

impossible to remain tied to life forms or cultures which depended on narrow inner and outer boundaries. Compared with his fathers, modern man gives the effect of a new, traditionless, and unburdened person.

Yet this German prophet says that those who preach "back from the technical" are nothing but bad romanticists. The masses will inevitably decide the issue. He points out that an idea never rises to historic power simply because it is true, but only when it is representative. The chauffeur is the typical modern man, and the Fascist and Bolshevik movements are related, — if opposite, — manifestations of his will. To-morrow's leader will be the man who best expresses the collective unconscious mind of the populace. Lenin did that in Russia. Mussolini is doing it now in Italy.

The immediate problem is to develop world leaders from a Europe materially impoverished, but spiritually richer than the nascent chauffeur-communities elsewhere. The mechanized world of quantitative and transferable values is choking with gasoline fumes of our older culture. Still, in time, and under the guidon of a perfectly self-conscious, time-conscious, and technically intellectual thinker, modern Europe will create new spiritual values of its own.

Keyserling, like Spengler, has found a favorite pastime in collecting the sweepings of current pessimism into impressive generalizations. And the wise are saying of Keyserling, as they have already said of Spengler, that his shining nuggets may prove fool's gold.

HENRY H. BALOS

## An Ambassador as Mystic

**T**HE profound piety of the French Ambassador to the United States has long been revealed to his own countrymen and to those familiar with certain mystical and highly orthodox religious currents in modern French literature. Paul Claudel's *LETTERS TO A DOUBTER* (A. & C. Boni, \$2.50) introduce him to the American public in a form that will interest all denominations. It shows him reasoning with one of those "sincere doubters" who ultimately admit and accept all that each particular sect considers to be the truth of God and religion.

In these days, it must be remembered that even the Mohammedan and Hindu propagandists among us are fond of pointing out that they also can exhibit anguished souls who have found peace within the compounds of their beliefs, no matter how narrow the confines or how preposterous these beliefs may seem to outsiders. So too, Protestantism has produced those whose spiritual experiences have inspired other troubled souls. It has been left, however, for the modern French literary groups to reveal a class of strugglers who, while they have never strayed far from their childhood faith, nevertheless indulge in the luxury of grief over their unbelief.

Thus, in this work the "conversion" is of one who "never left the road to Christianity". If the doubting seems, as Emerson once pointed out, to be safely within the charmed circle where truth is commensurate with uncompromising orthodoxy, it can be seen, therefore, that the sympathetic ambassador is not dealing with a scientific doubter in the modern, rationalistic conception of the word. To the correspondent who sought M. Claudel, as a disciple might seek a master in life or in letters, the French poet and public man offers an attitude of complete orthodoxy which asks for nothing but submission and renunciation. His faith in forms and ceremonies even extends to the point of finding comfort for the soul in wearing a scapular.

There are times when the correspondence and its edifying result in reconciling a doubter to the Church which he has never left, seem hardly more than a literary experience. While the great river of modern doubt rushes all over the plains of complacent orthodoxy, the safe skepticism of M. Claudel's "doubter" is hardly more than the trembling of a rose leaf in an agitated goblet. The volume is symptomatic of the poetry and prose poesy of those "rallied Catholics" who are playing so important a part in the literature of contemporary France.

HARVEY M. WATTS

## Russia—Obverse and Reverse

**A**NY one who reads *THE MEMOIRS OF BARON N. WRANGEL* (1847-1920), subtitled *FROM SERFDOM TO BOLSHEVISM*

(Lippincott, \$4.00), will do well to read also the *MEMOIRS OF A REVOLUTIONIST* by Vera Figner (International Publishers, \$3.00). What Baron Wrangel knows, he knows well; what he doesn't know, Vera Figner knows. The only trouble is, the Baron, especially toward the end of his book, pretends to knowledge which he doesn't possess. This arises out of his antipathy to the intelligentsia. The mere mention of the word is enough to set him off on a tangent.

He ascribes the chaos into which Russia was plunged in 1917 to the intelligentsia and to the Jews; at the same time he reveals an intimacy with the Banker Rothstein, a charming and amusing fellow who served weekly dinners at five hundred roubles per head. This is not said to discredit the author who, like many another anti-Semite, knows a Jew or two whom he likes. He reserves, however, his strongest language for Kerensky and members of the Provisional Government, — "the Grand Eunuch Kerensky," — "these emasculated wretches." As for Vera Figner, she never condescends to uncharitable language, though there would be greater excuse for her if she did; and she does know the intelligentsia, and what she knows places them with the saints rather than the sinners.

Putting the controversial elements aside, Baron Wrangel has produced a charming and even fascinating book. The earlier pages, in particular, read like a novel by Turgenev. We are presented with a series of portraits such as are possible only in Russia. The drawing of the more intimate portraits of the author's own family is accomplished with a disarming frankness. There is his *Nyanya* (nurse) who will endear herself to many readers' hearts; there is the impressive full-length study of his father, whose "one principle was to have no principles"; there is the picture of himself as a child against the animate background of Russian family life, of peasants, tutors, governesses, of piquant domestic episodes, of dramatic incidents connected with serfdom days, — all seen with sensitive eyes and related with that authentic touch which at times endues the narrative with the illusion of creative art.

There is an interesting chapter on his school days in Geneva, which was then the

Russian's second fatherland, another on his meeting with the Princess Metternich is really amusing; and his glimpse of Bakunin concludes with the mirth-provoking episode of the great anarchist's inviting a number of friends to a grand dinner, at the end of which he takes up a collection to pay for it! Baron Wrangel has lived under four reigns, and no end of important personages stalk through his pages. It is all of a piece, however, as regards one thing: the easy morals of his *dramatis personae*.

In consequence, Vera Figner's vivid epic of the revolutionaries becomes understandable, indeed. If Wrangel takes in more, she goes deeper; and her account is one of interrupted integrity, of wholehearted endeavor to make Russia a better place by ridding it of the sort of people Baron Wrangel writes about, though even he has little favorable to say about Nicholas II and his spouse. Vera Figner's twenty years' confinement in the Schlüsselburg Fortress, due to her complicity in the murder of Alexander II in 1881, makes a heart-rending story, told with that simple art which comes with suffering. When "every little blade of grass is dear to us", as it was to Vera Figner in prison, we may begin to understand something of the self-sacrificing spirit and fortitude of those to whom freedom in the wilderness was infinitely preferable to slavery with the flesh-pots which Baron Wrangel laments.

JOHN COUNOS

## Religious Genetics

**R**ELIGION is the highest music of the soul, and religious sects are its hymns, — which makes it difficult, indeed, to compress their myths and teachings into a small scientific book. To treat them algebraically, what a thankless task! Professor Theodore H. Robinson has outlined *grosso modo* the cold anatomy of that majestic body, mystic and electric at the same time, whose miraculous vitality, universally scattered, baffles the skeptic and invigorates the believer. Such objective description may account for the errors that appear in *AN OUTLINE INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS* (Oxford University Press, American Branch, \$2.00).