

criticism of each. The Graeco-Roman school he finds poetic, pessimistic, apodictic, and pragmatic (by the last two words is really meant "didactic" and "political"). The Middle Ages, with Augustine, brought in the idea of progress, i.e., of rationality and providence. Eusebius also found a more universal interest in religion than the Greeks, even Polybius, had found in the mutual relationship of states. After this came the Renaissance, which found in history "the adequate foundation of the sciences," and defined it as "the knowledge of single things of which it is useful to preserve the memory for the purpose of living well and happily." Followed the Enlightenment with its discovery that "the true ancients, i.e., the men of most expert and mature mind, were the moderns." Reason was worshiped as the universal guide to all happiness and the general criterion of all values, thus replacing, or rather simply transforming, the medieval ideas of providence, redemption, and the millennium. The discovery of such constantly operating forces as geography, government, and religion, the invention of the phrases "spirit of the time," "genius of the people," were but so many attempts to put causality into the universal order.

After the rationalists the Romantic school inaugurated what Croce well calls "nostalgic" history. Their main idea was to "restore" a long lost time, to make vivid the habits of men of bygone ages. These men first learned to justify everything, Socrates and his judges, Shakespeare for his style and Voltaire for finding fault with his style. Even Karl Marx voiced a grandiose eulogy of the bourgeoisie in the very Manifesto intended to put an end to it. Each age was now judged solely by itself, and each man according to his own lights.

Finally came the positivist or scientific historians, with their demand for the integration of historical events, for the unity of narration and document, and for the idea of the immanence of development. Their complete neutrality and objectivity Croce finds impossible, even in the great Ranke. Masterpiece though his history of the popes was, for example, it fell into the dilemma of trying to represent the papacy neither as a divine institution, nor as a lie, though Croce claims that there is no third possibility. In fact, the positivists, or naturalists, or critics, or sociologists, or whatever the new writers called themselves, really had a philosophy even while disclaiming it. It is not even possible to prove or disprove miracles from the purely philological method; one finds in history what one seeks in it; the inquirer ever comes out of the door by which he enters. This is the end and the climax of Croce's thought, that historical research must not only be based on but must be identical with philosophy.

In conclusion, it must be repeated that this book is well worth the painstaking study it requires. If I have here and there questioned its results it is less from the desire to pick flaws in a fine work than in obedience to an injunction of Croce himself. In another work, he compares the reviewer who is content with paraphrasing an author to the German audience which frequently add their vocal efforts to the music of the orchestra and for whose admonition are posted up the signs "Mitsingen verboten." In the present instance I have endeavored to give, with a just appreciation of the book, enough of my own "reactions" to furnish sport to the audience. PRESERVED SMITH

Maxwell Bodenheim

Introducing Irony. A Book of Poetic Short Stories and Poems. By Maxwell Bodenheim. Boni and Liveright. \$2.

IT is a tragic temptation to shuffle the American poets and look for the aces. I am foolish enough to yield to the temptation and, with hesitant gesture rather than assurance, to lay them on the table. If Mr. Robinson, Mr. Fletcher, Mr. Aiken, and Mr. Bodenheim are not the real aces (and I regret that my pack, not intended for pinochle, limits me to four aces), I still believe that Mr. Bodenheim is one of the four. He does not seem

to be as well known as he should be, being a poet for partly "unpoetic" reasons.

Mr. Bodenheim has been called a poet of word overtones. This is a true statement so far as it goes, but it is a little misleading. He gets his "overtones" not by insisting on the word, not by listening hard for the dying clang of its marginal associations, but by a somewhat high-handed, and therefore refreshing, method of juxtaposition. His words, as he sets them down in sequences, make strange companions. They put each other to acid tests, cutting irrelevances out of each other's vitals, and constructing themselves into lines of thought that have the freshness of corroded contours. Mathematics runs through all of his work, as he himself explains in the exhilarating Talmudic exercise entitled *An Acrobat, a Violinist, and a Chambermaid Celebrate*. Take this passage from the *Turmoil in a Morgue*:

"Impulsive doll made of rubbish
On which a spark descended and ended,
The white servant-girl, without question or answer,
Accepts the jest of a universe."

