Smiley was just a working man, one of the many who come on the earth, toil for others, get enough to live on, perhaps populate the earth a little, and then pass on. "Brother So-and-So passed on the other day, etc., etc." So reads the usual write-up in the union paper.

There is irony in Smiley's death, and this is what makes the story.

For, after all, thousands of workers are killed every year in the shops, and nobody gives the news more than a passing glance or perhaps a "hmm, hmm, ain't that awful."

But when it happens to someone close to you, it means more. Smiley was close, about a hundred yards or so on the other side of the plant from me. Smiley, like all workers, wanted to get ahead. Lacking much of an education, this meant getting ahead in the shop, a promotion, an upgrading, as we call it, to a better job. His wages on the huge body stamping press were nothing to write home about, nor even to bring home to a wife and family. Smiley had a family, you see, because he had believed that two could live cheaper than one. Later he found out that two brought in its wake three, perhaps four, five and six and on up.

Fortune soon smiled on Smiley, and for him, because, like we said, he couldn't do his own.

A crane hook-up job was vacant, and Smiley had the seniority to apply for it. It paid five cents an hour more, being a rather involved job hooking huge body dies up and directing the crane operator just right so that the dies swung into the press without banging a corner off it, or smashing the form of the die.

Smiley had the seniority, but little else. No experience. The foreman knew this. That night the job became vacant, he jumped down the list over Smiley and took a man with less seniority who knew his way around hooking up dies.

Smiley protested, loud and furious. He grabbed his steward right off, and demanded the job. Here was a chance not only to get off production, but also to bring home a few more bucks each week. Yeah, yeah, the steward told Smiley, you have the seniority, but this other guy has the know-how, and the job is too dangerous for a beginner to take on right away. Smiley was not to be put off. When he got his teeth — I mean his gums — into anything he held on. He held on to a fault, because in the end he got it. He got the job, and the death that went with it.

Later, about 3 A. M. — we were working the midnight shift — Smiley was stacking dies. What this means is that the company to save space, which means money, stacks dies which are not being used, one on top of the other so high that sometimes we wonder what strange hand of destiny keeps them from toppling over on each other.

Up, up went the crane. Smiley was directing the stacking of a body die which must have weighed three quarters of a ton, or more, if it weighed an ounce.

It all happened so fast then, that no one knew anything until they heard a hoarse scream, and saw Smiley stretched out on the floor, his head a bloody pulp, and his legs crumpled like broken straws under him.

Some say that Smiley was at fault, that in directing the crane operator he hit a pile of dies broadside, knocking the body die off the crane hook and down on him. Others say that the safety catch on the crane failed to work, went up past the "stop" and broke the cable.

Whatever happened, who placed the blame where, or what Smiley's family got out of it, I never did know.

One thing I do know though. Smiley was just a little guy trying to get back a few more pennies of the wealth he produced for others. And it was for this that he was a man one moment, and a crushed heap of bones and muscles the next.

Yes, steel, and a man — who used to be.

I. B. C.

LUCKMAN'S "JABBER-JITTERS"

On July 20th, 1949, American Business and American Labor got bawled out. The scene of the berating was the elegant Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, where the local Chamber of Commerce had gathered to listen to an illustrious contemporary, one Charles Luckman, President of Lever Brothers, soap manufacturers. So far as we know, none of Mr. Luckman's employees, nor any others for that matter were invited, but that we suppose is as it should be in this democracy of ours.

The fact that Mr. Luckman's company has begun the erection of a 25 million dollar plant in the Greater Los Angeles area and will spend another 30 million dollars on expansion elsewhere in the United States gives the gentleman the right to speak his piece. And whether he has something of value to offer his listeners, or merely the sort of nonsense that Mr. Luckman apparently excels in, an important individual such as he is and a concern like Lever Brothers will always command a lot of respect from the general public and a lot of space in the advertising-hungry daily press.

"Psychological Slump"

The subject on Mr. Luckman's mind that evening was the case of "jabber-jitters" (as he termed it) which Americans in all walks of life are apparently suffering from today. In short, the "recession" which, according to Mr. Luckman, they have allowed themselves to be talked into. His speech, entitled "A Fighting Faith For America," was calculated to talk them *out* of such a "defeatist attitude." Mr. Luckman, like St. George the fabled, has sallied forth to slay a dragon, in this case an economic slump which he believes is purely psychological.

The argument that depressions are caused because the majority of the population gets itself into a fit of despondency, listens to "dire rumors" and "gloomy statistics" is a lot older than Mr. Luckman. Its as good a story as any that emanate from the capitalist economists but like the others it is based upon upside-down thinking. Depressions do not happen because people get *ideas;* on the contrary the despondency and gloomy statistics emanate from the material thing, the depression, recession, disinflation, or whatever one wishes to call it. The very thought of businessmen going broke and workers becoming unemployed because they have psychologized themselves into a business slump is funny. There is no sweeter music to a capitalist than the ring of a cash register and the mounting figures on a ticker tape is for him more beautiful to behold than grand opera. On the other hand, the workers' eagerness for labor is not matched even by their love for a "scratch-sheet" or a ball game. Or so it would seem.

"Happy Figures"

Mr. Luckman, however, does not believe in spreading gloomy statistics and altho he admits that his system is not perfect he nevertheless trots out some facts and figures which he insists prove that the American economy is in an extremely happy and healthful condition. As he puts it:

(1) 59 million workers on the job;

(2) 200 billion dollars in liquid savings;

(3) 215 billion dollar personal income for 1949;

(4) High purchasing power — 53 percent greater than prewar.

These are very interesting figures and seem quite impressive when tossed out in the midst of a lengthy speech. Actually they mean very little, for even were they accurate it should be plain that employment totals, bank savings, personal income and purchasing power have very little if anything to do with the economic