

States, "where no one dreams of putting the Norwegians of Minnesota or the Germans of Wisconsin under a separate government in virtue of their particular sentiments." It is true that one reason for this adjustment is the Norwegians' ability to practice undifferentiated citizenship under liberal institutions. But another reason, more to the point at the moment, is the atrophy of their Norwegianism, the loss of their nationality. Certain physical and psychical characteristics they retain, but they tend to become American—to acquire, that is to say, a strange language, a strange art, a strange literature, to adopt George Washington and Abraham Lincoln for spiritual heroes, to accommodate themselves to the environment of precedent Americans. If Norwegianism in Minnesota were expressing itself vividly in art and literature, in the games and dress and customs of the old country, I'd believe Mr. Zimmern. But no one will assert that Norwegianism has here the strength that it has in the old country. Were the Norwegians firmly colonized, or grouped and separated by a very special religion, they might longer have resisted the contagion of America. But aliens in this country do tend to lose their nationality. The harmony that exists in the United States is not only political. It is social and spiritual. The United States does not preserve and reconcile accentuated national differences. It may not assimilate diverse nationalities rapidly, but it neutralizes them in a bath of Americanism, and gradually converts them into a queer, semi-solid, semi-fluid, perhaps incongruous mixture. The United States is witnessing the dissolution, not the solution, of nationalities. The result is a nationality in itself.

So long as men thrive better in one national atmosphere than another, respond better to one art and literature, articulate more freely in one tradition, so long will there be danger of discord and conflict in the concert of great Powers—whether or not those Powers seek to enlist Poles and Finns and Boers and Chinese without due consideration. If the Powers take politic care to pay the national pipers, they may perhaps call the political tune. But in that case, as the British Empire shows, the world is apt to present the new problem of dominions under-individualized.

New York City.

H.

Mr. Belloc's Negligible Germany

SIR: I have lived in England for the past eighteen years, and during that time I have had many occasions to point out to Englishmen that they must not take the writings or talk of such men as W. J. Bryan, W. R. Hearst or Henry Ford as the opinion of "an authority," or of the "thinking influential" American. May I suggest to you that you are taking the writing or talk of Englishmen of the same kind as Mr. Bryan, Mr. Hearst and Mr. Ford as the opinion of "thinking influential" Englishmen. No one who knew England would think of taking Mr. Belloc as "an authority" or a "thinking influential" Englishman.

May I add that you cannot find a man in England who comes under my heading of a "thinking influential" man who wants to crush Germany. Ask any such Englishman the question whether England wants to crush Germany and you will be told: "Certainly not. It is impossible in the first place; and in the second place we cannot afford to even if we could. Germany is our second largest customer."

Why not use your influence to show American Germans, and through them the German people, that the only ones

who can win this war are the people? The sooner the German people say, "We have been worshipping a false god in thinking that 'might is right,'" the sooner the German people will win. There can be no compromise in this war any more than there could have been a compromise in our Civil War. How much better it would have been for the Southern people if they had given up in 1863 instead of 1865! Those two extra years of war took more than twenty years extra in recuperation. Every month that Germany continues the war will mean a year extra in returning to prosperity. The ruling military autocracy in Germany which brought on this war knew when they failed to reach Paris, and when they were driven off the seas, that there could be only one ending to it. But the German people have not seen it or known it. If our American Germans would only tell it to the German people, the war would cease and the real winners would be the German people themselves.

AN AMERICAN.

VERSE

Poppies of the Red Year

I

The words that I have written
To me become as poppies;
Deep angry disks of scarlet flame full-glowing in the still-
ness
Of a shut room.

Silken their edges undulate out to me,
Drooping on their hairy stems:
Flaring like folded shawls, down-curved like rockets
starting
To break and shatter their light.

Wide-flaunting and heavy, crinkle-lipped blossom
Starting faint shivers through me:
Globed Chinese lanterns on green silk cords a-swaying
Over motionless pools.

These are lamps of a festival sleep held each night to wel-
come me,
Crimson-bursting through dark doors.
Out to their dull blue heavy fumes of opium rolling
From their rent red hearts, I go to seek my dream.

II

A riven wall like a face half torn away
Stares blankly at the evening;
And from a window like a crooked mouth
It barks at the sunset sky.

Out over there, beyond,
On plains where night has settled
Tent-like encampments of vaporous blue smoke or mist
Three men are riding.

One of them looks and sees the sky,
One of them looks and sees the earth,
The last man looks and sees nothing at all.
They ride on.

One of them pauses and says, "It is death."
 Another one pauses and says, "It is life."
 The last one pauses and says, "'Tis a dream."
 His bridle shakes.