It is a summary, very precise and appropriately impertinent, of the white servant-girl's erotic experience and cosmic philosophy. It has almost as little grease in it as one of those tortuously simple demonstrations, that we remember to have witnessed, of Euclid's more difficult theorems.

What makes Mr. Bodenheim a poet, and not merely a surgeon and applied geometrician, is his fancy. This quality of his work appears even more clearly in *"Minna and Myself"* (which deserves a vastly greater accessibility than its publishers have given it) than in the present volume. In *Old Man, Seaweed from Mars*, and a number of other pieces the fancy is elaborate and, if artificial, legitimately so. Numerous images, such as "the rock-like protest of knees," have a value far beyond that of a merely intellectual symbolism. Yet it cannot be denied that Mr. Bodenheim's fancy plays with less abandon in *"Introducing Irony"* than in his previous work. His passion for the knife has led him to prune too much; in excising the irrelevant he has also cut into the quick of his imagination and drained it of some of its life-blood. It is a pity that bitterness should have made a murderer of his fancy. In *"Minna"* it was more of a dreamer. And *"Minna,"* while less fiercely exact, is better poetry.

The sardonic intellectualism of this book proceeds not from heartlessness, not truly from philosophic aloofness, but from suffering. It is impossible to disentangle the poet's love and his hatred, to sever derision from his pity. Irony is here a substitute for tears. The following passages from *The Scrub-Woman*, significantly styled "a sentimental poem," illustrate Mr. Bodenheim's method of dodging the direct expression of the pity that he feels:

"Time has placed his careful insult
Upon your body. . . .
Neat nonsense, stamped with checks and stripes,
Fondles the deeply marked sneer
That Time has dropped upon you. . . .
When you grunt and touch your hair
I perceive your exhaustion
Reaching for a bit of pity
And carefully rearranging it."

And perhaps the paralyzing turmoil of love and hate has never been more poignantly rendered than in the closing lines of Jack Rose:

"And when her brother died Jack sat beside
Her grief and played a mouth-harp while she cried.
But when she raised her head and smiled at him—
A smile intensely stripped and subtly grim—
His hate felt overawed and in a trap,
And suddenly his head fell to her lap.
For some time she sat stiffly in the chair,
Then slowly raised her hand and stroked his hair."

EDWARD SAPIR

Behind Hedges

Elinor Colhouse. By Stephen Hudson. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.
Intrusion. By Beatrice Kean Seymour. Thomas Seltzer. \$2.

THE author of "Elinor Colhouse" has stripped his story of unessentials until it is reduced to one hundred and fifty-seven small pages, but it is as rich and full in the implications of character as any number of pages could make it. Not once does he tell us what his characters are like and not once does his story even mark time while he creates character or atmosphere. Every phrase speeds the narrative on its way and at the same time reveals in itself the mind and soul of the speaker or actor. The book leaves little for a critic to say because within its self-imposed limitations it is almost perfect. A simple story telling of the deliberate trapping of an innocent young Englishman by a cold-hearted American girl, it undertakes no philosophizing and no moralizing save that which is implicit in an icy-cold portrayal of character from a chosen angle, but it touches upon nothing which it does not complete and it leaves no strings dangling. It is merciless with the detachment of the best French *contes*.

Beatrice Kean Seymour's novel is linked with this one by theme but not at all by technique. She belongs to the school which depends upon massiveness rather than upon selection and indulges in elaborate analyses; but she too tells a story of the helpless male in the hands of a calculating woman and gives occasion to remark that of recent years roles seem to have been reversed and that today designing hussies stalk through novels as persistently and as victoriously as the omnipresent male seducers used to do. Her hero, Allan, is a member of one of those typically British families which have no exact counterpart in America. Intelligent, bookish, and tremendously self-contained, they inhabit middle-class castles in Wimbledon or Sutton, and even if they go off to war they return without much visible change to read their well-written journals about the fire or to ramble the countryside in splendid isolation from the promiscuity of life. Though they read poetry they are determined to live none. Accordingly when there enters by accident a beautiful and brainless young vulgarian into such a protected circle it is not surprising that she plays ducks and drakes with the whole crowd and especially with young Allan, who has lived so long in a somewhat bloodless world that a little tangible beauty seems a miracle.

