

of distributing publications outlining various means of making better homes. Prizes are offered for the best-conducted campaigns in towns of various sizes. A number of communities, impelled by these measures, have built houses, or refurbished and furnished houses already standing, to serve as demonstrations. At the Sesqui-Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia a model house was built and furnished by a local committee, to be maintained permanently by the Girl Scouts of the city. Elsewhere, local committees have arranged "Better Homes" tours, to show their fellow-citizens what their neighbor towns were doing to improve their homes.

Americans who have taken pleasure in the increasing attractiveness of average homes will join those who have been helped in having attractive homes in gratitude for the influence of the "Better Homes" movement, which is now centered in the "Better Homes in America" organization.

"Poisoning the People's Drink"

THOSE who celebrated the season of peace on earth with lethal doses of bootleg liquor have caused, dead, more strife than, alive, they ever could have caused. When they were alive, most of them could not disturb the peace sufficiently to influence anything higher than a police court. Now that they are dead, they have started a turmoil which involves several National organizations and the Treasury Department of the United States Government, and will involve Congress.

The wets are charging again that the Government is "poisoning the people's drink" by denaturing commercial alcohol. The thirty or so persons who died of alcoholism in New York City at Christmas are said to have been murdered by the Government, as are the eight hundred or so who died in that city from the same cause during the year 1926. The fact is overlooked, apparently, that there always have been deaths from alcoholism. Indeed, the number of such deaths has not varied greatly from year to year. In 1910, nine years before prohibition, the number of deaths from alcoholism in New York City was greater than in 1926.

Still, it is not to be denied that many of those who drank themselves to death at Christmas in New York City drank alcohol denatured by the Government with poisonous substances, redistilled, peddled by bootleggers. Both the revenue law under which alcohol is dena-

tured and the Prohibition Law were, in that sense, instruments of homicide. But it would be more logical to charge General Andrews, head of prohibition enforcement, directly with the deaths. Somewhat more poisoned alcohol was drunk than usual because better enforcement of the Prohibition Law made less real liquor obtainable. And that applies to most other cities as much as to New York.

Information comes from reliable sources that enforcement lines have recently been so tight that practically no real liquor has found its way into New York or any other of the large Eastern cities with the exception of Baltimore. There are said to be sources of supply among the tortuous inlets of Chesapeake Bay from which the Maryland metropolis drew fairly liberal supplies of real liquor for Christmas. Over the country inland, cities great and small were in the same situation as New York. One city on the Pacific coast, Seattle, was about as fortunate—or unfortunate—as Baltimore.

And so Senator Edwards, of New Jersey, and the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment talk of legalized murder and the like. "In opposing the use of poisonous denaturants," says a statement from the Association, "this Association has always held that nobody voted for prohibition with murderous intent. It still holds that the misguided followers of the Anti-Saloon League did not so vote." The Association Against the Prohibition Amendment ought to know—and probably does know—that alcohol is not denatured under the Volstead Law or the Eighteenth Amendment, but under a revenue law passed in 1906 without the slightest reference to prohibition.

The Treasury Responds

THE Treasury Department, as if in defiant answer to its critics, put into effect on January 1 a new denaturing formula containing twice as much wood alcohol as the old ones. Heretofore commercial alcohol has contained two per cent of wood alcohol. Hereafter it will contain four per cent. Some other poisonous substances, however, are left out, and commercial alcohol, as such, is no more poisonous than before.

Further, the announcement has been made personally by Secretary of the Treasury Mellon that the Government has no desire to put poisons into commercial alcohol if it can be denatured with non-poisonous substances. Chemists in the Prohibition Unit are hard at work in an effort to discover denaturants

non-poisonous but so vile tasting and nauseous as to render alcohol undrinkable even after the finest arts of redistillation have been applied to it. If such a denaturant can be found, it will be used. Secretary Mellon, however, is not very hopeful that any such formula can be evolved. Neither are the chemists who are at work upon the problem. Some progress, it is announced, has been made, but nothing as yet known to chemistry is adequate.

Persons whose knowledge of hard liquor and hard drinkers of liquor comes from observation rather than from experience will be, perhaps, even more doubtful than the Secretary and the chemists. It is probably not possible to make anything so distasteful that certain types of soaks will refuse to drink it. Most of the liquor consumed during the past several years has been decidedly vile tasting. And it has always been accepted as a fact that persons who get drunk derive no pleasure from the taste of their liquor. Most of them are gagged by it, even when it is good liquor. If any chemist's job depends upon his ability to make an intoxicating draught so nasty that men like this will not drink it, that chemist had better resign at the outset; but some chemist may some day find a substance inseparable from alcohol that, though not deadly, but acting as an emetic, will make the alcohol undrinkable.

Hoods or Flour Sacks?

WHEN the Governor of Georgia in offering a reward for the conviction of those engaged in a whipping outrage declared that "mobs with heads covered with flour sacks shall not rule in Georgia," he did not mean to distinguish between flour sacks and hoods. But the Grand Dragon of the Georgia Ku Klux Klan pointed out that his followers wore robes and regalia, and that the night-birds who beat and injured Mr. W. E. Brown wore something different and presumably inferior.

At all events, Mr. Brown was thoroughly thrashed with leather straps, and he says that it was because he prosecuted "alleged members of a hooded mob that killed Willie Wilson in July" and that the punishment was for attacking the Klan and writing newspaper articles—in other words, for exercising the right of free speech and a free press.

