

his satisfaction in good work solidly done, in his ten years on the Massachusetts Railroad Commission, in Quincy's finances and library, in the formation and management of the Kansas City Stock Yards Company, in the Boston park system. Then one stops to think, and decides to be less sorry for Mr. Adams. He had a troublesome, self-judging conscience, but it was not a curse. At the time of writing this autobiography, as often before in hours of leisure, on the long rides he liked so well, he judged himself with harsh modesty. But on the whole he was far too busy a man for indulgence in this self-judging habit to have occupied much of his time. Even when he was a very young man his family connections brought him into contact with great affairs, with the men who were running things. He fought for more than three years of the Civil War. By his study of railroads he gained a knowledge of them which was rare in that time, and by his fullness of knowledge he persuaded the Massachusetts legislature to create in 1869 a railroad commission, in which he was for the ten years of his service "by common consent the controlling mind." He was president of the Union Pacific for nearly seven years, "passed in my office, largely in the society of stenographers." He was an active and reforming Harvard overseer. The patience and leisure to imagine which he brought to his historical studies are exceptional in a life so filled with other activities. To look upon his work and to see that it was not very good was his life-long habit, but this habit never made him sit still, never interrupted either his studies or his public-spirited labor.

Something very characteristic of Charles Francis Adams is revealed by his regrets. In 1893 he lost a great deal of money. Straightening out his affairs occupied him for a good many years thereafter. He condemns his lack of wisdom. But how much less does he regret losing money than he regrets wasting time! How few of us have the peculiar kind of character, the particular valiancy which made money losses, in Mr. Adams's case, the thing he regretted least of all!

It would be inexact to say that in this book Charles Francis Adams criticizes his own aristocratic class, for in this country there is no such class. But he does criticize the situation into which membership in the Adams family put him. He criticizes Boston and the Puritan spirit with shrewd humor. Himself he has elsewhere described accurately as "otherwise-minded." He was from an early age an active-minded heretic, whose heresies were not large and revolutionary, but in comparison with major heresies affairs of detail. So with his originality. Except in his early perception of the importance of railroads, and in his swift decision to master their problems, his originality was in details. But an originality which discovers and sticks to a few leading ideas may leave a man's character rather savorless, and a day by day originality on a smaller scale may foster the growth of a strongly individual quality like Mr. Adams's. When he laments he is sturdy. There is something combative even in his wistful moods. With a stouter belief in himself Mr. Adams would have been a greater man, but his character could hardly have been more individual, more hand-made, more sharply stamped by a virtue that has always, since the beginning of time, been called antique. His autobiography will be read as long as readers want to know what it was like to be born a Puritan leader. It is a book to read and keep and reread, amusing, sad, tonic, courageous, vivid, pugnacious. It is a record of New England at its best, of energetic toil without high spirits, of a self-distrust which has unflinching eyes.

P. L.

White Magic

The Listeners and Other Poems, by Walter De La Mare. New York: Henry Holt & Co. \$1.20

THE present writer was brought up on a square, thin, red book of nursery verses, called *The Daisy*. Queen Victoria, as any sightseer at Kensington Palace may verify, had the same advantage. One of the rhymes in this book began as follows:

A very young lady
With Susan the maid,
Who carried the baby,
Was one day afraid—

And it goes on to tell how a fine fellow, the Man at the Mill, entirely allayed the false fears of the very young lady in connection with a well-intentioned cow.

The narrative is flat, the vocabulary is without distinction, yet for some reason these absurd lines have a certain charm. Why? It was hard to say until the poetry of Mr. De La Mare gave us the clue. This nursery rhyme has the charm of inevitable inflection. The phrase and the meter are so adjusted that you can say it in only one way—the way the author meant you to say it.

The illustration is trivial, but the same ability as exercised by Mr. De La Mare is anything but trivial; it is moving to the highest degree. You can read his poems only as he means them to be read, and be assured that that is in a very thrilling sort of way. For the time being, your inflection, your breathing, perhaps even the beating of your heart, become a necessary part of the poem. The sense and the rhythm are so wedded that they intensify each other. The idea gains excitement from the pauses and accelerations of the meter, and the necessities of the phrase develop new and unexpected cadences in the rhythm. It is this, partly, that gives to his poetry the magical quality.

