

world in a grain of sand, he readily reduces it to a pebble in his shoe. He appears to be on more intimate terms with pain than with poetry, and his attempt to relieve his agonies by screaming in uppercase letters is more to be pitied than encouraged. Not his despair in the face of a universe which he views as a slaughter-house hidden in a rose-bower but the stupidity of his revolt against stupidity is condemned. His book is "not poetry in the proper sense of the word . . . it is a bit of spiritual autobiography." It is really an epitome of the helpless wrath of the adolescent for the first time aware of the malignancy of life. Mr. De Casseres is the little-boy-who-can't-get-over-it. One wonders if he could find release in the free man's worship so splendidly declared by Bertrand Russell, or whether the only salvation that remains for him is the annihilation he wretchedly contemplates.

THE SHADOW-EATER. By Benjamin De Casseres. Wilmarth Publishing Co. (1917).

In a recent issue of *THE DIAL* Mr. Aiken defined the functions of romanticism and of realism as, on the one hand, "to delight with beauty" and, on the other, "to amaze with understanding." The latter felicity is less to be expected of those whose primary concern is with the blind forces of emotion rather than with the lucidities of the intellect. And yet the poet who cares only for beauty betrays it by a limited vision, while the realist who ignores it is no more amazing than are certain successes of instinctive behavior. Nietzsche's most terrible analyses are scarcely softened by his power over the German language. Yeats' fluent music is most commanding when he catches truth in his net of images. Indeed the poet's faculty for revealing the universe would seem to be in inverse ratio to his desire to embrace it. The light of ages is likely to vanish under bushels of metaphysics.

These convictions are strengthened by the sighings and shriekings of such a Neo-Nietzschean as Benjamin De Casseres. Not that he yearns for loveliness. He seems to take a morbid joy in the leering of lean and filthy specters. Far from seeing the