

Who put that tincture of gall and copperas in Edith Wharton's inkstand? What makes her see the activities of her fellow creatures through the wrong end of the telescope? God knows there is plenty of sin and folly in the world, plenty of ignorance, affectation, and conceit. And there is this to be said for the mordancy of Mrs. Wharton. She does not, like so many of our would-be satirists, attack virtue and idealism and self-sacrifice; she attacks wickedness in high places, selfishness in its million manifestations, the follies and futilities of those who serve the Prince of the Power in the Air.

Furthermore, she shows that however skeptical this age may be in religion, it is gullible in everything else. Never was there a time more propitious for the Prophets of the Grand Bluff. Fortune-tellers, mind-healers, intellectual vacuum cleaners, psychological masseurs, are making hay in every sense of the words. "Just relax, — yes, fifty dollars, and you have an appointment for Wednesday. This is the way out." Is it?

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

From the saga of John Galsworthy his work is more than remote. Whole centuries stand between.

Jensen is in love with this great, glowing world of engines and designs for engines, men and designs for men. His cooperation with such a world has given him strength to surmount obstacles, often verging on the fabulous, to find a clean, clear love, — the Margaret of the dedication.

Many will find reality, simplicity, truth in the development of this formidable Nordic from a lad, steering his tiny craft about the ugly Stendiget, through the years in stoke-hold and slum, attic and Doomsday seminary, college and social service, to the philosopher and behaviorist, faithful to J. B. Watson and smoking a contemplative pipe with experienced eyes upon the waters of New York harbor. His book has the beauty of an ancient saga, the cadence, occasionally the cruelty. Carl Christian Jensen is a Saxon *scop*, a seafarer at the court of modern science; his Alfred, a gentleman with dissecting knife and little squeemishness.

DONALD GIBBS

The Rise of a Nordic

MEMORIES of Beowulf merge with thoughts of Ibsen's symbolism, as one reads the story of Carl Christian Jensen presented as *AN AMERICAN SAGA* (Little, Brown, \$2.50). For this narrative of mental and spiritual growth never loses the shadows of its early chapters, — those moments in the life of a Norse adventurer when he is most sincerely a part of the background which framed *Ghosts* and *Hamlet*.

Mr. Jensen suggests in the movement of his ardent impressionism the new meaning both of "America" and of "American" literature. Can one forget the force of individual will driving the hero of this autobiography, one realizes immediately how far his idea of America must be from the more stilted concept held by Beacon Hill or Gramercy Park. As for decorum and lightness of touch in this new American, the Normans might never have brought their dazzling brilliance to the shores of Saxon England; Edith Wharton might never have written. He has the booming vigor, the gusto, of Dreiser, his method, his lack of humor.

Two Views of Fascism

OF the making of books about Fascism there is no end. And this is as it should be, because Fascist Italy is a phenomenon of great importance, not only for Italy but for the world at large. In the fields of politics, government, economics, sociology, and philosophic speculation, Fascism alike demands attention and challenges thought. The challenge is most striking when we have two books which approach the subject from opposite angles.

FASCISM by Guiseppe Prezzolini (Macmillan, \$2.50) is a brief topical survey, "intended especially", as the author himself states in his Foreword, "for the enlightenment of foreign countries." It was originally published in Paris in 1925, and thus does not deal directly with events beyond the autumn of 1924. The translator has, however, added a final chapter which carries the thread of the narrative through the years 1925-26.

This book is not a profound study, — nor does Signor Prezzolini claim that it is. The volume bears evidence of having been somewhat hastily compiled. The topical arrangement is at times illogical,

and there are missing links in the chain of exposition. To one having a first-hand knowledge of Italian affairs or to the genuine student of the subject, the book will offer little that is new. But the general reader will find it a sketchy yet fairly useful survey of ideas, events, and personalities in Fascist Italy. The readability of the book would have been enhanced by a better translation.

Quite different in character is Don Luigi Sturzo's *ITALY AND FASCISMO* (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.75), — in every respect a more noteworthy study than the first. Don Sturzo has the initial advantage of being one of the outstanding figures in Italian political life. Although now living in exile, he is the titular head of the so called "Popular Party", a group describing themselves as Christian Democrats, but often termed Christian Socialists. This group represents the organized Catholic masses. Its importance can be gaged by the fact that in the last parliamentary elections held before the Fascist dictatorship, it obtained nearly one-fifth of all the parliamentary seats.

The most interesting item in its program is its advocacy of a federal form of government for Italy, with larger political activity for the provinces. This program of federalism and regionalism, whose logical culmination is a "United States of Italy", not only opposes Fascism but also criticizes the whole political trend toward centralization which has prevailed since the attainment of Italian political unity. In a sense, therefore, the Popular Party is the most uncompromising opponent of Fascism, which exalts centralization, nationalism, and imperialistic expansion to the utmost degree. This explains why the Fascist Dictatorship of Mussolini has sternly repressed the Popular Party and has driven its leader, Don Sturzo, into exile.

Don Sturzo's book is a trenchant attack on Fascism, which it criticizes root and branch. But the attack is conducted on a very high plane. Don Sturzo is a philosopher. He digs deep. The book opens with a broad historical survey and ends with an equally broad survey of current trends and tendencies, not only in Italy but in the world at large. Furthermore, the tone always remains restrained. This book is an excellent example of the adage:

suaviter in modo, fortiter in re. Its readability is distinctly enhanced, moreover, by the excellence of the translation.

Don Sturzo has unquestionably written the most effective criticism of Mussolini and the Fascist régime that has thus far appeared. Yet, for this very reason, we must be on our guard. So able is the criticism, so restrained the tone, and so persuasive the argument, that the reader is likely to forget that there is another side to the story. The challenge of Fascism to many of our traditional ideas, its triumph in Italy, and the sympathetic echoes it awakens in many quarters outside of Italy, are not fully accounted for in Don Sturzo's admittedly able pages. The book should be read by all genuine students of contemporary Italy. But it should also act as an incentive for further reading on the Fascist side. Thus only will a just intellectual synthesis become possible.

LOTHROP STODDARD

Fool's Gold

WHEN an author of Count Hermann Keyserling's stature pounds the table and says: "I regard this book (*THE WORLD IN THE MAKING*, Harcourt, Brace, \$2.50) as the most actual of my works and believe it should have the widest appeal," one reads with, at least, attention. But in doing so, one discovers that even reading with attention can help little when the whole book is written in an abstruse, semi-opaque manner. Nor is this the only hindrance. The ubiquitous I-spirit echoes and reechoes through the pages. And it is downright irritating to be reminded well over sixty times during the course of a book that it is imperative to read a number of other works by the author before the one in hand can really be understood.

However, there is something on the other side of this literary ledger. Keyserling agrees with the pessimistic Spengler that civilization is trembling on the brink. He argues that the spiritual organism of man has made such great strides in the realm of the intellect that the dynamic balance of the golden age has been upset. Therefore, all old states of culture must die. He accuses the machine. The man who loves his car, his airplane, or his globe trotting, who prefers radio and movies to Sophocles and Shakespeare, finds it quite