

æsthetic matters and should be especially noted for encouragement and example.

The recent celebration of the centennial of an important date in the history of Columbia College has drawn public attention to an institution which shows abundant signs of rejuvenation. The college is still a college in name, but its tendency toward a genuine university establishment is emphasized in many ways; notably in the conduct of its library, which, in its printed treasures and in its lecture courses, is a college in itself, the benefits of which are wisely and generously extended with few restrictions to the entire community.

The dinner to James Russell Lowell, Charles Waldstein, and the trustees of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, was an event in line with the general movement; and it is evident that the proper endowment of this school is sure to follow soon. The Metropolitan Museum has shared in the æsthetic generousities of the time, and has received some splendid legacies and gifts. There is already the surety, also, of the generous endowment of a new and highly important scheme for the direct advancement of American art, in all its branches. Along with these signs of the times have come annual exhibitions of special interest—exhibitions which proclaim that the new generation of painters and sculptors have something in them beside suggestion and promise.

The prosperous and growing Free Library scheme,

and the Tilden bequest to the same general purpose, are a part of the new movement.

It is evident that New York is yearly becoming a better city to live in.

#### The Lincoln History.

THE current installment of the *Life of Lincoln and History of his times* reaches and includes an account of the famous Lincoln-Douglas Debates. Although Lincoln had for years been opposed to Douglas in political discussions, the great struggle between these giants of debate did not occur till in 1858 they simultaneously appealed to the people of Illinois for election to the United States Senate. The readers of the *Life* will fully appreciate the necessity felt by the authors to record amply and clearly the occurrences in Kansas, in Congress, and in the Supreme Court which led up to the political situation of 1858 and the celebrated canvass of that year in Illinois. This momentous debate, which sent Douglas to the Senate and Lincoln to the White House, cannot be fully understood, in all its subtleties of argument and allusion, by those who are unfamiliar with the political events of immediately preceding years.

The *Life*, which will certainly lose nothing in interest as it approaches more nearly the war period, will deal in August with Lincoln's Ohio speeches and the Cooper Institute speech, and in September with Lincoln's nomination and election.

## OPEN LETTERS.

### Labor and Capital.

#### A CONNECTICUT EXPERIMENT.

IF Mr. Walter Besant wishes to see a working model of the "Palace of Delight" so movingly described by him in that "impossible story" of his which bears the preposterous title, "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," let him cross the ocean and visit the thrifty Connecticut town of Bridgeport. The novelist's notion is that the chief trouble with the working people is their lack of pleasure; and that pleasure enough is within their reach, cheap and wholesome, if they only knew where and how to find it. His theory is, therefore, that the philanthropist who can show the poor how to enjoy themselves is a better friend than the one who can increase their income; that he who can make one innocent pleasure grow where there was none before is a greater benefactor than he who puts two dimes into a purse where there was one before. Therefore he would turn the efforts of those who seek to improve the condition of the people in our cities toward the problem of brightening their lives by providing them with social amusements, or, better, toward the task of teaching them how to amuse themselves. That this kind of philanthropy, like every other, will cost something, his fable teaches; but his contention is that money and effort expended along this line will produce the best results.

What Mr. Besant would see, if he came to Bridgeport, is a beautiful building, nearly ready for occupation, somewhat less magnificent than the airy nothing of his creation, and bearing the less ambitious desig-

nation of "Seaside Institute." It stands near Seaside Park, in the western suburb of the city, directly across the street from the factory of the Warner Brothers, by the side of which it has grown as the honeysuckle grows upon the cornfield wall,—the flower drawing its beauty and its fragrance from the same kindly soil that nourishes and ripens the grain. The Warner Brothers are manufacturers of corsets, and they employ about one thousand women of various sorts and conditions, most of them young and unmarried. A bright, comely, wholesome-looking company of young women they are; four or five hundred of them might be picked out who, judging their intelligence by their faces, would not look out of place in the chapel at Smith, Wellesley, or Vassar. The average weekly wage of this thousand is about seven dollars each,—a larger amount than women in such callings generally earn,—which indicates that the dealings of the firm with its employees are not wholly regulated by competition.

For a long time these employers have been studying the problem of the working-girl, and trying to find out how they could best improve her condition. They knew that a large share of the earnings of these girls must go for board and room-rent; that it was possible for few of them to afford any but narrow, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated, unwarmed lodgings, and that no cheerful and comfortable place was open to them in which they might spend their leisure hours. They knew that the presence of so many of these girls in the skating-rinks and on the streets in the evening was due, in large part, to the fact that they had nowhere else to

go. They knew, moreover, that the kind of food furnished in such boarding-houses as they must patronize was in many cases inferior and unwholesome. Under such conditions it is not strange that the working-girls of the cities often develop abnormal appetites, and vicious tastes, and rude manners; the wonder is that so many of them keep their health unbroken and their characters unsullied. And these men of good-will, studying with what seems to be a sincere philanthropy the welfare of the thousand women by whose labor they are accumulating their fortune, determined to build for them, if not a "Palace of Delight," at least a Hall of Comfort, in which shelter and care and companionship and opportunities of wholesome diversion and of mental cultivation should be freely furnished them.

