



Outlook.

BY ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

Not to be conquered by these headlong days,
But to stand free; to keep the mind broad
On life's deep meaning, nature's altitude
Of loveliness, and time's mysterious ways:
At every thought and deed to clear the haze
Out of our eyes, considering only this:
What man, what life, what love, what beauty is,
This is to live and win the final praise.
Though strife, ill-fortune and harsh human need
Beat down the soul, at moments blind and dumb,
With agony; yet, patience—there shall come
Many great voices from life's outer sea,
Hours of strange triumph, and, when few men heed,
Murmurs and glimpses of eternity.

"Wish-bone Pickings."

BY THE SPARTAN.

If the reader cares a snap for an explanation, it was nothing more heroic than a Thanksgiving fowl in the process of dissection that prompted this philosophic ramble. It was really pathetic that one had no O. Henry nor a Mark Twain to elaborate the theme; for the pater-familias that was performing wondrous surgery had really started something when he remarked that he had spoiled the "wish-bone" but that he didn't care, it wasn't as important as the backbone, anyway.

Of the elect who waited in close-belted and undisguised, lofty anticipation, one said the wish-bone looked like the fifth proposition in Euclid to him—had the same luck trying to cross the asses' bridge as he had breaking the wish-bone—always got about a short half. Another said, with more imagination, that the thing really did resemble an isosceles triangle but that the bridge was no "asses' bridge," it was rather a bridge of sentiment joining Thanksgiving to Christmas, as it were from stuffed fowl to stuffed fowl, and spanning a period of fine human hopes and sentiments at that.

A lady, thereupon, remarked that while wish-bones were so easily broken she noticed, too, that the doctor in his carving onslaughts had done the good, solid backbone no damage whatsoever.

I think it was the word "piffle!"—O tempora, O mores!—that finally ended the remarks on that particular theme. I have always wondered what would have happened had someone in the midst of one of Burke's masterpieces risen to shriek that word at him, or whether Cicero in full swing against Cataline would not have been stricken dumb by a well-howled "piffle!" from the historic renegade himself. Speaking of Rome, one is reminded of a certain monastery there with small dimensions but large and memorable records. It has a very small burial plot, and for many centuries the good monks have been interred nowhere else. In the stress of grim events the plot ere long became full, so that now, the monks of the middle ages having yielded their crowded tombs to more modern sleepers, the walls of the courtyard are hung heavy with gruesome decorations. Yards, rods, almost miles of backbone! Skulls shrunken, toes missing but backbone still intact. Fine, substantial old Roman backbone, too, for which we Anglo Saxons, Romans in many ways, can be thankful in these days.

I don't know how far comparisons might be carried. It may be a wish-bone answers for poetry. It is backbone that makes a Lloyd-George oration. One can wrap a wish-bone in tinsel, be-fibbon it

and hang it artistically on one's wall, but any kind of decent backbone will stand by itself.

For it takes stout vertebrae to make history, to hew out civilization, to trample down tyrannies. One likes to know that the crest of Britain bears a lion rampant, for there is more room for backbone there than in certain shrieking eagles we wot of. And it is in pathetic sublime that, beneath that crest, Britons have led legions of their fellows to every corner of the earth, so that there are whitening British bones in the remote Himalayas, in the wastes of the Soudan, in the deserts of Arabia. Nor has it all been for conquest, but rather because of the untameable impulse to do rather than to wish that springs from an upstanding backbone.

But it is in the individual that the thing means all. It is only a symbol, my friend, and yet infinitely more than a dinner jest. Have you not seen brilliance go skyrocketing to gaudy flash and instant death? Tap that fellow in the middle of the moral back and he wobbles. And have you ever beheld the unutterable pathos of the near-great? The tragedy of one who almost got there but for the scintillating lure of a tinselled wish-bone diverting him, not happily?

There was genius and philosophy about Byron and Shelley. Yet one contemplates them as pictures with spaces of canvas strangely bare, or as a highly colored Oriental vase in the last touching of which the artist has suddenly lost his sense of proportion. Not that these partial flights are without inspiration—there is insignificance in the sublimest human soul it seems sometimes—but that the uplift of peoples and times is not wrought by such spasmodic brilliance. No, rather by the straight-standing

figures of substantial strength consistently and persistently applied.

