

The Gyldendal Prize Novel

The Philosopher's Stone, by J. Anker Larsen. Translated by Arthur G. Chater. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.00.

A NOVEL without plot, without movement, without heroine, almost without a love story—a more characteristic Scandinavian book than this winner of the Gyldendal Prize would be hard to find. Shaped by its theme into a kind of spiritual unity, it is otherwise as formless, as complex, as illogical, as life untouched by the creative hand of art.

With a quotation from Hans Christian Andersen for clew as to his purpose, Larsen begins with a picture of a dozen Danish children at play in the school yard, and proceeds to show what in the course of years life makes of them all. Two gossiping old women and a man who has gathered wisdom from much wandering about the world form a sort of chorus to the intertwined dramas presented in a broken series of detached scenes, often with considerable lapses of time between them.

Only two of the characters are clearly aware of a quest for the philosopher's stone that will put meaning and value into life—the young student-friends, Jens Dahl and Christian Barnes. Dahl is the temperamental mystic who strives vainly through theology and theosophy in turn to recover his childish sense of an immaterial world. Barnes, passing through the normal corruptions of youth and finding intellectual efforts barren is (unconvincingly) led to become a disciple of a woman who has a school of mental hygiene in Los Angeles (one suspects the original of this) and is eventually trained into a normal conception of life and restored to the sweetheart of his boyhood.

But in addition to these contrasted stories, we have the stories of the minor characters who are unconsciously engaged upon the same quest and who work out, according to their own temperaments and the conditions under which they begin and continue life, different degrees of salvation for their souls. Undoubtedly the dominant figure in the book is not either of the neurasthenic students but an inarticulate being named Holger Enke who is driven to hideous crime against the woman he loves in order that by expiation he may come to see and understand and accept God. This episode is a fine, tragic conception but continually obscured by the details of the other stories with which it is intertwined.

On the whole, a maddening book—overloaded with fine themes and with esoteric rubbish, rich in observation and sympathy, crammed with details, often remarkable in themselves, which blur the big conceptions, ambitious in its purpose of showing a whole community of souls on their way to God and failing to transform into art the big idea on which it is constructed and the vivid stuff of life of which it is composed.

It may be that the author is deliberately modern in his heaping of one phase of life upon another, working much as modern painters work with their cubes and masses and veils of color and their deliberate avoidance of logic; but the result is confusion. Not only is there continual break of continuity almost as soon as established, continual shift of interest from one set of characters to another, bewildering change in point of view from moment to moment; but there is not time for us to realize the various aspects of a national temperament so different from our own, and to follow and evaluate the various in-

terpretations of life offered. Rich in elements of greatness, the book is rather a promise than an achievement.

The translator errs, if at all, in the direction of being too idiomatic; but he has given the book a very fair presentation in English.

EDITH RICKERT.

Tales of the Lower Tenth

A Pedlar's Pack, by Rowland Kenney. New York: Thomas Seltzer. \$2.00.

SOME sixteen short stories, these, dealing with the lower strata of British industrial life—navvies, dockers, shutters. All are related in the first person by an author who associates himself closely and in full comradeship with the rough-and-ready existences which he depicts. A droll effect is sometimes produced by an incongruous choiceness of language, as in the opening story of a fight among railroad day-laborers. When we read of a "cul-de-sac" and of a train's "human freightage" we seem to scent the collegiate investigator, the amateur sociologist. There is also a too thorough presentation of the workings of machinery and mechanical appliances in the switch yards and among the ware houses—as of details but lately learned. Aside from these points the technique of the stories is excellent: a sinewy brevity comes to correspond with the grim and often gruesome material. Amidst all this battling and violence woman takes her chances and is sufficiently portrayed in her subordinate rôle. Mr. Kenney's pages are stark and clean-cut, direct and devoid of superfluity. He deals with a section of society which increasingly engages the attention of the novelist, the poet, the painter; and any other young writer who is searching for a technique in harmony with the brutalities and discords of modern industrial life might do worse than study these pages.

H. B. F.

Contributors

SIDNEY HOWARD, journalist and playwright, was, during the war, captain in the U. S. Air Service and Flight Commander of the 20th Aero Squadron. He was decorated with the Croix de Guerre and the D. S. C. He is the author of *The Labor Spy*, which The New Republic published in 1921.

EDWARD H. SHAFFER is the managing editor of the New Mexico State Tribune, and a journalist who has written for papers in Illinois, Ohio and Kansas.

