

spirit of man and has, perhaps for that reason, not only survived but come to be constantly embattled amid the brutal pagan forces of a world unspiritualized and unredeemed.

I have left myself no space to make the ordinary observations that belong in a review. But it must be evident by now that in the commoner and more accepted sense, too, Thomas Mann is a very great artist. After the prelude the book is purely epic. Mann understands the noble and almost lost art of narrative—narrative in the sense of both Homer and Fielding—in which sharp characterization and dramatic conflict are arrived at without interrupting that narrative flow and mood which is the eternal mood of the stories told by men to each other from myth and legend to romance and novel. Read from this point of view "The Story of Dinah" for instance. It is, quite literally, Homeric and yet fed at every moment by the subtlety and awareness of a modern mind of the first order. And that is indeed the mark that ultimately distinguishes Thomas Mann from practically every other living writer: the union in him of the highest creative and the highest intellectual power. Therefore he is not always immediately accessible to readers enfeebled by the works of men with more talent than brains. Therefore, by the same token, "Joseph and His Brothers," like Mann's previous works will, finding first its few fit readers, come soon to belong to the necessary cultural landscape of the human mind.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

Morris Hillquit

LOOSE LEAVES FROM A BUSY LIFE,
by Morris Hillquit. \$2.50. 5½ x 8¼; 357
pp. New York: *The Macmillan Company*.

"A *BABBITT* of Babbitts is Hillquit, the ideal Socialist leader of successful den-

tists." Thus Trotsky dismissed the late mentor of American socialism. The invidious touch was justified, but the characterization was not very happy. To be sure, the contemptuous reference to Hillquit's smug and vulgar petty bourgeois following was sound enough. Only an American Flaubert could adequately convey the spiritual halitosis of these Socialist "dentists," be they pants-pressers or liberal parsons. But to call Hillquit himself a Babbitt is to miss the key to his long and tragic leadership.

If Hillquit had been Babbitt he would have been perfectly happy in striving towards a Socialist-good government Tammany, such as Victor Berger, a typical immigrant Scheidemann, built in Milwaukee. Or he might have accepted with good grace the Y. M. C. A. Socialism of Norman Thomas. Though these purely liberal forces finally defeated him, as they are now defeating themselves for the simple reason that the New Deal is going them one better, Hillquit never abandoned, at least in theory, his early Marxism. Finally, his Marxism became conservative, even reactionary. But this reaction was not achieved by the Rotarian intellectualism of the progressive mind. It was the refuge of his disappointments. His Socialism became tired and sectarian; and he no doubt knew it. He came to feel that the American atmosphere, for all sorts of historic reasons, was fatal to the social revolution, at least for a long time to come. Yet his lucid mind could not abandon the clarity of Socialist doctrine.

This gap between his social logic and his "realism" took away his spiritual wind. It dwarfed his social stature. He died a very clever, cynical, scornful and embittered man; and essentially a small, though honest, man. But he never became Babbitt. For that he was intellectually too

civilized. Indeed, the only thing he saved from the wreckage of his youthful revolutionary outlook was a supreme contempt for the liberal "Socialist" Babbitt about him. Probably the most ironic thing to himself about his own career was his success in a system he honestly despised. As a lawyer he was not merely the equal of the Elihu Root and the John W. Davises, but by far their superior. And so he always had a sufficiently large labor practice to keep his quite un-Socialist fortune from rolling into the millions; and also to keep his merited distinction as the greatest labor lawyer in American history. Compared to him Darrow is not a lawyer but an actor.

As the years went by this split in his personality widened. He became the incarnate contradiction of the "Socialist" leader, an intellectual snob who could not break through to the masses. He dealt only with a close and insignificant oligarchy of personal cronies, whom he didn't even trouble to control; and he became involved in innumerable ways with the various "progressive" forces. He despised the personalities of all these liberal, pseudo-Socialist tendencies. He laughed at the complex emptiness and the opportunist pragmatism of a John Dewey, who started out to "revolutionize" our education and wound up as the patron saint of all the Teachers Colleges.

He was amused by the humble-pretentious humanitarianism of a Jane Addams, who professed pacifism while advocating meatless days during the war. Privately, he lumped together the Rabbi Wisers and Harry Emerson Fosdicks and Norman Thomases; to him they were all merely left publicity seekers. La Follettism he considered a mere return to the trust busting 1890's. He was fully aware that the "lovable" Debs was not the first native

Marxian but the last and most befuddled Jacksonian. He intensely disliked the heavy, *echt Deutsch*, beer garden, Ebert variety of Socialism of Milwaukee. He knew the abject mental and moral bankruptcy of even the so-called progressives in the A. F. of L. He was a thoroughly disillusioned man.

