

Apologia for Capitalism

The Ethics of Capitalism, by Judson G. Rosebush. New York: Association Press. \$1.50.

MR. ROSEBUSH is a representative capitalist. He accepts the existing capitalistic social order in toto, for day by day in every way it offers him increasing opportunities to exercise his growing powers and to realize his expanding ambitions—that is, ever since the day he had the sagacity and good fortune to marry the only daughter (and millions) of an aged manufacturer and banker. In order to impress his readers duly with the fact that he is a man of parts and that he speaks with authority, he begins the volume with a catalogue of the positions he holds, which reads like a typical page from *The Goose-Step*. He is president of several large concerns, vice-president of several others, the owner of a large cattle ranch, superintendent of a Methodist Sunday school, trustee of two colleges, and a member of the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A.

The book is an unsuccessful attempt to justify ruthless business methods and to discredit every movement for social reform. It is a heroic effort in defense of "this fine pretty world" which he believes to be in imminent danger of destruction, not because of any inherent defects in structure, but because of the dastardly attacks of disgruntled labor agitators and social reformers. He might have spared himself the trouble and used the time and energy increasing his bank account, for the book is insufferably dull and merely an inferior imitation of Hartley Withers's *The Case for Capitalism*.

In solving the problems of the day, the author has recourse to orthodox economic theory. All suggested reforms in behalf of wage-earners are opposed to the interests of the public because the public pays the bill. The captains of industry and finance are the real friends of the people, in spite of the fact that since the war the bankers have the country by the throat. Industrial democracy consists in the open shop. Trade unionism, the Plumb plan, Sovietism, and the social creed of the churches, which calls for a living wage as a minimum and for the highest wage an industry can afford—these are the spawn of the same brand of pernicious socialistic agitation; pernicious because it would wrest the control and direction of society from the hands of "the more intelligent members of the community, who by virtue of their superior mentality have become property owners." Benevolent paternalism will solve our troublesome labor problems. All profit-sharing schemes are condemned as economically unsound. We need a new system of taxation in which spending is penalized and saving rewarded, notwithstanding the fact that America has fifty percent more capital goods than can be used. An example of the author's ethics, and incidentally of good business, is given us in a statement that he has transferred large sums of money from a state that protects its people from exploitation by stringent corporation laws to one that has lax ones.

Our disappointment in the book is the more poignant because the author has had the benefit of studying under such stimulating minds as Seager, McMaster, Fetter, Ely, La Follette, and others; because he was for years a professor of economics; and because he poses as an enlightened capitalist and Christian business man. The book would be harmless enough had it been published by anyone

else but the Y. M. C. A. Press. As it is it will do much harm because the industrial secretaries and most of the other secretaries of the Y. M. C. A. will accept it as pure gospel with the result that the organization will become more reactionary in its industrial program than ever. The book was written for these men. Indeed, it is the result of a series of lectures first delivered to industrial secretaries at a summer school. Rosebush specifically warns religious bodies to beware of the vicious so-called social gospel, and admonishes them to follow the example of their leader Jesus Christ, who preached the true gospel and kept silent on economic issues. As a member of the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A., Mr. Rosebush helps shape the industrial policy of that organization, and we cannot hope for any effective work from it until men of his type are replaced by business men truly progressive and enlightened.

GUSTAV T. SCHWENNING.

