

more interesting stage in its history than ever before. For labor has at last become articulate, and in every varied form of literary effort we are given the exuberant manifestation of its spirit. That is the more welcome since, I believe, no age has been more thoroughly receptive to its demands. We are genuinely discontented with poverty. We are dissatisfied with the plutocratic organization of industry. We are tired of an effete legalism which would stifle our legislative ideals in the narrow swaddling clothes of the Fourteenth amendment. People are everywhere demanding the right to live a richer and fuller life. The spirit of unrest in modern education, the attempt everywhere to systematize our knowledge of the needs of the time—these surely are symptomatic of a new and vital temper. What is wanted, above all in the field of economics, is a text-book that is something more than a meagre study of its anatomy. The only gift to the student must be the analysis of its spirit in the light of its physiology. What in fact we need in the field with which Professor Groat has dealt is a book that, summarizing very briefly the facts of labor organization—I have in mind certain admirable chapters in Mr. Louis Levine's "Syndicalism in France"—will proceed to tell us what the labor movement means. Such a book would explain that fundamental difference, for instance, between the economic philosophy of the American Federation of Labor, which is narrow and particularist, and the mystic generosity of the axioms of the I. W. W. Upon the right understanding of that difference depends our knowledge of the future of American labor. It would discuss the moral and legal validity of labor methods, not merely in their absolute aspect, but also in relation to the peculiar environment they have to confront. It would interpret phenomena like the Rockefeller despotism in Colorado, and the ungenial anarchy of the garment-trades of New York. It would strive to show the influence of foreign and especially illiterate immigration first upon the standards of American life, and, as a consequence, upon the rates of American wages. It would attempt to analyze labor unrest in terms of the increased cost of living. It would discuss those fundamental plans of industrial and social reconstruction of which our time has been significantly prolific. It would study the moral import of the growth of labor internationalism. What essentially the writer would attempt would be to sketch in a rapid survey the perspective of labor in the shifting drama of American life. The result would be a piece of work that might compare not unfavorably with the magistral analysis of Mr. and Mrs. Webb. It might equally contribute to the building of a new industrial structure.

The student who comes into contact with Professor Groat's book will understand nothing of all this. He will be utterly unable to penetrate behind its dry lists of facts to the living hopes of men and women for which they stand. He will not understand the working of those fundamental human motives which in Paterson and West Virginia sent men into revolt against what they deemed injustice. He will not realize why the exordium of the Communist Manifesto remains, after sixty years, a trumpet which can still stir to action.

Dean Haskins has recently complained—and no one in America to-day speaks with more authority—of the undergraduate's lack of intellectual alertness. I think in all soberness that books of this kind are largely responsible for that temper. The dry bones must be made to live. The text-book on which the student is to try his teeth must arrest his intelligence. It must deal clearly and even eagerly with the fundamental issues. It must not be a

miniature encyclopedia with a bad bibliography and an inadequate index. Books of the kind I have suggested are in fact to be found. Dean Haskins himself has written such an one on his own special subject of Norman history. It sets the reader's pulses tingling with its scholarly vitality. Mr. Graham Wallas has shown us that social psychology can be at once profound and interesting. Professor Maitland contrived to be as masterly as he was gaily epigrammatic. Mr. Cannan and Mr. Hartley Withers have rescued economics from the reproach of dulness. Mr. Justice Holmes has set the common law to the rhythm of life. If Professor Groat will take his volume and add to his conscientiousness a determination to make his reader either thoroughly angry or extravagantly pleased—anything but intellectually woe-begone—he will have contributed much to the technique of economic instruction. He will also have aided greatly in making the general public capable of meditation on the most outstanding of its permanent issues.

H. J. L.

A Misadventure

Ventures in Worlds, by Marian Cox. New York: Mitchell Kennerley, \$1.25 net.

WAS it so long ago that the articulate woman rebel seemed a gay and welcome discovery? The more iconoclasts, we then felt, the better—especially the more women iconoclasts. Feminine assaults on our Dogberry conventions were a heartening spectacle, for protest and revolt were the fashion. Eloquent revelations of stupidity by the feminists were cheerfully hailed as an indication of the renaissance. We seldom asked that the line be crossed to constructive thinking. But we have grown more cautious; we expect almost a philosophy to-day, at least a conscientious attempt to formulate a method of attack. We have become very critical of our women "intellectuals." Twenty years ago Miss Cox's discovery that our home life lacks passion, that marriage—conventionally supposed to be an idealization of love and its goal—is really a complex conspiracy to rob love of its romance and "mystic sensuous" stir, would have been considered a remarkable *tour de force*. It seems a little stale now. We don't any longer regard an essay built around a similar theme as an inevitable sign of intellectual power.

Yet the best parts of Miss Cox's book have this old-fashioned, revolutionary quality, the 1890 accent of rasping impatience at social absurdities. These sentences are from "Our Incestuous Marriage": "As soon as a man and woman marry—perhaps propelled by the primal dream of home as the nest of seclusion and privacy—they are at once thrust into a realization of the appalling publicity of their Home Performance. The System and Society demand of the fated ones that they shall perform together in this home all the imperative functions which create the appearance and results of marriage:—eating and drinking and sleeping and breeding and going out together, always together, the two as one, an eternal togetherness without a solitary taboo." But one almost forgives the obvious, the Carlyle capitals, the stridulence, because it is the note of frank rebellion. It is a note which Miss Cox sounds now and again in her two essays on the Japanese woman, whom she studied at first hand. Occasionally these essays have a sort of empirical and descriptive vigor.

However, it is not as an old-fashioned revolutionist that Miss Cox desires to be justified, it is as a modern thinker.