The sky
 Is filled with oval bluish-tinted clouds
 Through which the sun long settled strikes at random,
 Enkindling here and there blotched circles of rosy light.

These are poppies
 Unclosing immense corollas,
 Waving the horsemen on.

Over the earth, upheaving, folding,
 They ride: their bridles shake.
 One of them sees the sky is red,
 One of them sees the earth is dark,
 The last man sees he rides to his death,
 Yet he says nothing at all.

III

There will be no harvest at all this year,
 For the gaunt black slopes arising
 Lift the crumbled aching furrows of their fields, falling
 away,
 To the rainy sky in vain.

But in the furrows
 There is grass and many flowers:
 Under the drooping, rain-smudged sky
 Scarlet tossing poppies
 Flutter their windlashed edges
 On which gorged black flies poise and sway in drunken
 sleep.

The black flies hang
 Above the tangled trampled grasses:
 Grey crumpled bundles lie in them.
 They sprawl,
 Heave faintly,
 And between their stiffened fingers
 Run out clogged crimson trickles
 Spattering the poppies and standing in beads on the grass.

IV

I saw last night
 Sudden puffs of flame in the northern sky.

The sky was a dull expanse of rolling grey smoke
 Lit faintly by the moon that hung
 Its white face in a broken tree to east.

Within the depths of greenish greyish smoke
 Were roars,
 Crackles and spheres of vapour,
 And then
 Huge disks of crimson shooting up, falling away.

And I said, "These are flower-petals,
 Sleep-petals, dream-petals,
 Blown by the winds of a dream."

But still the crimson flashes rose,
 They seemed to be
 One great field of immense poppies bowing evenly,
 Casting their viscid perfume on the earth.

The earth is sown with dead;
 And out of these the red
 Blooms are pushing up, advancing higher,
 And each night brings them nigher,
 Closer, closer to my heart.

V

By the sluggish canal
 That winds between thin ugly dunes
 There are no gliding boats with creaking ropes to-day.

But when the evening
 Crouches down, like a hurt rabbit,
 Under the everlasting rain-cloud whirling up the north
 horizon,
 Downwards on the stream will float
 Glowing points of fire.

Orange, coppery scarlet,
 Crimson, rosy-flickering,
 They pass the lanterns
 Above the unknown dead.

Out where the sea, sailless,
 Is mouthing and fretting
 Its chaos of pebbles and dried sticks by the dunes.

By the wall of that house
 That looks like a face half shorn away—
 And from its flat mouth barks at the sky,
 Which is glowing, shot with broad red disks of light,
 Petals drowsily falling.

VI

"It was not for a sacred cause
 Nor for faith, nor for new generations,
 That unburied we roll and float
 Beneath the flaming tumult of drunken sleep flowers;
 But it was for a mad adventure,
 Something we longed for, poisonous, seductive,
 That we dared go out in the night together
 Towards the glow that called us
 On the unsown fields of death.

"Now we lie here, reaped, ungarnered,
 Red swathes of a new harvest,
 But you who follow after
 Must struggle with our dream:
 And out of its restless and oppressive night,
 Filled with blue fumes, dull, choking;
 You will draw hints of that vision
 Which we hold aloof in silence."

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

Drink and the Devil

Habits That Handicap, by Charles B. Towns. New York: The Century Co. \$1.20 net.

A QUACK, as everyone knows, is a person who pretends to skill, usually in medicine or surgery, and puffs his own wonderful remedy—making a loud and foolish noise. Mr. Towns claims he can stop the morphia habit. Is he a quack? Well, Dr. Alexander Lambert of New York and Dr. Richard C. Cabot of Boston have estimable names. They lend them to Mr. Towns. Dr. Lambert sent Mr. Towns to Dr. Cabot. Dr. Cabot regarded as “entirely impossible” the claims that Mr. Towns made. Experience converted him. He not only verified Mr. Towns’ statements. He duplicated his methods and his cures. “I do not hesitate to say,” Dr. Cabot writes, “that he knows more about the alleviation and cure of drug addictions than any doctor that I have ever seen.”

This book is not a treatise on Mr. Towns’ method. It is a discourse on the “menace” of opium, alcohol and tobacco, and an exordium on the remedy. So far as regards tobacco, Mr. Towns seems to me unbalanced and unsound. As regards opium and alcohol, he seems to me to carry conviction. What he says about opium is primarily of interest to people who have formed the drug-habit or people who want to know how it can be cured. It is, secondly, of the greatest importance in respect to drug regulation. What he says about alcoholics is of even greater importance. Men are arrested every day for drunkenness and treated or ill-treated on account of drunkenness. Mr. Towns makes criticisms of this punishment for drunkenness which should revolutionize the current practices. Magistrates and police officials are public servants. They are responsive in some measure to public opinion. Seeing how wrong their attitude can be—Mr. Towns proves it—the sooner they can be influenced in a line with Mr. Towns’ contentions, the better for everyone concerned.

