

MAXWELL BODENHEIM

Advice. KNOPF.

Brittle, penetrating, filled with dry humor and biting satire, Bodenheim is the youngest of these three ironists, and perhaps the least given to a contemplation of beauty. He lets his satirical sense feel its way among personal and social problems. He is an introspective satirist. Vivid in his sense of drama, and of description, he records both events and people with faithfulness. If music is lacking in his verses, it is perhaps compensated for by adroitness.

Maxwell Bodenheim was born in Mississippi in 1892. He is wispish in appearance, with sharp features and sandy hair. His conversation is as biting as his poetry. A keen analytical mind and a contempt for the unintelligent make his reactions and ex-

pressions fearless and rather terrifying. For three years he was an enlisted man in the army. He spent some years in Chicago, and is definitely associated with the group there. I have never known him to hesitate to criticize a man's work because that man was his friend. Both in his work and in his person, he seems afraid of friendliness. This is, in a sense, his strength. Uncompromisingly, he looks at life through a strong lens of ironical humor. American poetry has needed this note. Bodenheim is a sort of poetic Jonathan Swift, a twentieth century Pope turned democrat.

"His delicacies are daringly clear and his images are fresh without attempting the latest heresy. Bodenheim's sensitivity to words makes him especially expert in his use of the verbal nuance. . . . Bodenheim has no superior in the whimsical-grotesque." — *Louis Untermeyer* in *"The New Era in American Poetry"*.

"Mr. Bodenheim uses words in a cryptic, esoteric fashion, attaching to them meanings of his own, as though they were his

private property and not the common possession of the race." — *Review of "Advice"* in *"The Athenaeum"*, November 5, 1920.

"'Advice' is indubitably one of the important books of the year as it is one of the books most compact with beauty, actually worthy of frequent rereading. It is a book small only in size, for behind its lines tremble the multitudinous vibrations of a world of beauty and thought." — *Herbert S. Gorman* in the *New York "Times"*, December 26, 1920.

"Mr. Bodenheim has proved himself a very capable artist. Once the reader is willing to lend a bit of sympathy to his theory there is much to enjoy in his poems ['Advice']. The clew to their virtues may be a little difficult to get, the harmony may seem discordant, the images a trifle confusing and fantastic but careful discernment will bring unity out of the picture, and with a vivid phase of imaginative suggestion." — *William Stanley Braithwaite* in the *Boston "Transcript"*, November 27, 1920.