A Poet of Lasting Things

Wild Cherry, by Lizette Woodworth Reese. Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Company. \$1.50.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE has been known to a number of lovers of poetry for a long time, but to the outside world whose interest in literature is not very great, she has been known only as the writer of the superb sonnet *Tears*, and perhaps because of Mr. Mencken's enthusiastic praise of her work. When all is said and done a writer has as good a chance with posterity for a little work superbly done as for a great deal even superbly done; quantity does not count where the passports to immortality are handed out, and Andrew Marvel with his half dozen poems, and Emily Brontë with her one small novel, are as safe inside the courts of the gods—perhaps a little safer—than those men of enormous abundance like Walter Scott and William Morris. Lizette Woodworth Reese is perhaps the least advertized of American poets; her output has not been great, yet I am inclined to believe that out of her couple of slender volumes there can be drawn enough of that sort of poetry which persists through all changes of time and fashion to make her name lasting in American literature. This poetry of hers will persist, not because the author was cleverer or more original than other writers, but because, in some way, her nerves were more subtle in response to the kinds of life and experience that came her way. Some very poor critic at one time christened those poets who get in among the immortals for one or two poems "minor poets"—one of the most nonsensical expressions that ever came into the literature of criticism. No poet is a minor poet if he or she achieves immortality were it but with one short poem. Miss Reese's great successes are in the sonnet form, and probably two or three of them belong to the great sonnets of our time.

Her sonnets have that combination of spontaneous lyric emotion and philosophic thought which is characteristic of the great sonneteers. It would be hard, among living poets, to find anything to surpass the sonnet called *Portrait* which has these lines:

In the pale rain
The tall house shook, and ever after kept
The look of tears. A dream indeed may pass,
And love be bitter-brief. From dreams cut free—

Poverty at the Bottom of Social Maladjustment

Poverty of mind on the part of some; lack of money on the part of others. Many people live in a rut. It is a comfortable rut. They are well-to-do and have inherited ideas. They don't understand any other standard of living.

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They think of poverty only vaguely. They have never come in contact with it. They do not realize that these United States hold some ten millions of people whose incomes will not afford them a bare subsistence.

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They do not realize that many and diverse elements enter into American life, and that the latter term itself is broad and elastic, covering a multitude of lives. (P. S. They do not read Scribner's Magazine.)

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But, to some, life is a continual adventure. These people observe life and are interested in people. They inquire into the why and how. They are the active minds. They are the people whose writing stimulates and interests you in Scribner's Magazine.

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Scribner's Magazine for December contains two such stories of change in attitude toward life, of stepping out of the rut. The author of one had money. The other was pastor of a church. One studied politics. The other theology.

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Judge Robert Winston was successful in business. He had achieved a name for himself in politics. But when he stopped to consider, he found that he wasn't getting what he wanted out of life. And what he did was to offer a solution to the problem of retiring with pleasure and satisfaction instead of boredom.

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"A Freshman Again at Sixty" is a feature of the Christmas Scribner's Magazine which is just published.

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Gaylord White stepped out of his pastorate and went to live with the poor. Although his church was considered modern in its social work

and institutional activities, the pastor found his point of view restricted.

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He confesses: "It came to me with something of a shock when I discovered that I had been looking at life as a Protestant parson and not as a simple-hearted human being."

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He found poverty to be the root of social evil. Those who believe that rich and poor can be judged by one moral law, should read at once Gaylord White's "Reflections of a Settlement Worker" in the Christmas Scribner's Magazine.

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Those who maintain a liberal outlook on life will find here an interesting mind which perceives many things clearly.

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And, appropriately enough, McCready Huston contributes "Immune" to this number. It is an answer to the question of whether the laboring classes are free from the finer emotions.

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George S. Brooks has an amusing story about the war, "Pete Retires" in the same issue.

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F. F. Van de Water is the author of "Three Minutes of Silent Prayer" and Eva Moore Adams of "Shady."

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The first of Mrs. Wharton's essays on "The Writing of Fiction" appears in the Christmas number, and the concluding chapters of John Galsworthy's first novel since 1921.

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W. J. Henderson discusses "The Emancipation of Music" and Royal Cortissoz deals with a neglected side of religious painting in "The Field of Art."

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Readers of Scribner's are not poverty-stricken in the mind. Neither are those who write for it. And Scribner's Magazine aids in understanding life and in interpreting it. (Hint. It would be a fine gift for a friend at Christmas.)