The comparison is very clear when one compares the far-flung achievements of a Livingstone, a Roberts, a Kitchener, a Lloyd-George with the insufficient, though at times pleasing, life-expression of a Buckingham, a Marlborough, or a Charles II. In the earlier romantic centuries these picturesque figures constantly crept into the light and dazzled their day there, but they stand out in our fanciful moods only. When we want substance we think of the good, long swords of the barons and Magna Charta, or of Oliver Cromwell and his legions.

No! The age of laced cavaliers has fled, and their snuff-boxes are largely in museums. The twentieth century is well laden with falsities, it is true, but when all is said it is a practical and a very observing century. The chances are you will be judged more by your beefsteak purchasing abilities than by any artistic trait that may be yours. And one finds it hard to decide just which stands higher, the talent that builds a sound bridge or the talent which produces a silvery sonnet. Such judgment seems merciless to many a high-strung soul, but it is inexorable. One has to accept in some measure the tide of his own times and to shape his course thereby.

This trend toward practical work-a-day achievement is significant and commands respect, for its result, in the long run, probably raises the level of living amongst the whole mass of mankind, and in all cases it is at least evident—visible to the eye—a bigger house, a larger car, more snipping of coupons at approved intervals.

Commendable this and eloquent of substantial vertebrae no doubt, in which sense it wins its legion of disciples, and rolls up irresistible forces, sweeping nearly

all with it. But I think the very fact takes us back to the rarer and higher strength, which can march alone, yea, though its valet doesn't exist and its top coat be of last year's pattern. Heavy marching, too,—apt to be solitary throughout life, and only winning followers perhaps of a posthumous sort. Nevertheless high, tragically fine, and soundly upstanding.

So it is that one sometimes recalls the "different" in this strong age, who are also very strong, albeit the force of them radiates towards their fellows, seldom converges towards themselves, and grasps little or nothing.

And when all is said, if one would weigh truly these two strengths in the deepest recess of his heart, he would know with knowledge of high instinct, which he nor none other could explain, that the scale hung never so heavily with gold was yet all too light to balance a single roll of a John Milton manuscript, the bow alone of a Stradivarius, or the smallest canvas of a Rembrandt.

And were the yule-tide log to be aflame, —well, it is a strong thing to rear a pyramid, to dam the Nile, to tunnel the Rockies, to make a million, but I ask, in that soft, mysterious hearth-light, if one were to hear the strains of Gounod's "Ave Maria," would one not forget, or if one were recite "the Cotter's Saturday Night," would one not sense to the full this other—this different strength?

Travel Notes.

(FROM HELEN'S DIARY.)

Berne, Switz., Nov. 8, 1916.

Berne again! All roads in Switzerland lead to Berne. Sooner or later everybody has to come to the Hub of the Republic, for one reason or another. Just now there is a rush for passports, the two-year limit being just about up. At the beginning of the war the English passports were good for five years, but later the time limit has shortened to two. Now, if one wishes to cross the frontier he must do so within three days after the passport has been vised. Moreover, one cannot enter any of the belligerent countries without a good and sufficient reason. This puts a veto on the travelling for pleasure, if there is such a thing nowadays, and in travelling to "see things." Illness is a sufficient excuse for leaving Switzerland for a more salubrious climate, but not unless one has a doctor's certificate stating that it is necessary.

So all our dreams of spending the winter by the blue Mediterranean in Italy or Southern France have vanished. We have to resign ourselves to another season of fog and gloom in Switzerland.

In Berne one is apt to meet any of one's made-in-Switzerland-since-the-war acquaintances. The refugees keep going around and around from one place to another, to the mountain resorts in the summer, to the cities in the winter, to Lugano in the spring and autumn, and between times they come to Berne. Switzerland is so small that wherever we go we keep running up against the same people. We are continually having monologues or dialogues or triologues in our family of this sort:

1. Uncle Ned (at luncheon)—"Say—who is that charmer over there with the golden locks? Haven't we seen her some place before?"

Aunt Julia (elevating her lorgnette)—"Yes. But where? Her hair seems to be different."

Helen (turning to look)—"Oh! it's that alleged Austrian widow who sat near us in Geneva. Her hair was brown there. She is the one who was suspected of being a spy."

2. (At the theatre, just before the curtain rises).

Uncle Ned—"Who's that military swell over there who is bowing to you, Helen?"



War Prisoners Post at Lucerne, Switzerland.

Reading from left to right: German, French, English, Swiss.