This "Seaside Institute" will cost the builders about forty thousand dollars. It is a shapely building externally — no mere barracks, but a well-proportioned and winning structure, seventy-five feet square and three stories in height, proclaiming in its very form the presence of other than "economical" motives. In the basement is a large refectory, with kitchen attached, in which the best of plain food will be furnished at cost. Those who wish will be permitted to order by the card; a glass of milk for a cent, or a cup of coffee at the same price, indicate the scale of the charges. An experienced and popular caterer tells me that the actual cost of the food is not more than this — that the project is feasible from this point of view. Those girls who wish may obtain regular board at this refectory, at prices not to exceed two dollars and a half a week. It is hoped that the charge may be less than this. "The food will be prepared," say the proprietors, "by experienced cooks, and served in the best manner." The value of this provision for the comfort and health of the girls can be estimated only by those who have tested the cooking of the average cheap boarding-house. To be permitted to sit down in a bright and airy room, at a clean and prettily furnished table, to a well-cooked meal, will seem to many of these young women a foretaste of Paradise. In the determination to make this part of their plan serviceable to their employees, the proprietors will not haggle about the cost. If the refectory should not quite pay expenses, the bill of fare will not be cheapened, but the deficiency will be provided for.

The floor above is entered from the street by a wide porch which opens into a generous hall, on the left of which is a reception and conversation room, connecting by sliding doors with a music-room in the rear. Back of this is an ample lavatory with numerous bath-rooms — a most sumptuous provision for the comfort of the girls, and one which they are sure to appreciate. On the right of the hall is the great reading-room or common-room, a spacious and beautiful apartment, and in the rear of this, and communicating with it, the library, surrounded by low cases whose shelves will be filled with books for the use of the girls. Here, too, will be found numerous writing-tables and full supplies of writing-materials.

An easy stairway leads to the second floor. The first apartment on the right of the hall is a room to be furnished with sewing-machines, where the girls will be able to do their own sewing. Farther on are two or three class-rooms, in which evening classes will be taught in any branches which the young women may

desire to study. The plan is to permit them to organize these classes for themselves, in any branch in which they may desire instruction,—singing, penmanship, book-keeping, type-writing, stenography, fancy needlework, or whatever they wish; for all classes so organized, containing a certain number, teachers will be provided. The other side of this story is occupied by a large assembly-room, seating five or six hundred, with stage and anterooms, in which lectures, concerts, and entertainments of all kinds may be given to the inmates. It is hoped that they will take Mr. Besant's hint with respect to the use of this room, and learn how to furnish with these facilities a large part of their own diversion.

Several pianos will be located in different parts of the building, on which students of music will be permitted to practice. A competent matron will be put in charge of the Institute, to whose wisdom the general management will be largely intrusted. The whole building is warmed by steam and lighted by electricity.

The design is to furnish an attractive and delightful home for these young women during all the hours when they are not at work or asleep. The question about lodgings has been considered by the Messrs. Warner, but they have not been satisfied of the wisdom of furnishing these. It is possible that they may yet need lodging-houses in the neighborhood of the Seaside Institute; but at present they are not convinced that it may not be better for their women to keep their rooms in private families. The proprietors have found by investigation that half of their employees live within half a mile of the factory, so that the Institute will be easily accessible to most of them. Several rooms in the third story will be furnished as lodgings into which any of the women who are ill, or temporarily without homes, may be received, under the matron's care.

"All of the benefits afforded by the establishment," say the proprietors, "will be substantially free, except food, which will be furnished at or below cost. All the women who are in the employ of Warner Brothers will be entitled to any of the educational, literary, musical, and social privileges that may be furnished." There has been a question whether a small fee, say one dollar a year, might not secure a more general and freer use of the privileges of the Institute; whether the girls would not more readily avail themselves of a provision which was not entirely gratuitous. If any such charge should be made, it would be nominal, and only for the purpose of extending the benefits of the Institute.

Another feature of the institution is thus described by one of the proprietors: "We shall have connected with the building a savings bank, in order to encourage our hands to save some portion of their earnings. I have long since learned that what one earns has little to do with what he saves. One with an income of ten thousand dollars is no more likely to lay aside a portion of his earnings than one with an income of one thousand. The principle of saving is either inherited, or it must be cultivated, and it is to encourage this principle that this branch of the institution will be established. This privilege will be extended to all our help, male and female." Every employee who deposits two dollars a month is also promised that a half-dollar will be added to the deposit by the employers; and interest will be paid on all deposits, besides the bonus allowed.