“No cure exists, or ever will exist, for alcoholism.” That is Mr. Towns’ invincible belief. Yet he says also: “I cannot too strongly or too frequently reiterate the statement that there is no more desperate illness than chronic alcoholism.” What treatment, then, can be adopted to restore an alcoholic to normal being? For the “home cure” or the sanitarium Mr. Towns has no good words to say, either for drug-habits or for alcoholism. He denounces deprivation in unmeasured terms. “With the alcoholic, as with the drug-taker,” he says, “the first thing to be accomplished is the unpoisoning of the body. In order to accomplish this, it is first necessary to keep up the alcoholic medication, with ample sedatives, using great care lest the patient drift into that extreme nervous condition which leads to delirium. If delirium does occur, nothing but sleep can bring about an improvement in the patient’s condition. . . . I am rather proud to state that from delirium tremens I have never lost a single case.” But when the body is “unpoisoned,” as Mr. Towns and Dr. Cabot say it can in a week be “unpoisoned,” what then is the treatment? And is it “guaranteed?”

“Thousands of decent men annually yield to alcohol, and are wrecked by it. The decent and potentially valuable citizen who through overwork, worry, sickness, sorrow, or even through a mistaken conception of social amenities and duties, drifts into excessive alcoholism is a victim of our imperfect social system, and repays remedial effort. Furthermore, such a man is invariably savable if he himself applies for salvation, assists with his own will in its

application to his case, and pays his own money for the cure.” The emphasis on money is deliberate. “My long experience has taught me that the man who does not feel a financial responsibility for that which is done for him is usually the least promising of all the cases brought to me.”

Sympathy is not the secret of Mr. Towns’ treatment—“that most striking evidence of weakness, a craving for sympathy rather than blame.” Nurses “must do as little hand-holding and sympathizing as possible even in the cases of ultra-nervous women patients.” “The first thing a physician must do when dealing with an alcoholic is to cut every string of excuse which lies between him and his habit. He must leave nothing of this sort to which the drinker may cling. Sickness, worry, unhappy circumstances of whatever sort must immediately be eliminated as excuses for alcoholic indulgence.” I like that brisk word *immediately*. It sounds so simple. But Mr. Towns knows what he means. And it leads to his truth: “Nothing except a man’s own mind, whether the treatment extends over six weeks, six months, or six years, can ever relieve him of the danger of a relapse into alcoholism.”

Among alcoholics there are incurables. “Many alcoholics never have been and probably never could be useful citizens. Waste of money and emotion on them is lamentable to contemplate; the sums at present thus hopelessly thrown away would aggregate enough really to restore every alcoholic actually curable. Sentimentalists do not like to admit the limitations of useful help, but those limitations do exist, and we should reckon with them.”

The curables, however, are different. “The curables among alcoholics are intense and pitiable sufferers. They have never had real help. They have been penalized. . . . An intelligent handling of this subject would close or entirely reform ninety-nine per cent of the public institutions devoted to the care of inebriates, and would depopulate one-half of the sanitariums between the Atlantic and the Pacific.”

Granted a man is curable, “the first effort should be devoted to reestablishing his confidence in himself. He should be ‘given a new mind’ upon the subject of drink and general self-indulgence.” “The alcoholic idle poor are virtually hopeless; the alcoholic idle rich are absolutely hopeless.” “I cannot say with too great emphasis that self-respecting pride is the main hope of the alcoholic.” “The whole effort of society in dealing with the alcoholic should be to prevent those things which at present are the very ones which it accomplishes—mental depression, loss of pride, disgrace, and loss of social position. I am inclined to think that as the world grows older it will be more and more convinced of the inefficiency of punishment, and more and more aware of the necessity of reform through helpfulness.” And again: “Self-respect must be protected at every stage of the struggle as the patient’s only hope. My purpose here is to show that the only chance of reforming most alcoholics is giving them opportunity through this physiological change [unpoisoning] to reestablish confidence in themselves.” “A man cannot be cured of alcoholism. He can be given medical aid which will restore his self-control.”

That the cure comes back in the end to “self-respect” seems a rather empty truism. In point of fact, however, it is the phraseology rather than the thought that makes it a platitude. Where the moralist is annoying is in suggesting that man exists for the sake of temperance. One can act much more receptively to the idea that temperance exists for the sake of the man. What Mr. Towns emphasizes is that morphine, cocaine, heroin, trional, sul-