But it is not only this; nor is it only his choice of subject. Other poets have set their stage as liberally with ghosts and night-birds, and stars twinkling through bare branches. The mystery we feel in Mr. De La Mare's verse is an inherent quality of his inspiration.

Almost everyone who has written verse knows the sensation of receiving it—if not from without, at least from an unknown power within. Poets have believed in their daimons as firmly as Socrates did. They may understand that it is all an illusion, the result of past hard work and present concentration. Nevertheless they know very well that once in so often it will turn up and offer them a poem, as it were, on a platter.

Verse of this nature is by no means uniformly good, but it is from verse so inspired that the great poems have come. Pope, for instance, had no daimon, or would not listen to it. To Byron it came, but not regularly. It visited Keats constantly, sometimes to his detriment. Shelley was growing more and more intimate with his.

All of Mr. De La Mare's poetry—the worst and the best—is daimonic. Mr. De La Mare has a daimon and an extremely potent one. It does with him, quite obviously, whatever it wants. It has had relations with the daimons of the early ballad-makers and with the daimon of Poe, but probably found the former too anecdotal and the latter too ghastly to please it. It knows about the most delightful things, about shadows and ivory-towers, and scarecrows, and Arabia, and what happens after everybody has gone out of the room. As for witches, it knows everything there is to know about them. Best of all, it com-

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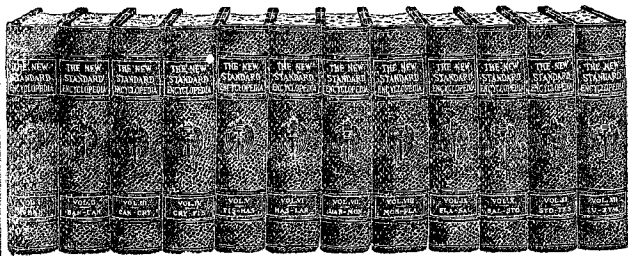
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From the one man left awake;

Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,

And the sound of iron on stone,

And how the silence surged softly backward,

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ALICE DUER MILLER.

A Plea for Socialism

Socialism as the Sociological Ideal: A Broader Basis for Socialism, by Floyd J. Melvin, Ph.D. New York: Sturgis & Walton Co. \$1.25.

THE title of this book is somewhat ambiguous. Its real subject is the sociological exposition of socialism rather than socialism as the ideal of sociology. The sociological development of socialism is new and important, but is not altogether a novelty. Edmond Kelly has made the same apology brilliantly from a Spencerian standpoint. Both authors write from an individualistic standpoint, and both succeed admirably in avoiding state socialist conclusions.

This new book of Melvin's is undoubtedly a special plea for socialism, but no reader will deny that it is both a liberal and an honest plea. The writer seems somewhat old-fashioned in taking his departure from a discussion of the relative value of various social ideas and in taking the doctrine of the survival of the fittest as basic in the argument. The book does contain certain novelties however; for example, when it regards socialism as the apotheosis of public education.

"For essential procedure in every attempt to educate consists in bringing to bear on the individual the influences of an environment artificially fashioned, in which it is hoped that the desired development will work out. Socialism proposes to do this in the large, not merely with children in the calculated environment of the socialist state. *Socialism is the apotheosis of public education.*"

Although the book contains no new information and few original ideas, it is unusual in its sympathetic but thoroughly non-partisan attitude towards its subject. It avoids entirely the traditional and orthodox socialist methods. It seems to guarantee that we are passing into a period of broader and more liberal discussion of the subject. But for Kelly's book it would represent a radical advance, and in any case Melvin demonstrates that we are still able to maintain the high standards the former writer set up without in any way merely repeating him. The chief advance Melvin has made is in the general conception of his work and the sociological method he employs rather than in its contents.

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