cellent history of the development of the three iron ranges of north-eastern Minnesota. Walker based his research upon an extensive number of primary and secondary sources, and he welded a relatively complicated story into a richly detailed narrative that rarely flags. Although his study will hardly resolve all the contentious issues surrounding the exploitation of the iron country, *Iron Frontier* is an important book that adds much to our understanding of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century industrial development.

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Books by Stuart Brandes, Daniel Nelson, Roy Lubove, David Brody, and John Garraty have taught us a good deal about "labor reform" and almost as much about labor reform in the Progressive-era steel industry. What justifies the publication of this new entry is less the originality of its subject matter than its data base. Gerald Eggert brings a generally familiar tale to life by telling it through the correspondence, scrapbooks, addresses, poetry, essays, and reminiscences of William Brown Dickson. To be sure, Eggert carefully sets the historical scene for his protagonist, and we finish the volume wiser about Elbert H. Gary, Charles M. Schwab, and the business of steel-making. But this story is at its best when Dickson is at center stage.

For a man who reached the first vice-presidency of United States Steel (1909), Dickson was something of a maverick. Eight years in the mills — five as a laborer, three as a clerk — had made him more conscious than most of Andrew Carnegie's "young geniuses" of what it meant to live the life, and to have the expectations, of an ordinary working man. Unlike his fellow steel executives, Dickson had never bossed a gang or depended for his salary on driving a work force to new levels of production. At United States Steel under the Gary regime, Dickson became the company's alter ego, pushing hard for the stock option, pension, and safety programs that were the staples of welfare capitalism and, after 1907, initiating a campaign for the elimination of Sunday labor. Resigning under pressure in 1911,
Dickson spent four years in a premature and morbid semiretirement before joining the Midvale Steel and Ordnance Company. There, in only a few years, he ruffled more feathers with an employee representation plan, a device some of his colleagues saw as the cutting edge of bolshevism, and by pressing for the abolition of the twelve-hour shift. Dickson was, on the other hand, an old-fashioned Carnegie disciple on pricing. Like his mentor, he believed in cutting prices when demand fell. He thus strongly and vigorously opposed the gentlemen's agreements that were the cornerstone of Gary's cooperative pricing policy. As he put it, "when business was normal these agreements were unnecessary; and when it was depressed, there were no gentlemen" (p. 58).

This is a perceptive book. Eggert understands Dickson in the larger history of American management, as an actor in the conflicts between steelmen and bankers, competition and cooperation, production and marketing, efficiency and predictability. He is also properly cynical about the substance of much that passed for reform — of stock option plans that workers could not afford, of an industrial representation plan in which a majority of the representatives were foremen. Eggert is superb at capturing the ironic and the absurd (the Midvale president who said, "some of the best friends I have are workmen in the works" [p. 119]; Dickson eloquently lecturing his workers on the pitfalls of material possessions).

On the negative side, Eggert does not understand the corporate interest in pensions. His use of secondary sources is inadequate (a chapter on industrial democracy, but no citation to Milton Derber's study). And he allows his conceptualization of Dickson as a radical to overshadow his subject's profound belief that the interests of capital and labor were identical. Dickson was an independent spirit, but his ideas were tolerated and ultimately accepted because others recognized, if only intuitively, that Dickson's "labor reform" was, in fact, a managerial style — indeed, a system, of nondirective, democratic authority. The future of labor relations belonged not to Henry Clay Frick and the tactics that had brought him victory at Homestead, but to William Brown Dickson and the emerging social sciences.

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