It is evident that a considerable amount will be re-

quired to pay the operating expenses of this institution, and although this will be taken, at present, from the profits of the business, it is not to be left unprovided for in the event of a change in the proprietorship; for a sum of money is being set apart as a permanent fund for the endowment of the Institute, that it may go on doing its beneficent work after its proprietors have passed to their reward.

In these days, when the hearts of the compassionate are torn by so many harrowing tales of man's inhumanity to working-women, it is pleasant to be able to set forth the good deeds of these two chivalrous employers. Under the law of competition, which always pushes the weakest to the wall, women are the slaves of the labor market. They have not learned to combine; they have no power to resist the oppression of conscienceless capital; the price of their labor is therefore fixed by the most rapacious employers. Against them "the iron law of wages," in its bitterest sense, is continually being enforced. By a logic which is as inexorable as the grave, their compensation tends to starvation-point, nor does any merely "economical" force appear for their deliverance. The less they receive, the less they are able to earn; the labor-force in them is weakened by their impoverishment. The pictures that Helen Campbell has been showing us of the "Prisoners of Poverty" in New-York exhibit the natural result of unrestrained competition. If the women who work are to be rescued from their wretchedness, it must be done by the appearance on their behalf of such knightly employers as these, who decline to build their fortunes upon the woes of women, and who determine to share their gains with those who have helped to gather them. Of course all this is done in sheer despite of the economical maxims. In the thought of such employers, "business is business," and something more: it is opportunity; it is stewardship; it is the high calling of God. Not being omniscient I cannot pretend to discern all the motives of these employers, nor have they shown in my presence any disposition to make any parade of their philanthropy; but I visited their manufactory, by the side of which is planted this fair flower of their charity, and I have seen with my eyes what they are trying to do, and the thing which appears is this: that these two men are working as studiously, as resolutely, as patiently to improve the condition of their employees as they are to enlarge their fortunes. I believe that the one purpose lies as near their hearts as the other.

Are they alone in this? By no means. The number of those employers who find the vocation of the captain of industry to be a humane and a benign vocation is steadily growing. It was never growing so fast as it is to-day. The past two years, with all their strifes and turmoils, have wrought wonders in this realm. It begins to be evident enough that no organization of industry is stable and productive which does not bring in goodwill as one of the working forces. It is just as true of industry as of art, that

"He that shuts Love out, in turn shall be  
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie  
Howling in outer darkness."

The age of the soulless money-maker is passing; the new nobility is coming to its own.

It may be asked whether a higher justice, if not a true charity, would not require these employers to distribute directly in wages the money which they are

devoting to this institution. I do not think so. They are giving their employees more than the market rate of wages for such service; and this institution will be worth far more to these women than the money which it costs would be if it were divided among them. The aggregate amount of comfort, of enjoyment, of health, and of welfare which this institution will produce will be indefinitely greater than they could purchase for themselves with the same sum. This is due, in part, to economical causes; for comfort is a commodity that like most other commodities can be far more cheaply produced on the large scale. The benefits of coöperative housekeeping, after which a generation of burdened housekeepers have struggled in vain, are secured for these employees by the good providence of their employer. There are moral reasons, also, for preferring this method of distribution; for many of these beneficiaries would not, in their present state of mind, be likely to receive any real benefit from an increase of wages; a little more candy, a few more ribbons, an additional number of evenings in the skating-rink or the cheap theater would tell the story of their added income. They need, most of all, higher tastes, simpler enjoyments, and habits of frugality; and the Seaside Institute is intended to lead them gently toward these higher things. When they have found this kingdom, many things can be added unto them.

*Washington Gladden.*

#### Christian Union.

FROM THE BAPTIST POINT OF VIEW.

THE recent articles in *THE CENTURY* on the general subject of Christian union have been in a high degree interesting and instructive. He must be a very blind observer of "the signs of the times" who does not discover strong tendencies toward a closer union among all denominations of Christians. At the New York State Baptist Pastors' Conference held last fall at Poughkeepsie, a unanimous resolution was passed expressing this desire in explicit and emphatic terms. No body of Christians is more earnest than is the great Baptist denomination — numbering in the United States its millions — in offering the prayer of our Lord: "That they all may be one." By no formal appointment do I represent the denomination in this "Open Letter"; but I am quite sure that I do not misrepresent its spirit and efforts.

Three facts seem very plain to many at this time.

*First.* The great denominations are drawing nearer together in their forms of service. Churches which have not a liturgy, in the technical sense of that term, are adopting more elaborate forms of worship than they formerly used. On the other hand, some churches, which come into the category of liturgical churches, are omitting, in some of their services, some of their usual forms. In some of the revival or "mission" services everything which once distinguished liturgical churches is wanting. One might think in attending these services that he was at one of Mr. Moody's meetings. These "missions" are themselves an illustration of the tendency here named. They are simply "revivals," as the term has been used for generations among the more fervent Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists. The Roman church adopted them in forms adapted to