

## Have We Progressed?

*Industry and Human Welfare*, by William L. Cheney.  
New York: The Macmillan Company. \$2.00.

IT is of industry and human welfare that Mr. Cheney writes, not industry or human welfare. Wisely, no doubt, for the latter states an academic question. Industry is here, ineradicably, and America now is but a foreshadowing of the future not only of Europe but of Asia and Africa—large-scale production, standardization, regimenting of ideas, Rotary and all. No one who has sensed the drive of forces in the mechanically undeveloped lands like China and India and Egypt has any belief in the practical use of debating whether the factory system is better adapted to human instincts than handicraft production. Steel has won. Japan has succumbed, Russia has succumbed, China is in process of succumbing and in India Gandhi is making the romantic last stand in a lost cause. Yet while Gandhi's memory is still green, the steel worker on the Ganges' banks and the Himalayan foothills will sit him down of evenings, fix a little disk to his ear and listen rapt while Senator Niu Singh sends his voice from Delhi, mingling with the music of the spheres, to view with alarm.

Wisely, then, Mr. Cheney accepts the industrial system as a settled fact and measures its effects on the lives of men. In a slim volume of 166 pages that is a fine achievement in, compression and suggestion he surveys the changes wrought in a century and a quarter. Much of the illusion of the good old times when the Adams delved and the Eves span he strips; life was no bed of roses for the poor of the eighteenth century either. But he is equally without illusions as to the glamour of the mill of ten thousand workers where a lump of metal enters at one end and emerges at the other a motor car or a mechanical boxer. He does not babble of Progress.

The planlessness and empiricism that have marked American history in its every aspect are conspicuous in its economic and industrial development. By quotations from writings in the first years of the republic Mr. Cheney shows how little the portent of the factory was understood, even by one so penetrating as Alexander Hamilton. The machine was looked upon as an instrument of quicker and larger production only, and even as a labor-saving device that would benefit the worker. That there were social implications none dreamed. The real history of the United States is the story of the dawning recognition of these implications and the struggle to meet them satisfactorily. This is the story that Mr. Cheney tells in its larger outlines. With swiftness and dexterity he touches in the picture of the social conditions that the coming of the industrial revolution found. Men worked from sun to sun, and their women and children with them, for woman and child labor was not started by the factory. Except in the small leisured and propertied class housing was primitive, illiteracy or scarcely better was almost universal, the margin of leisure was perilously thin. In short, life for the masses was substantially as it is today in China or India.

Between that life and the life even of the poorer classes in America today there is a whole span in material civilization. Except in a few slave-driven industries like steel, ten hours is a fair working day. In food, clothing, living conditions generally, there is a standard of comfort beyond all but the rich of the eighteenth century. Actual illiteracy is the rare exception among whites in all but isolated spots. There is a margin of leisure, with libraries, moving pictures, lectures and other easily accessible entertainment for

its employment; even the slum dweller has his social settlement. Measured in things, the lot of the American today is incomparably richer than it was a hundred and fifty years ago.

Yet from my own observation I have come to believe that in the life of the Chinese peasant or artisan, say, there is a greater content of happiness than in that of the modern American workingman. The Chinese works longer hours, yes; but he works at his own speed, undriven by an impersonal thing of iron over which he has no control. He stops when he likes for a puff at his tiny pipe or a cup of tea or a chat with a fellow-workman or his children. If you go by his shop at sunrise—his shop being also his factory and his home—you find him already at work; you find him still at work at nine or ten at night. Yet I believe that a fourteen- or even fifteen-hour day takes less tax of his strength, does less violence to nature's laws, than eight hours in a Ford plant. His work is back-breaking, sometimes of a seemingly incredible cruelty. Yet I believe it is less exhausting and stunts fewer instincts than eight hours of physical ease at turning a screw on a bit of steel whirring by on a belt. If he is a potmaker he makes that pot himself, or at least with a minimum of division of labor between himself and his family and perhaps an apprentice or two. He has the satisfaction of creating something himself; in it he has put at least a little of his personality.

The living conditions of that same Chinese workman are by our standards inhuman, not only because the rewards of his labor are so low but because a non-mechanical society must be without the advantages of applied science: better sanitation, better buildings, sewers, cleaner streets. The standards of comfort must necessarily be lower in a non-industrial society. But in compensation there is not the dehumanization in work and economic relations that there is in an industrial society. There is also, as Mr. Cheney points out, a greater sense of security. "Unemployment and fear of unemployment are twin evils created by the factory system." The minute division of labor and the high specialization necessary leave the factory workman only one narrowly limited kind of skill by which to earn his living, and the control of tools of production by large centralizations of capital leaves him without opportunity to use that skill except by others' volition.

One or two broad conclusions seem inescapable. The monotony and fatigue of factory work make it impossible for men any longer to find their happiness in their work. They must find it outside their work. There must be therefore shorter hours and greater leisure and a much higher wage standard. That is only another way of saying that if the immensely greater wealth-producing capacity of the factory system is to benefit more than a narrowly limited class there must be an entirely new basis for the distribution of wealth. The world as a whole is vastly richer, in more than the material sense, by reason of the industrial revolution. The increase in wealth produced has liberated untold energies and widened the scope of their play. There has been in consequence a considerable social elevation—in a wider representation in government, in education, in closer intercommunication of peoples and ideas, in the progressive conquest of disease. But in fundamentals the majority of men are little better off than they were with a much smaller production of wealth—certainly not proportionately better off. The disparity between the classes is greater than it was a hundred and fifty years ago. That is the greatest indictment that can be made against the industrial system.

