

clearness and fairness the weaknesses of the present social order, after criticising the commoner economic theory, and after rejecting the socialist remedy, the author urges the need of certain ameliorations of social injustice. These include such things as income taxes, a minimum wage law, social insurance, and child-welfare laws. It is interesting to observe that the program of the eminently fair-minded and not at all radical Professor Leacock is not very different from that of Mr. John Spargo's proposed "National" Party; and that in at least one passage about labor unions the author seems to voice essentially the sentiments of Mr. Samuel Gompers. The Professor, however, is by no means on the side of the "masses" against the classes, or of one class against any other class. Rather, he seeks to be "on the side of the angels." He has no axe to grind, no pet theory to defend.

As a book for the general reader this little treatise can scarcely be too much commended. It is eminently humane in spirit, sensible, serious without being "dead serious," and thorough on the essential points. The author seems to know how average, educated people think and feel about the present state of society, and to have an unusually good idea of how to write for persons who do not know much about political economy.

AVERAGE AMERICANS. By Theodore Roosevelt. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

"From the time when we were very little boys we were always interested in military preparedness." This, the opening sentence of Colonel Roosevelt's book, gives the key to the whole. The book is the expression of a family tradition no less than of a personal conviction. Nor is simple insistence upon public duty as an active faith the only characteristically Rooseveltian quality of this account of war service. The soul of the thing is expressed in the title, "Average Americans." The capacity to exalt duty and at the same time to take things as they come, to be indignant and yet not to lose the human touch, to speak out forcibly against abuses and then to turn instantly, without loss of temper, to the next incident of the day's work, all this is part and parcel of the Roosevelt version of Americanism. Its appeal is mightily effective. The thought and feeling of the common man are intensified in this book. It is because Colonel Roosevelt expresses so unaffectedly the point of view of the average American, of unspoiled common sense, of untainted morality, of undiscouraged idealism, that his pointed comments are so convincing.

At the time of the first Business Men's Plattsburg Camp, "the average man did not know what military service and training meant. . . . We took it all very seriously. At one end of the company street you would see two prominent middle-aged business men trying to do the manual of arms properly, rain dripping off them, their faces set like the day of judgment, crowned with grizzled hair. At the other would be Arthur Woods, the Police Commissioner of New York, 'boning' the infantry drill regulations. George Wharton Pepper was promoted to sergeant, and was as proud of it as of any of his achievements in civil life. Bishop Perry of Rhode Island was named as color sergeant."

Somehow, after passages like this, one gets an intensified effect from such a stinging bit of honest criticism as the following: "While we were personally working at Plattsburg, the national Administration, after a meandering course, in which much of the motion was retrograde, had finally decided that to fight a war in France, it was necessary to send troops to that part of the world."

There is plenty of candid and outspoken criticism in this narrative—criticism offered not with a backward snarl, but in a spirit of progressiveness and hope. When our troops, shortly after their arrival in France, paraded with the French, our "splendidly trained little army" did not dare trust itself to take up platoon front. At this time, "there was no one with the command who had ever shot an automatic rifle, thrown a hand grenade, shot a rifle grenade, used a trench mortar or a .37-millimeter gun." At length troops began to go across in large numbers, but munitions and weapons of war did not come. The Browning automatic rifle, invented in America, and called by Colonel Roosevelt "one of the greatest weapons developed by the war," had just been placed in the hands of a limited number of divisions when the war ended. From guns to footwear, there was inefficiency. Colonel Roosevelt mentions a number of facts "that no amount of words can cover, no speeches explain away."

But having had his say about such things, the author passes on, perhaps to tell of fighting, perhaps to relate a bit of comic or pathetic by-play. The significance of it all lies not so much in the condemnatory facts, or even in the strong plea for universal military service, as in the spirit of the whole book. It is the spirit of common American manhood, neither hard to understand, nor requiring special genius to put into practice. This spirit of morality, common sense, and energy is really all around us. It is strong enough to overcome greed, class hatred, moral slackness, and all other evils that attack democracy.