

In the Driftway

THE Drifter cannot understand why intellectuals should be so maligned as negligible butterflies fluttering idly over the clover-fields of present-day society. What would the Peace Conference have been without the bushy head of Poland's piano president, the parchment visage of author Clemenceau, and the resplendent verbiage of Professor Wilson? Or Czecho-Slovakia without its President Professor Masaryk? And as to the revolutionists, what are Lenin and Trotzky if not intellectuals? The Drifter recalls reading of the arrest of the actor Alexander Moissi, the finest Hamlet he ever saw, for Communist propaganda in Vienna; he has beguiled many hours with the cinematographic exploits of the poet-pirate-novelist-hero-constitution-maker d'Annunzio; and now he reads that the composer Mascagni is inflaming the shipyard workers of Leghorn with his bolshevist orations. Defame the intellectuals if you will, but you cannot call them negligible.

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NO such storm of anti-war poetry and prose disturbs the Drifter's peace of mind in America as would be his lot were he reading his paper on the quai d'Inconnu, with Mme. Lecomte's blue jay peering over his shoulder, instead of in the Mercantile Lunch on Park Row. He hears that Henri Barbusse's "Le Feu" has passed the three hundred thousand mark; and his mail tells him daily of the work of Duhamel, Vildrac, Romain, Léon Werth, Marcel Martinet, Roland Dorgelès, Henri-Jacques, and others less known or unknown to him. The name of Noel Garnier has long intrigued him—the poet of "Le Don de ma Mère." And now he learns that it has intrigued the French Minister of War as well—and that, for this thin booklet of pacifist poems, the name of Noel Garnier has been stricken from the list of Legion of Honor by order of the Minister, and that he has been deprived of the right to wear the *croix de guerre*. The Drifter little dreamt that a book of poems could so stir a Minister of War. During the war it was otherwise: Noel Garnier wrote poems on *permission* and on *repos*, but he kept them to himself, and it was the poetry of action which intrigued Marshal Petain into writing:

Order No. 15352-D.

M. Garnier, Noel, second lieutenant in the 11th regiment of hussars, attached to the 15th battalion of chasseurs, is named to the order of the Legion of Honor, with the rank of knight:

A young second lieutenant transferred at his own request from the cavalry to a battalion of chasseurs. Volunteered to establish communication between two companies placed, on September 14, in a very delicate position; struck by three bullets in the thigh and one in the arm, very seriously wounded, he succeeded in dragging himself across the ground to fulfil his mission. Had himself carried on a stretcher to his *chef de corps* and before mentioning his wounds gave a detailed report on his reconnaissance. Proved a heroism which will never be surpassed. Two citations.

PETAINE

It is not required of patriotism that it be always and ever patriotic, but poetry, it seems, must be patriotic, or else

past action is forgotten. Fortunately there are others besides Ministers of War to judge of both.

THE DRIFTER

Correspondence

Mr. Wilson's Limited Democracy

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In a recent article you say, referring to President Wilson, "who had battled for that democracy at Princeton," etc.

A friend, one of the ablest of the younger generation of colored men, said to me recently—he is from New Jersey—"In selecting a college, I thought of Princeton, but, because of the race prejudice there, under Wilson, was advised to go elsewhere." He went to Harvard. Another friend, a teacher in the colored public schools in Washington City, said, when I told her this, "Yes, Princeton is now about like the University of Virginia."

If Wilson "battled for democracy" at Princeton, it must have been *white* democracy, the only part of which he has the remotest conception. How the intelligent colored people of this country must love him!

Bird-in-Hand, Pa., June 28

MARIANNA G. BRUBAKER

[Our correspondent is correct. Mr. Wilson's democracy has always stopped at the color line as it did at the sex line until it was to his political advantage to become converted. Princeton's doors are closed to colored Americans.—EDITOR.]

What Europe Thinks of Us

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Shortly before he died in Switzerland, Dr. George Nasmyth, organizer for the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, addressed a letter to Newton D. Baker which I feel sure would interest your readers:

"My Dear Mr. Secretary:

"In my travels through Europe it has been impressed upon me of late, how greatly the influence of American ideals and America's international policies is being weakened by the continuous imprisonment of political prisoners and conscientious objectors.

"During the past eight months I have traveled through England, France, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, Greece, and most of the countries of Eastern Europe. I have been surprised to find how widespread is the knowledge of American conditions in this regard and how long we have delayed in proclaiming amnesty—a measure of social reconciliation which has long been adopted in all the belligerent countries of Europe.

"I find this discussion and a growing protest against America's policy which is charged with being liberal abroad while tyrannical and Czarist at home, not only in the Labor and Radical press, but also in the Conservative and Nationalist papers. For example, in Italy, the country from which I have just returned, I find long articles on the subject in the *Idea Internazionale*, the most jingoistic newspaper, as well as in the *Avanti*, the organ of the radical Socialist Party. This anomalous situation in our political life at home constitutes the chief obstacle which prevents the democratic forces of Italy from rallying their full strength in support of President Wilson's Fiume policy and the League of Nations covenant.

"George W. Nasmyth."

When will Americans awaken to the menace of our growing isolation, and to the ill reputation which is replacing our past popularity in Europe?

ELLIS OGLE, M.D.

