

the human soul, there would be a closer relation between the behavior of his characters and the reactions they are supposed to set up in his readers. I find that in reading Mr. Frank one's throat sometimes becomes a little tense and strained, as one sympathetically attempts to follow an expression which does not seem able to find a channel of egress deep enough to permit its flow.

When Mr. Frank succeeds, he succeeds magnificently; and one has a genuine sense of his depths; when he fails one sometimes feels that he is using a dragnet to fish in a very shallow pool. It is doubtless Mr. Frank's conviction that his realities are to be found in the depths: the result is, if one may use a more pregnant metaphor, that he is perpetually swimming under water, and he never for long sees daylight nor breathes the undiluted air. By turning his back upon the classic tradition of English prose, with all its externalism, Mr. Frank has not merely thrown over its tepid felicities: he has thrown over all the charm and fluency that carries one through a narrative. In an art which springs naturally out of good conversation, Mr. Frank fails to achieve the ease which that art permits; and in order to make up for the losses he seeks to get his effects by feverishly dabbling on color, in a fashion that does violence to his medium. Mr. Frank's exacerbated English is sometimes a triumph in a crisis; it is his misfortune that he must prolong the crisis in order to retain the triumph. Too often one's attention falters: a prolonged dose of novelty is more tedious than platitude.

When one puts aside this criticism of Mr. Frank's execution, a good deal that is fine and credible remains. The accent of Rahab is right, honestly and emphatically right. If anyone takes exception to the fact that Mr. Frank speaks of physical things in spiritual terms, and spiritual things in almost physical terms; if anyone dislikes to see the naked bodies of thoughts before they get dressed for society and leave the chamber of the mind, the fault is not with Mr. Frank's method but with the code of mental etiquette it infringes. Those who have no preconceptions about the verbal decencies will find many passages of deep emotion, finely conveyed; and they will perhaps achieve a sense of salvation—the sense of a “saving something”—which is in essence religious. Above all, in the travail of Fanny Luvé, they may find a fresh meaning in the myth of the generous god who was torn to bits and scattered abroad, and out of the dark earth emerged again in the spring as the Resurrection and the Life.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

Secretary Mooseheart

The Iron Puddler, by James J. Davis (*Secretary of Labor*). Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. \$2.00.

MR. DAVIS is not the most important member of the Cabinet. He doesn't have much to say, these days, about the mine or railroad strike. He was appointed because he would be a good conciliator—and such he has proved himself to be on a number of occasions—but particularly because he was the devoted and beloved chief of the Loyal Order of Moose, because he commanded the loyalty of some half million Moosemen who were voters, but mainly because, as Uncle Joe Cannon tells us in his introduction to the Secretary's autobiography, he is “the Napoleon of Fraternity,” and “can call more than ten thousand men by their first name.”

He may not stand out in the Cabinet, but his own story of his life shows him as beyond doubt its most engaging and vivid personality. He was born in Wales, the son of a hard-working iron puddler, and came to this country as a youngster. There followed years of the hardest kind of sledding for the family, but it did not darken the days of the young Davises. Song and mother kept clouds from their sky. “I have sung more songs in my life than did Caruso,” Mr. Davis tells us, and “The memory of my mother's singing has made my whole life sweet.” He was duly grateful to her: when he was shining shoes at the age of ten or so “every nickel that rolled loose in the town landed in my pocket and I took it home to mother.”

He shined shoes, he puddled in the iron mills, “kneading a batch of iron bread for the devil's breakfast,” he supered in Richard III, he carried the drum in minstrel parades, he worked in tin mills, he lived in boarding houses called “the Greasy Spoon” or “the Bucket of Blood,” where the boarders “fought with fists, coffee cups and pieces of furniture.” He was kangarooed in New Orleans to a job that was practically peonage. This chapter, which is without his usual excursions into views of life in general, is a very real picture of what life was then for so many people in this country. Here he is at his best, and his best is attractively breezy and spontaneous, slangy, energetic, often epigrammatic, with an occasional touch of something almost poetry.

But as he goes on in life, becomes trusted by labor and capital in the tin mill, is elected to local office, makes money, his book becomes less and less attractive, and its story more and more diluted with his opinions, which, since he is a Cabinet officer, are worth some attention. Here is perhaps the secret of them: “So many of [my] ventures thrived that by the time I was forty I was rated as a prosperous young man. This gave me a great confidence in myself and in the institutions of my country.”

Some of this confidence was due to an abounding vitality and appetite. He is eloquent on the subject of pie, in which he “had a liberal education”—“not the standardized tasteless things made in great pie factories, but the personally conducted pies that women used to make.” “Food,” he admits, “is the first thing in the world. Cleanliness may be the next to godliness, but food is ahead of them all.” He has eaten of all kinds of it, and heartily. In his ears still rings the cry of those days when he worked with his hands: “Hog fat, and plenty of it!”

A man that enjoys such a good digestion has small sympathy for those of meaner stomach, and his intolerance of them is closely bound up with his aversion to people who have an opposite economic creed from his own. Expressions of this are the core of his philosophy and the leit-motif of his book: “I never knew a theorist who wasn't a sick man. . . . The white man who doesn't want to work is sick. . . . Communists all have inferior bodies.” Of a certain “free thinker,” a “tired Thomas,” he once knew: “He thought he needed one of the Utopias they talk so much about. What he needed was a dose of castor-oil.”

