers mingle benignly around, glad of a religion that puts on an aching social system such a hot mustard plaster.

F. H.

## The Captain and the Priest

WE were asked to take a French captain in the touring-car to visit the spot where his brother had fallen and was buried. We thought he might prefer a solitary drive; but when he appeared himself he seemed if anything to be in rather merry pin, so at the last moment I got in too. He was a hard, natty little man in a fresh uniform and shiny top-boots, with a ready shrug for the terrors of war.

It was one of those still November afternoons. The brown copses in the hollows we passed were bloomed with smoky blue like a horse's eye, while round the sky-rim the sediment of mist was the color of dead rose leaves. The captain talked incessantly as we rushed and bumped along between the bare roadside poplars. He was at once vivacious, prompt, voluble, and stiff.

His tone when he repeated that la guerre was la guerre reminded me of people who say boys will be boys, and the lightness of his resignation set me wondering how it would wear. For though I could picture him an officer in an office—smick-smack, no hesitation—I could not imagine him at the front, dealing with men in circumstances which throw one back on human nature as it is.

When we arrived at the village where we were to stop, the captain left us and strode off across the fields to look for his brother's grave. Like all villages near the French fighting line, it was in a great mess and full of blue-coated soldiers. Twenty or more were standing on the green doing nothing; others were sitting on the churchyard wall; some hung about the slushy road; some came to the windows to stare; some lolled listlessly in the doorways; and from one of the cottages floated the strains of a gramophone—the music of boredom. One or two soldiers asked me the two inevitable questions, "Are the Germans?" and

"How long do you think the war will last?" Then I handed round cigarettes till they gave out, and those who got some nodded and smiled, and those who came up too late nodded and smiled. And we all stood together in the mud.

There was a squashed loaf on one side of the road, a tin or two lying about, and on the doorstep of the nearest cottage the liquid footprints were mixed with blood. Looking up from this threshold I caught the eye of one of the soldiers. He also nodded and smiled. I began myself to sink into the collective torpor and to dream also that we were all standing together in the mud. They, poor fellows, had been standing there for close on five weeks, and a little experience had already taught me before that man is not, let alone his other disabilities, an animal properly shaped for standing in the mud. For though after a time the familiar chill about the feet will act almost as a mesmeric suggestion that one is a cart-horse, the delusion is never complete enough. Four legs are too badly wanted, and men cannot stamp and snort for no reason yet with much apparent relief. A sudden sound does not startle them into momentary clumping activity. Above all they cannot put their necks across each other and rub and rub. Only that gesture could express and relieve the feelings of men towards each other who, having surrendered their individuality, find themselves day after day, week after week, standing together in the mud.

For us two Englishmen, however, there was this afternoon a distraction in store. Some one shouted "Messieurs les Anglais!" We instantly swung around our haunches and pricked up our ears. An old priest was eagerly beckoning from a window.