

I want them to have the wages of the spirit and power over their own souls. . . . There's only one key to all our problems today, and that is to give the workers the same treasures of knowledge that hitherto have belonged only to the few. Then you will make our democracy safe for the world, for you will have made it an aristocracy. . . . I tell you that I have known poor men who spent their evenings with Plato and their scanty holidays with the great poets. There's a thirst abroad, a divine thirst, and the quenching of it is the finest task before us. Give the worker all the technical training he wants, but don't deny him the humanities, for without them he can never be a citizen. . . . Think of what you can make of him. Not culture in the trashy sense, but the wise mind and the keen spirit. He lives close to reality, so you needn't fear that he will become a pedant. You will make your academies better places, for you will let the winds of the world blow through them, when you open them to the Many instead of the Few, and you will make a great nation, for the Many will be also the Best."

So far as Cadmus and Harmonia have a message for their generation, this is it. And for the wisdom and humanity of it we may perhaps forgive them the appalling bathos of making the speaker slip away from the company which is still under the spell of his words, to "go for a walk with Phyllis in the garden."

R. F. A. H.

The Case for Capitalism

The Case for Capitalism, by Hartley Withers. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co.

SUPPOSE that down to the present time mankind had lived under the various conceivable forms of communism and socialism; would it not have been easy for agitators possessed of the historical learning of Karl Marx, the industry of the Webbs and the wit of Bernard Shaw to draw up an ideal capitalistic state so entrancing as to make all generous souls long to realize it, by bloody revolution if necessary? That ideal state, to be sure, would not look much like the capitalism of today. Everything in the ideal state would be deduced logically from the essential principles. Nothing could be less true of capitalism as we know it.

The capitalism which Mr. Withers sets out to defend stands about halfway between the actuality and a figment of roseate imagination. He talks about banks and railways, about the claims of labor and the facts of increased production since the Middle Ages, and thus convinces you that he did not gather his facts exclusively from the moon. But observe this moonshine: "Capitalism leaves the question (of value) to be decided by competition, so putting the ultimate decision concerning the price of any article of common use into the hands of the consumer." And this: "In the first place, there is (in capitalism) the moral advantage involved by individual choice and responsibility which make men and women of us, while grandmotherly regulations under State or Guild monopoly would make us into machines." Mr. Withers does not admit any of the facts of monopoly into his ideal capitalistic state. He refuses to know anything about price fixing committees, about wants and values created by advertising, about men who feel that they are working for "the boss," not for them-

selves. By omitting about all the vices of which real capitalism stands convicted, he succeeds in making it contrast favorably with communism and guild socialism, pictured as he pictures them in the darkest colors he can command.

That sort of thing went very well before the war. It was sold at a high price in most colleges under the name of "Critique of Socialism." To men who pride themselves on their imperviousness to new ideas and their immunity to facts, Mr. Withers's book will give real pleasure. It will prove disappointing to those who recognize the fact that capitalism, as we know it, is seriously challenged by the times, and who wish light on the question whether capitalism can not gain a new hold on life through the excision of the ulcers that have eaten into its tissues through a century of laissez-faire. On such questions the light of Withers is foggy darkness.

A. J.

A Shell-Shock Novel

Peter Jameson, by Gilbert Frankau. New York: A. A. Knopf.

PETER JAMESON belongs to the large class of what may fairly be called shell-shock novels. The author's nerves are still raw and quivering from the effects of the War. His sense of proportion is lost; his characters are flat and unnatural; his style is affected and grandiloquent.

Peter Jameson is a hustling, aggressive English businessman, completely absorbed in the management of a tobacco business. He and his wife, Patricia, have never made any pretense of being in love with each other. The War liquidates this domestic problem instantaneously. Peter enlists. Straightway his wife falls madly in love with him, nurses him through a mental breakdown, and finally wins his full devotion in return.

Mr. Frankau dedicates his novel to "the average man and woman of the English-speaking peoples." It faithfully presents the viewpoint of a distinctly sub-average British officer, limited at every turn by obsessions of military and social caste. Mr. Frankau seems to share Mr. Coningsby Dawson's conviction that the War was won by a select group of British combat officers, with some casual assistance from the men, and in the face of manifold sins and blunders on the part of Parliament, the staff officers, labor and the profiteers.

The vivid battle descriptions that are the best part of the book cannot atone for its essential narrowness and shallowness, for its manifold defects of thought and style, for its systematic glorification of hates and follies and prejudices that were scarcely excusable even in the heat of the conflict. Peter Jameson is the product of a mind still inflamed by the fever of war.

W. H. C.

Contributors

WALTER LOCKE is editorial writer on the Nebraska State Journal, a newspaper whose genuine progressivism long antedated the formation of the Progressive party and has since survived unabated.