

"What's the Matter with Mexico?"
is the title of Caspar Whitney's
latest book. (Macmillan; 50 cts.)

It is only a rhetorical question to introduce his answer in the latest addition to "Our National Problems." The substance of his answer has already appeared in the "Outlook," and the recast material exhibits becoming restraint, except where he has to express his opinion of the Wilson-Bryan policy. He seems biassed in favor of the Gringo, not to mention the promoter, rather than against the native, but his vigorous championship of the former often betrays him into an unsympathetic attitude. He attempts a brief historical introduction that is neither clear nor accurate. According to his analysis, Mexico suffers principally from the revolutionary habit; but this, he points out, is individual rather than popular in impulse. The great bulk of the people are placidly disposed but irresolute, easily led, and attracted by momentary trifles. This is only what we should expect of a conglomerate mass of people, sixty per cent of whom are of native descent, and half as many more of mixed blood. One may question the accuracy of his figures without doubting their essential truth, and note with satisfaction that among the more cultured upper tenth he does recognize a "few high-minded, loyal Mexicans." He would initiate improvement by the establishment of a firm government, and follow this by an honest and just policy toward the lower classes. No one will quarrel with this as a general principle, but Mr. Whitney evidently would judge indulgently any form of government that promised reasonable stability. Therefore he would strip revolt of all high-flown phrases, disregard all pretense in favor of agrarian or political rights, and depend upon the slow processes of education to effect any essential improvement in general conditions. Once more he may be right in his main purpose, but he does not indicate how this is to be accomplished with a high-spirited, sensitive people. For this reason his chapters recounting the effects wrought in Mexico by the foreigner are more convincing. Of those effects up to 1910 and of the subsequent ruin wrought by revolution, we are reasonably certain, and he gives brief sketches of many who figured in both movements. But he does not clearly show us the way out of the present welter of blood and pillage; nor does he convince us that the policy of the present administration has been wholly injudicious.