NATHANIEL PEPPER.

## A Page of Fiction

*Daughters of Hecuba, by Clara Viebig, translated by Anna Barwell. London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 7s. 6d.*

THE Trojan Women of Germany—women of all classes, the General's wife, Frau von Voigt; her daughter Lily, married to an Italian lieutenant; Frau Bertholdi, with her two sons at the front; Frau Kruger, whose son, long missing, she fondly hopes is a prisoner of war; Gertrude Hieselhahn, the mother of Gustav Kruger's child; Frau Dombrowski whose flesh is too weak to bear the long absence of her man; Margaret Dietrich, crazed by waiting for a mythical lover. They are an agonized choir as they drift and suffer through the winter of 1915, and the summer and the winter again, and again the summer and winter, with food less and less for the children, and hope fading in spite of victory. With unconscious irony the book ends with the offer of peace by the Central powers in 1917. Two years more were theirs of the accumulating misery of war, and in addition the meaningless horror of blockade and famine. We can ask nothing more of American women whose hearts are still filled with hate than to read this book.

*Millions, by Ernest Poole. New York: The Macmillan Company. \$1.75.*

IN Millions Mr. Poole has worked within a limited scheme of time and place. The stage is set in the apartment of Gordon Cable (where his relatives have gathered, during his days of unconsciousness after an accident), and in the mind of his sister Madge, who is his heir. The inner drama gives to the outer the intensity and meaning of a moral problem; but it is as an aesthetic problem skilfully handled that the book most challenges criticism. In construction the piece is as exact as Swinnerton's Nocturne, though the touch is not quite so deft nor is the movement so certain. Mr. Poole has done nothing better—and nothing that promises better.

*The Cortlandts of Washington Square, by Janet A. Fairbanks. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company. \$2.00.*

A NOVEL unusually rich in fictional values. The Civil War furnishes most of them. Ann Byrne was active among the outskirts of that struggle, at Washington, at Gettysburg and in the draft riots of New York. She was unusually fortunate in her relations with celebrities, William Cullen Bryant, The Prince of Wales, Whitman—of course, Lincoln. Her story carries her from the stagnant pool of aristocratic old New York into the fresh vigorous current of young Chicago. We await with interest the sequel. Meanwhile the movie rights should run into money.

*The Unlit Lamp, by Elizabeth Sanxay Holding. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company. \$2.00.*

BY contrast with The Cortlandts, The Unlit Lamp is almost parsimonious. Again and again the characters are brought into a situation charged with dramatic possibilities, but the author passes over their grand scene and resumes patiently her study of their relations, their "interactions." Claudine Vincelle moves from girlhood through marriage and motherhood, like charity which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. She remains at the close of the story, like Galsworthy's Mrs. Pendyce in The Country House, going quietly about her garden, unconscious of the lesson which

life has taught her, that in quietness is her strength. She is surprised at her own justification when her son-in-law, a human dynamo, gives his verdict: "You've just existed in a very sweet, gentle way. I think that's a might fine thing. I don't believe there are many people who have done so little harm."

*Doubting Castle, by Elinor Chipp. New York: Boni & Liveright. \$2.00.*

THIS book also, according to the official critic, should remind us of Galsworthy, and it does—the Galsworthy who tests human character by passion and human society by scandal. The Baldwins are like the Forsytes, a robust and self-sufficient clan; Richard Baldwin is their finest product—generous, loving, compassionate. Gloria is the victim of his high qualities and her love of him. If the story is reminiscent it is not imitative; and it has a quality of its own in its portrayal of simple, tragic girlhood which manhood destroys, not cruelly nor basely, not wantonly—but in blindness, in helplessness.

*A Man of Purpose, by Donald Richberg. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Company. \$1.75.*

THIS novel follows the disarming device of Sartor Resartus and The Research Magnificent by which the author as editor presents his hero in autobiographical fragments. It is an example of the higher realism so eloquently urged by Stevenson. "We do not live by bread alone but by some cherished and fantastic pleasure," he tells us; and reminds us further of those men "who are meat salesmen to the external eye, and possibly to themselves are Shakespeares, Napoleons or Beethovens." Of such is Rodney Merrill. His loves, his dangers, his sins, his achievements, become interesting and significant in his account of them. We dare not conjecture what he would appear to the jaundiced eyes of Ben Hecht or Sinclair Lewis; but in his own he is simplified into a symbol—A Man of Purpose.

*I Walked in Arden, by Jack Clifford. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.*

A LOVE story, plain, unvarnished and approximately sincere. Unfortunately the reader does not understand the tone of vivacious extravagance and garrulous gaiety in which it is told until at the close it is learned that the narrator is telling the story of his beautiful and tragic love to his little daughter. There is, for example, the father's liability to nausea, which seems to the innocent reader unduly insisted on, until it reveals itself as presumably a domestic joke which he and the little one may often have enjoyed together. There are other passages which seem suspicious, but which ring equally true when we know in what key the sonata is written.

*Gargoyles, by Ben Hecht. New York: Boni & Liveright. \$2.00.*

A "DEVASTATING" novel! Who is devastated? Chiefly that oft devastated region of the public which enjoys the process. Gargoyles is a picture of American life in the same vein as Babbitt, but without the latter's unity of tone and method. If Sinclair Lewis has an animus he states it through his characters; Mr. Hecht carries on his quarrel in his own person with much vociferation. His hero reveals a perfectly possible experience in detail, but altogether he does not stand up. The title is a misnomer. Gargoyles are grotesque but they have a meaning. And they are of stone, not of putty.