"Intrusion" is likely to be very much more popular than "Elinor Colhouse" because it is warmer and less severe. Also, it will take Miss Seymour a step nearer than did her "Invisible Tides" to the place which she obviously aspires to occupy among the more important contemporary novelists. She demands a hearing from all readers of contemporary fiction, yet hers is not perfect work. Though she tries sincerely to face the realities of English society, there is, perhaps, more of the school to which she belongs in her books than there is definitely of herself as an individual person; and there are signs, also, that at times she has built her story when it would not grow—being, for instance, unnecessarily profuse with accidental deaths. Moreover, it seems to me that she has failed to indicate an adequate criticism of the society she describes and that such a criticism is necessary to bring out the full significance of the story. When the seductive vulgarian has done her worst Miss Seymour makes the gesture of inevitable tragedy, whereas a little deeper penetration would have revealed that here was no mysterious calamity with its roots in unchanging nature, but merely a result of that tradition of fastidious aloofness from life and of cloistered virtue which makes even the tawdriest lures of the flesh seem irresistibly fascinating. Behind his hedges Allan had fancied himself a very modern young man because, among other things, he had some sympathy with free verse, but he seems never to have realized that to free and hence fortify the soul one sane break with the fire-side tradition of

life is worth more than a break with all the literary traditions from Hesiod to Tennyson. Though one may build one's physical and spiritual hedges ever so high the world will sometime intrude. Instead of exclaiming with Miss Seymour over the pity of the fact that Allan could not be always protected, I am more inclined to ask if it was not because intrusions had been so rare that this one was so fatal.

J. W. KRUTCH

A Reporter with Brains

The Rising Temper of the East. By Frazier Hunt. Bobbs Merrill Company. \$2.50.

IF there must be globe-trotting reporters, which is debatable, then by all means let them be like Frazier Hunt. The average member of the tribe drops in on a country, brushes up with a book or two, picks up a few tritenesses from the hotel lobbies and the club bars, obtains a few ceremonial interviews with officials, gets a little of the erroneous inside stuff which old foreign residents are always ready to dispense, imbibes a few official prejudices from the diplomatic set, and then cables home sagely that there is no doubt the native population is not yet ready for self-government. Not so Frazier Hunt. He has gone about the world seeking out unbeaten paths of thought and feeling. He has deliberately ignored the professional spokesmen. To find out about a country he has looked for his facts among the people who are its natives rather than among the foreign business men and the embassies. Also he has imagination and sympathy. Therein he differs further from his fellow-newspapermen who, whether at home or abroad, hunt ever with the pack and cry with the mob, instinctively truckling to success and bending the knee to power. His, instead, is an instinctive feeling for the underdog.

"I might as well admit it," he says, "common people—Mexican peons, Filipino Taos, Indian ryots, Egyptian fellaheen, Siberian peasants, Chinese coolies, Haitian habitants—these are the people who interest me and it is their struggles and hopes that thrill me."

In China therefore he has gone to the students organizing their national movement against the corrupt Tuchun rulers; in Japan to the handful of laborers just raising their heads against their feudal masters; in Korea to the peasant rebels offering their tragically hopeless passive resistance to Japanese cannon and bayonet; in the Philippines to the American-educated independencistas asking America to redeem President Wilson's pledge of independence; in India to the mystic Gandhi and non-cooperation. Everywhere Mr. Hunt has attuned his ears to the voice of protest. And everywhere he has found surging upward a new passion for liberty; more particularly, liberty from the imperialist oppression of white men.

He has the defect of his qualities, however, and he may also be said to be a little sentimental and even more naive. One has more than a suspicion that he is a little self-conscious about liberalism, that he has but recently discovered liberalism for himself, and, having discovered it in himself, has gone about looking for it in others; and looking for it, has found it; and finding it, has been a little over-ecstatic about it, particularly when he has found it in non-white peoples. I have myself lived somewhat in some of the countries Mr. Hunt has visited and I fear he is a little too enthusiastic and inclined to overweigh merely vocal protestations. I could hardly recommend this book to historians as source material, or even to general readers as an all-sided judgment. Still, this is a minor criticism to make of a man who at least sees with his own eyes and hears with his own ears and can criticize the imperialism of his own country as vigorously and freshly as that of Japan and England. I wish there were some way of compelling all foreign correspondents under penalty to read this book twice.

NATHANIEL PEPPER