And yet, he believed that nationally American Socialism could not keep from becoming a sort of vague synthesis of all these forces; and he stayed on as the philosopher and somewhat contemptuous guide of the movement. Where else was he to go? That, he came to feel, is "America." He always remained deeply conscious of the immigrant nature of American Socialism. His mind was far too orderly to welcome the Populist laborism of Debs, the Christian Socialism of Thomas, the goo-goo flirtations of the Deweyites. But he respected tremendously their nativity.

In his heart he really admired the Trotskys of history, who despised him. But then, Russia was not part of Western industrial society, especially not America. His conception of Western Socialism became a sort of nebular hypothesis: in time all these soft, pink movements will harden into a red revolutionary star. And with a wry pen he defended even the Eberts and MacDonalds, until that became impossible; and he spoke of American progressives as "fine" characters. But his private mellowness he reserved for the radical oppositions which had abused him all his life. The Wobblies and the Communists, who called him every name under the sun, he considered more or less insane. Still, they were crazy on the left, and he cursed them almost affectionately.

"Loose Leaves From A Busy Life" is a very shrewd book of memoirs. Above all, Hillquit wished to leave a picture of himself as a true-blue Marxian. Above

all, he did not wish to be remembered as a wishy-washy liberal. And so he dwells lovingly on his early years, almost half a century ago, when as a Socialist agitator he was the leading figure in organizing Jewish American labor. He makes a good deal of his defence of ultra-radical cases, of Johann Most the anarchist, of the Communistically inclined editors of the old *Masses*, of the victims of the red baiters during and after the war. He is proud of the fact that it was he who forced the Socialist party into a clear anti-war stand. And one cannot help but admire his real courage in the memorable New York mayoralty campaign of 1917, when in the midst of all the war hysteria he stuck by all his guns. It was Hillquit who was mainly instrumental in taking the American Socialist party out of the Second International; and he even wistfully regrets that the Third International made it impossible for the party to join it. He clearly comes out against the revolutionary cowardice of the German Socialists and states his belief that Soviet Russia is on the way to Socialist construction.

And yet he does not succeed in establishing his revolutionary character. He can't. He has to contradict himself. In one place he indicts and elsewhere he whitewashes the Eberts and MacDonalds. His pen sketches of the American progressives and labor leaders are invariably flat. He tries to praise them. But he obviously does not care for them. In the most literal sense these memoirs are an *apologia pro vita mea*. Still, it may well be that the historians of the future will agree with Hillquit's unconscious justification of himself, legible between all the lines, that the last half century of American life was probably the worst possible environment for the development of a revolutionary radical.

BENJAMIN STOLBERG

Homes are as Barren as Box-Cars

BOY AND GIRL TRAMPS OF AMERICA, by Thomas Minehan. \$2.50. 5½ x 8½; 246 pp. New York: Farrar & Rinehart.

THIS judicious and absorbing account of vagrant children is written by a sociologist of the University of Minnesota, who, having previously made a study of older male transients, has now pushed his researches still further by taking to the road with a younger army of hoboes, and was evidently young enough himself to observe them at close range without detection. He dressed in old clothes, caught rides and camped out with them in all weathers, slept where they did in cars and on the floors of missions and jails, and with his camera and note-book made the same kind of record of his travels as if he had penetrated the tropical instead of the hobo jungle. Although the book has an appendix of numerical tables for those who prefer their information in this form, Mr. Minehan has deliberately chosen the method of the reporter, and set himself to answer the kind of questions that any reader would naturally ask about an unknown tribe of children. His chapter headings read; Why did they leave home? How they travel; How they get food; How they get clothing; How they sleep; Their education, sex life, philosophy, and conversation.

He found, for instance, that 387 out of 466 gave hard times as their reason for leaving home; 28 the fact that they liked to travel; and 23 their dislike of school. Whether or not these were the actual reasons, apparently the children thought they were, which is all that the author pretends to record. Of the 577 tramps he interviewed, 295 were less than 17, and 454 less than 19. Of this number, about 1 in 20 were girls, and the girls ran