The incident illustrates the basic fallacy of regulation by secret society. Even a theoretically ideal society that whips or banishes people without trial is bound to have imitators of a baser sort, and who shall separate the noble

K. K. K. sheep from the malignant goats?

What Men Believe

A COMMISSION of a hundred prominent clergymen of various denominations prepared recently a list of questions to be propounded through newspapers by the Church Advertising Department of the International Advertising Association. The purpose of these questions was to discover, in the words of the director of this religious census, the Rev. Charles Stelzle, "the attitude of Americans regarding religion." More than 125,000 persons answered the questions. Their answers, as received through 153 newspapers, have been tabulated, and, expressed in percentages of the total number of replies, are as follows:

| Question | "Yes" | "No" |
|---|-------|------|
| 1. Do you believe in God?..... | 91 | 9 |
| 2. Do you believe in immortality?..... | 88 | 12 |
| 3. Do you believe in prayer as a means of personal relationship with God?..... | 88 | 12 |
| 4. Do you believe that Jesus was divine as no other man was divine?..... | 85 | 15 |
| 5. Do you regard the Bible as inspired in a sense that no other literature could be said to be inspired?..... | 85 | 15 |
| 6. Are you an active member of any church?..... | 77 | 23 |
| 7. Do you regularly attend any religious services?..... | 76 | 24 |
| 8. Would you be willing to have your family grow up in a community in which there is no church?..... | 13 | 87 |
| 9. Do you regularly have "family worship" in your homes?..... | 42 | 58 |
| 10. Were you brought up in a religious home?..... | 87 | 13 |
| 11. Do you send your children to any school of religious instruction?..... | 72 | 28 |
| 12. Do you think that religion in some form is a necessary element of life for the individual and for the community?..... | 87 | 13 |

It should be noted that the question numbered 5 was asked of Catholics and Protestants only. The other questions were addressed to people of all creeds and no creed at all.

In any consideration of the significance of these questions and their answers, two facts at least should be kept in mind:

First, that these answers came from people who read newspapers published in cities, and are therefore presumably for the most part dwellers in cities.

Second, that the answers came from those, and only those, who were sufficiently interested in questions of religious belief to take the pains to fill in the blanks and mail their answers. They do not represent the utterly indifferent.

With these facts in mind, one conclusion seems clear. Open, active, and

warmly felt hostility to religion and religious belief is not characteristic of the city people of America. Nearly one-quarter of those who answered either did not belong to any church or did not regularly attend any religious service, and yet less than one in ten failed to acknowledge some belief in God and barely more than one in eight was willing to have a home in a community without a church. Active hostility to the church would undoubtedly be as strong an impulse for answering these questions as active support would be. It is likely that whatever anti-church feeling there is was well represented in these replies. That of itself is a fact of which churches should make note. The task that challenges them is that, not of converting the hostile, but of winning the interest of the indifferent.

That these questions aroused interest in many communities is the testimony of editors of participating newspapers. Evidence of such interest exists apart from such testimony. In that excellent financial weekly journal "Commerce and Finance," published in New York, there is an article, printed in its issue for December 22, by M'Cready Sykes. One would not naturally look for comment on a religious question in a journal devoted to commerce and finance. Mr. Sykes's comment is worthy of notice, not only because it appears in a commercial journal, but because of its thoughtfulness. He points out that as a measure of interest in religion "a questionnaire so largely framed in terms of 'I believe' is entirely inadequate." He draws this contrast: "Christianity may be an institution whose members are drawn together by community of belief or it may be a way of life, an attitude, consciously carried into action, toward the universe and specifically toward mankind, that takes as its inspiration the general spirit and approach of Jesus of Nazareth." If Christianity is a way of life, questions as to belief in creedal statements, as Mr. Sykes points out, cannot really elicit answers that reveal people's religion. Instead of these questions, which are mainly of creed or ritual (for family worship is a simple form of ritual), he propounds six questions which pertain to people's way of life. His first question, the briefest, and simplest, is this:

Are you in general sympathy with the principles of Jesus of Nazareth as set forth in Matthew, Mark, and Luke?

Even Mr. Sykes, however, cannot wholly discard questions of belief. Of the remaining five questions four of them have to do with the attitude toward belief. For example:

Do you regard as a matter of grave importance the correct determination of the extent to which divine inspiration entered into the composition of the Scriptures?

What we should like to see attempted is a questionnaire devoted solely to religion as a way of life and a source of power for life. Questions in botany have little bearing on love of nature; and questions of creed do not have necessarily much to do with the love of God and man.

The Navy and the Nation

THE battle rages over the naval appropriations. The President still seems willing to promise much as long as little is performed. The Naval Committee of the House appears to promise even less than the President. The Committee has recommended no appropriations to begin work on the three cruisers already authorized, and has in addition cut down the amount of money available for the cruising activities of our present fleet. The report of this Committee, of course, does not tell the final story.

The proposed increase in our Navy seems to The Outlook to be wholly justified by reason. The plan of the President to postpone this increase pending negotiations for a further international agreement looking towards a decrease in naval forces seems to us to represent a false economy and a false National policy.

We believe that there is not the slightest jingoism or the slightest thought of aggression in the demand that our Navy be brought to full parity with that of Great Britain at the earliest possible moment. To such parity we are entitled by our National needs and by the spirit as well as the letter of agreements already entered upon.

The fight against proper appropriations for the Navy indicates, at least in some quarters, a lack of knowledge of American history and of the temper of the American people.

The American Navy has never been used for purposes of aggression. It has been a weapon of defense, the value of which depended upon the wisdom and far-sightedness of the civilian authorities of the Nation. When the Navy has been given the proper tools to work with, it has always adequately represented both the power and the policy of the American people.

There have been times when the American Nation was essentially sea-minded, when it knew by intuition the correctness of the policy which Admiral Mahan proved by demonstration. There have been times when the American peo-