

answers to such questions, which are certainly most fundamental for an understanding of the problems of the government in its economic mobilization for war, the reader is afforded little light.

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The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice. By STEPHEN LEACOCK.
New York: John Lane Co., 1920. \$1.25.

"Social and economic theory is heavy to the verge of being indigestible. There is no such thing as a gay book on political economy for reading in a hammock" (p. 105). Nevertheless, even a book on political economy may be bound in a crimson cover. *The Unsolved Riddle of Social Justice* is a work by "Stephen Leacock, B.A., Ph.D., Litt.D., F.R.C.S., Professor of Political Economy at McGill University," written for the readers of Stephen Leacock, author of *Frenzied Fiction*, etc., and intentionally gotten up to resemble the nonsense novels in physical appearance.

But the style, though monosyllabic, is serious. After reviewing the social crisis brought on by the war, with inflated currency "lying upon the industrial landscape like snow" at home, and abroad "the fierce eyes and unshorn face of the real and undoubted Bolshevik, waving his red flag," and everywhere "the moving and shifting spectacle of riches and poverty, side by side, inextricable," he turns back to the industrial revolution and the beginnings of competitive enterprise. The contrast between the early hopes of the greatest happiness of all through the operation of enlightened self-interest, and the later facts of cut-throat competition and its attendant drift toward monopoly is clear enough, though brief and not particularly vivid. The author reserves his keenest shafts for his review of modern classical economics. Here Mr. Leacock's satirical powers are rather more in evidence than elsewhere. The cost-of-production theory of value, which serves him as a proxy for the science of political economy, comes in for a good ragging in the spirit of the younger group of "institutional" economists (who are not mentioned, however); a trained psychic might even sense the presence of the spirit of Mr. Veblen. Thereafter Edward Bellamy, as the embodiment of socialism, is torn limb from limb in the manner of Richard T. Ely. This sacrament having been duly performed, the limbs are gathered together again in a concluding chapter of suggestions for the future.

Though its style is not that of the nonsense novels, the *Unsolved Riddle* distinctly suggests its consanguinity. After all, Mr. Leacock's attacks upon established literary dogma convey to most readers not so much a clear impression of a coherent intellectual program as a highly developed technique for biffing everybody's illusions. He lets down the movies as hard as he does Homer. Part of the pleasure of reading him lies in the fact that you never know what he is going to say—and, on the whole, don't care. But this impartiality loses some of its charm in a book on political economy. One feels a stupid preference for some sort of anchorage. Certainly after seeing all and doubting all, one is unprepared for the concluding catalogue of "what is possible and what is not." There is something about the last two sentences of the book that challenges the reader to try his wings in a flight of Leacockian humor. "The chief immediate direction of social effort should be towards the attempt to give to every human being in childhood adequate food, clothing, education, and an opportunity in life. This will prove to be the beginning of many things." Can this be a case of the "inward smile"?

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