He feels he is made of stern stuff, but of that same stuff all good men are made. It is not pig iron. “Hot-tentots and Bushmen are pig-iron. They break at a blow.” Because the Bureau of Immigration is under his eye, Mr. Davis's metallic standards of humanity are interesting. “Men are like nails,” he says; “some have the holdfast will in their heads. Others have not. . . . They must be thrown aside and not used in building the state, or the

state will fall." Yet there is a certain kindness in his feeling for the immigrant: "The tenderer we treat the immigrant who seeks our hospitality, the harder will we smash him when he betrays us."

He doesn't like "measly savages" and Syrian "gypsies, who travel around cheating, dickering and selling gew-gaws that are worth nothing." He does not share the common weakness for the under-dog: "Some people say you should cheer for the under-dog. *But that isn't always fair.* The under-dog deserves our sympathy, the upper-dog must be a better dog or he wouldn't have put the other dog down. I give three cheers for the winner." And he spends a lot of time hissing the losers, the weak, the unsuccessful, and the "rat-people" (Anarchists). Nature, as a possible winner, he respects: "Nature is never whipped. . . . She is planning to attack us by a method that is new Who are the propagandists that Nature is using to undermine the race that conquered her? Communists, slackers, sick men and fools."

Mr. Davis's opinions about the field in which he is now engaged are just what you would expect from the above. His praise of Capital is even higher than his praise of Labor: "Capital safeguards the future." For the settlement of troubles between them he is all for the Golden Rule, since it and "the Proverbs and the Ten Commandments answer all our problems." "The old truths are the only truths, and they are all the guidance that we need." This is perhaps best explained by noting that as a young man, while "studying economic causes," his "outlook was widened" by reading the Youth's Companion.

His love for a world saddened often for him by men who cannot eat hog-fat, by the kind of people who in 1896 went about "teaching bi-metallism, communism, bolshevism and anarchy," is founded on fraternity. In 1888 the Loyal Order of Moose had only two lodges surviving. He was made its Supreme Organizer, and its membership grew to 80,000 in 1910, and kept on growing until now it is half a million. All this was the fruit of a "vision" he once had while "journeying to a mill-town in a freight car," the "vision" of "train after train of happy lodge men going to some happy city." That city now exists. It is called Mooseheart, and is thirty-seven miles west of Chicago. The plant of its school is "valued at five million dollars." This school—a pre-vocational one for orphans—is for the "industrial life; a life that draws no nutriment from Greek or Latin." Its motto is "Industry first and literature afterward," or perhaps "Transportation is civilization." It "teaches art, too." But "What is art without civilization? You can't eat pictures. You always slice the colored label off the loaf and eat the bread and throw the art away. . . . Keep working and you'll get the chromo."

No, Secretary Davis frankly admits that he thinks poorly of the Higher Life. "This long necked jargon must go," he says. Even, we suppose, if the alternative be rough-necked jargon. He is proud to confess himself a Low Brow: "'Intellectuals' is a name that weak men, crazed with envy, give to themselves."

All right, Mr. Secretary, we'll swallow that, since we are probably intellectuals, yet just the same we'll say that we enjoyed your book thoroughly. We should have enjoyed it a lot more, however, if you didn't happen to be our Secretary of Labor.

ROBERT LITTELL.

Introducing Irony

Introducing Irony, a book of Poetic Short Stories and Poems, by Maxwell Bodenheim. New York: Boni and Liveright. \$2.00.

THIS volume should become the gospel of sincere and exasperated futurists. It is sardonic to a degree, is totally unacquainted with the lisps and babblings of marketplace or home, and handles words with the deft remorselessness of a slave-driver. *Introducing Irony* is far more than a remarkable or disconcerting document. It is the ironic supplement to the more fanciful *Minna and Myself*, the two together expressing the most mordant poetic genius that America possesses. Not addressing itself to the thinking mass, but rather to the thought-feeling few, it would not know what to do with popularity. We observe in it the same eerie familiarity with the secrets of words that Mr. Bodenheim's work has always shown. If there is any sign of a let-up, it is, possibly, a tendency to slip here and there into the too clever smoothness that has been made fashionable by Mr. T. S. Eliot, as in the lines:

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.

It is only rarely that Mr. Bodenheim condescends to such glibness and urbanity. Passages like

Snobs have pockets into which
They crowd too many trinkets

and

Two figures on a subway-platform,
Pieced together by an old complaint

have that savage exactness of his for which felicity is too prim a word. The ten prose pieces at the end of the volume are less authoritative than the verse. It is difficult to see why Mr. Bodenheim should bother to write these semi-narratives.

EDWARD SAPIR.

Contributors

WILLIAM HARD is a writer on public affairs. He is the author of *The Women of Tomorrow*.

OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER is an English writer and war correspondent. At one time he was editor of the *Onlooker*, as also of the *Throne*. He has been on the staff of various periodicals in England and the United States. During the European war he served in the Somme campaign. He is the author of *The Artistic Temperament*, *Love's Disguises* and other books.

GENEVIEVE FOX has done research and special writing on questions concerning women in industry for the Industrial Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association. She is the author of a pamphlet on workers' education and magazine articles on the same subject. She is one of the tutors in Economics at this year's Bryn Mawr Summer School.

FELIX FRANKFURTER is professor of law at the Harvard Law School.

MARY ALDEN HOPKINS is a graduate of Wellesley and of Columbia (M. A.). She reports herself as having had "successive interests in literature, philanthropy, sociological investigations and analytical psychology."

H. M. KALLEN is on the staff of the New School for Social Research, New York City. He is the author of *Zionism and World Politics*.

LEWIS MUMFORD has been associate editor of the *Dial* and acting editor of the (London) *Sociological Review*.

EDWARD SAPIR is an anthropologist and student of linguistics. His latest book, *Language*, has recently been published by Harcourt, Brace and Co. He has also written poetry.