Boston, Mass., October 27

Criticism

By MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Dead men sit down beside the telephones
Within your brain and carefully relate
Decisions and discretions of the past,
Convinced that they will not deteriorate.
But you have not their certainty: you try
A question now and then that cautiously
Assaults their whispered indolence until
Their sharp words once more force you to agree.
Then you insist that certain living men
Whose tones are half-discreet may be allowed
To greet their masters through the telephones,
Provided that their words are not too loud.
The new men imperceptibly entice
Their elders, and a compromise is made,
Both sides discovering that three or four
Excluded men must be correctly flayed.
And so the matter ends: conservative
And radical revise their family-tree,
While you report this happening, with relief,
To liberals and victorious cups of tea.

Books

A Panorama of Labor

- What's on the Worker's Mind?* By Whiting Williams. Charles Scribner's Sons.
Why Men Strike. By Samuel Crowther. Doubleday Page and Company.
The New Industrial Unrest. By Ray Stannard Baker. Doubleday Page and Company.
The Workers at War. By Frank Julian Warne. The Century Company.
The Position of Labor in a System of Nationalism. By Edgar S. Furniss. Houghton Mifflin Company.
Life and Labor in the Nineteenth Century. By C. R. Fay. Cambridge University Press.
Humanizing Industry. By R. C. Feld. E. P. Dutton and Company.
The Human Factor in Industry. By Lee K. Frankel and Alexander Fleischer. The Macmillan Company.
Personnel Administration, Its Principles and Practice. By Ordway Tead and Henry C. Metcalf. The McGraw-Hill Book Company.
Labor's Challenge to the Social Order. By John Graham Brooks. The Macmillan Company.
The Church and Industrial Reconstruction. By the Committee on the War and the Religious Outlook. Association Press.

LET us start with the simple assumptions of those who write ordinary newspaper editorials and address employers' associations. Let us suppose that there is nothing in particular the matter with our industrial system or our economic order. Its obvious failure to function satisfactorily is due not to any structural defect, but to original sin on the part of wayward individuals. The first thing to do is to deport, imprison, and silence agitators. The next thing is to instil into the workers, by persuasion if possible, but by economic and political force if necessary, a proper respect for the employer. Why is the cost of living high? Because millions of laborers throughout the world are lazy and will not work hard enough; because they are avaricious and use their organized power to extract wages higher than those they deserve. The remedy for this is an open-

shop campaign to break up their unions, lengthen their hours, and put the fear of starvation and the boss into their hearts. With a long pull, all together, we shall be able to defeat labor, and then we can live at our ease.

A man with a mind so uncritical as to accept these assumptions without question is probably not given to reading books. But if at any moment a tiny doubt should open a crevice in the smooth surface of his complacency, Mr. Whiting Williams's book may profitably be inserted. Mr. Williams is not a revolutionary. He was a prominent official in a large steel fabricating concern. He wished to fit himself for the position of employment manager, and thought it a part of his preparation to find out what it was like to be a workman. Therefore he left home with a few dollars in his pocket and looked for a job. This is the story of his adventures in a basic steel plant, a rolling mill, a coal mine, an oil refinery, a shipyard, and other resorts of toil.

If Mr. Williams can be trusted, the life of the worker is not entirely an affair of leisure and silk shirts. Neither is the man on the job a dull individual who will respond to no stimulus but hard driving, when he is not listening to the wild words of an incendiary. He is much like anybody else, with his small and great annoyances, his ambitions, prides, and fears. If he is dissatisfied, and dissatisfied along with many others, his dissatisfaction is just as likely to have a reasonable basis as that of editors, directors, or presidents. Although Mr. Williams does not omit to relieve his picture with authentic colors of humor and pleasure, it leaves no doubt of certain devastating influences in the worker's life. One is his insecurity, his fear of unemployment, his utter dependence on the will of the boss. Another is his frequent lack of any feeling of participation in the whole process of production; his pride in doing a good job and his creative instinct are usually allowed to lie dormant or are positively rebuffed by poor management and alien control. No one after reading this book can hold any illusions as to the inhumanity, the unpopularity, and the inefficiency of the twelve-hour shift in the steel industry. Nor will he be deceived by rosy pictures of high wages or living conditions in the steel and coal towns. He will see why the miners are in a continual turmoil about wages and insufficient employment. He will understand the physical and nervous difficulty of much of the work in most of the occupations Mr. Williams tried.

Mr. Williams does not put forward any solution of the "labor problem" with much assurance. He sees the matter chiefly as one of personal relations and understanding. It is easy to point out a hundred places in which better management would smooth over difficulties and increase efficiency. But how is this better management to be achieved? Why has industrial development gone on so long without approaching it? Is there much chance of introducing it now, except in scattered and ineffective instances where there happens to be a manager with more than average intelligence? These are questions which Mr. Williams does not raise.

"Why Men Strike," the confident title of Mr. Crowther's book, might lead us to expect a somewhat more authoritative treatment of these matters than Mr. Williams's. On the contrary, however, it is a genial and smoothly written but ill-informed piece of work. It starts with the assumption that workmen on the average have been making extravagant expenditures, and comes to the conclusion that if they would only invest their surplus, the increased capital would at the same time bring about increased production to satisfy their material wants and also give them a sense of ownership which would make them work better. It is germane to such an argument, however, that yearly incomes of more than half the wage-earners probably have not kept pace with the cost of living, that never has such a superabundance of capital been stored up as in America during the war, and that the result has not increased but has decreased production. It is furthermore doubtful whether the investment of a few hundred dollars, even if the average worker could ever make it, would render him immune to the other disturbing features of his life.