It is hardly as the apostle of belated enthusiasms that she would like to be considered; she would prefer to be thought of as the prophet of new insights. Now this claim, although I believe it to be quite unwarranted, certainly merits attention. For it is a claim put forward by a whole group of writers of whom Miss Cox happens to be a representative instance. "Ventures in Worlds" is characteristic of much of the "intellectualism" which is so easily mistaken for radical thought. It is the perpetual and perennial bad boy of careful scholarship, the kind of book that makes the conservative reactionary and the reactionary self-complacent. It awakens instinctive distrust; the suspicion of its valuelessness cuts deeper than the mere ostensible argument. Such scorn may be unreasonable and undeserved, it may be just a "defense reaction" against uncomfortable truths—yet it will inevitably be aroused by Miss Cox's style. If she really wants to convince anybody, she should curb her pretentious manner; otherwise her readers will make a shrewd guess that what she wants to impress upon them is not so much the integrity of her argument as the cleverness of her wits. Consider first of all, then, the manner.

There is a style of paradox which stands up so straight in the matter of sheer perversity that it finally leans over backwards into common sense. G. K. Chesterton is an adept at this amusing trick. Yet it isn't the only style and it isn't that of Miss Cox or her kind. Theirs is the paradox of juxtaposition and unexpected affinities—"baton and bayonet" in "Our Musical Culture," also "melomania, megalomania, mammon and militarism." It is about as sincere as the verbalism of a dinner-table punster and often evokes the adjective "brilliant." Occasionally Miss Cox is graceful; oftenest she is jerky and self-conscious. It is the style of slipshod quotation. (On page 34 she quotes a passage from William James as from Henry James, and misquotes it at that.) It likes the jargon of inaccurate physiological psychology and talks learnedly of "neurosis," "psychiatry" and "analgesia." It loves to clothe the meagrest observation in elaborate words. It expresses the curious notion that to be clever, a writer must never be caught voicing her deepest convictions, that she should remain scrupulously in the rarefied atmosphere of the top, intellectual layers of the mind and should blush to be found in the snug valleys of animal feeling. It is moving-picture intellectualism, this style—spurts of thin, nervous ratiocination. It is usually amusing, now and then provocative, but invariably minus warmth and body and massiveness. "Man has never conquered woman by his strength but by his subtlety," writes Miss Cox. "The master-stroke of genius in subjugating her was in his making her love dress and decoration in herself instead of—as nature intended—in man. Hence the complete transposition in the original sex rôles, from the male's desire and effort to please the female's senses to the female's desire to please the man's senses; so evident to-day." These are the seven-leagued biological and evolutionary boots of generalization, always worn by this nimbly-skipping style.

And as for the matter, the kernel contentions introduced with such a bewildering flourish, what are they? Frankly, half of them are platitudes and the other half nonsense. What is not a truism is likely to be an absurdity. I learned that musical culture was "an erotico-religious-dementia-præcox, a disease of the soldiers and the snobs of our man-made structure of society," that music should be restricted to medical use, that it was "the sensitive individualism of the primitive man that made him by nature a monogamist" and the mystical individualism of the modern



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man which is making him a bachelor, that the normal man was in essence the criminal man, that happiness, stealing a page from Nietzsche, comes only through joyful pain, and that the tailor-made suit has done more to emancipate the American woman than any other influence. All these statements and many more like them may be profoundly true; who can say? But if Miss Cox wants us to believe they are she must employ a little more honesty and intellectual care and abandon her epigrammatic rhetoric. More preposterous arguments have been maintained by able writers and warmly espoused by a public delighted with novelty. Nevertheless, whether Miss Cox becomes convincingly absurd or remains unconvincingly ridiculous, what she has to say will still seem almost tragically unimportant. The war is nearly over, and we are somewhat tired of revolt, whether of nations or of intellectuals. We are already talking reconstruction.

HAROLD STEARNS.

Archaism

The Great Maze; The Heart of Youth, by Hermann Hagedorn. New York: The Macmillan Company.

A SIMPLE man married to a subtle woman goes off to war, leaving her alone for years. In her bitter loneliness, hearing reports of his casual infidelity, she consoles herself with a lover—inferior to her husband in simplicity, but superior in subtlety. The husband returns, is unable to understand his wife; and she is goaded by the lover to murder him. Who is guilty? What do the dramatic personae feel, and why? This theme would make an interesting study for any modern psychological novelist. It could be used to prove that simple husbands deserve fidelity, or subtle wives deserve understanding, or both. It could be used to dissect an inevitable tragedy in any such arrangement. To do any of these things in heroic blank verse would seem rather incongruous, but permissible if the verse were an adequate expression. Yet there is no good reason in this narrative for calling the woman Clytaemnestra, the man Agamemnon, the lover Aegisthus. Such associations as these names borrow from Homer and the Attic dramatists are not germane to the spirit of this poem. They emphasize the incongruities of the verse without helping the insight. They suggest a style, both of living and of writing, which makes the modern intimacy and the Tennysonian imagery of Mr. Hagedorn's work seem less noble than they are. For it would not be just to omit that "The Great Maze" contains many lovely pictures and intricately felt emotions.

"The Heart of Youth" is better, not in detail but in conception, for it uses a mediaeval story to show a mediaeval moral. A young follower of a saintly monk longs for the rewards of this world; he leaves his master and tries to win renown by imitating the saint's healing art in behalf of a young princess about to die. In his failure and contrition he finds religion and happiness. The superiority of other-worldliness to worldliness, the lack of earthly power in one who is not humble before God, are conceptions whose charming archaism may at any time become ultra-modern; and they are at least simple enough to fit well in a poetic decoration. The only danger in using them is the danger usually fatal to pseudo-archaism; we know so well how their use has been made effective in the past that a new arrangement is likely to seem—quite without truth—an exercise in craftsmanship rather than the flower of simple faith.

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