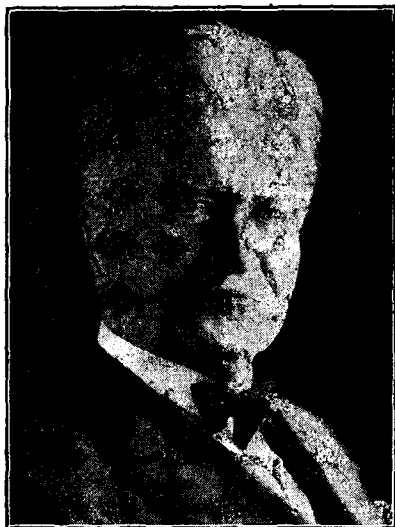
LOLA RIDGE is the author of several books of poetry, which include *The Ghetto* and *Other Poems*, and *Sun Up*.

EDWARD MEAD EARLE is a member of the faculty of Columbia University and the author of *Turkey*, the *Great Powers*, and the *Bagdad Railway*.

A. R. ORAGE, who was the editor of the English publication, *The New Age*, for fifteen years, has written *Consciousness*, *Animal*, *Human* and *Superman*; *Nietzsche in Outline* and *Aphorism*; *Readers and Writers*; *An Alphabet of Economics*; and edited *National Guilds*.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER, an American poet and art critic who has lived in London since 1916, is author of several volumes of poems and of *Paul Gauguin, His Life and Art*.

EDITH RICKERT, lecturer on contemporary literature at the University of Chicago, is the author of *The Reaper* and other novels, and (with J. M. Manly) *The Writing of English*.



ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE

Special
LA FOLLETTE
for President offer
The New Republic
 for the remainder of the year
 for \$1.00

SIX short years ago Senator Robert M. LaFollette was the most unpopular and vilified man in the United States. As the leader of the handful of "wilful men" who opposed the entry of the United States into the world war, he was denounced from a thousand platforms, pilloried by the press, and subjected to the most violent abuse that popular passion is capable of.

Today Senator LaFollette heads the most formidable political revolt in half a century, a thoroughly genuine movement expressing the aspirations of the common man. He is the idol of millions. Such is the amazing fortune of one who refused to bow to political expediency.

"If a Farmer-Labor Progressive party does not emerge from the wreck of the old parties," said *The New Republic* in a recent issue, "the American nation will soon have small reason to boast of its achievement in the art of self-government." That is the real meaning of the LaFollette candidacy. The measure of his success will determine whether a new progressive party is to be born in this country.

What part do you propose to play in assuring the formation of this new party? If you are apathetic, cynical, or simply not interested, the most hopeful political movement in half a century will come to nothing. *The New Republic*, for its part, will have correspondents on all battle fronts observing and reporting, but it will be in the thick of the fight for LaFollette. It aspires to supply intellectual ammunition to the LaFollette forces and it invites you to participate with it during this all important, exciting and uncertain campaign—on terms that make it less difficult to accept than decline.

SPECIAL LA FOLLETTE-FOR-PRESIDENT OFFER

The New Republic for the remainder of the year

for \$1.00

More than four months for the price of three

The New
REPUBLIC
 421 West 21st Street
 New York City

For the enclosed \$1.00 please send me *The New Republic*, beginning with the current issue and ending with the December 31st issue.

Name Street

City State

8-20-24



Good Books for a Dollar

THE LABOR SPY

by SIDNEY HOWARD

*With the collaboration of
Robert Dunn*

A PART of this work was published serially in The New Republic three years ago, and was later printed in pamphlet form of which more than 30,000 copies were sold. In this edition it has been greatly enlarged through the addition of sensational new material recently come to light. It is a thorough and comprehensive survey of industrial espionage. It carries a direct challenge to the vast insinuating system of bad will, provocative corruption and violence which poisons the coöperative efforts of labor and capital. Mr. Howard supplies complete documentary evidence that industrial spies have played both sides against each other, and have been the cause of much of the violence and corruption of industrial conflict.

Ready Sept. 1st, \$1.00 postpaid

THE STORY OF TEAPOT DOME

by M. E. RAVAGE

*Author of "An American in the Making,"
"The Malady of Europe."*

I N all the history of modern government there appears no act of official corruption equal to the Scandal of Teapot Dome. Yet how many righteous people have sought to hush it up or minimize its importance? While the papers printed reams of reports from the committee room, their editorial columns were either silent or strangely mealy-mouthed. As a result the black and sinister implications of the facts uncovered have never been sufficiently comprehended. Mr. Ravage has written this book with the avowed purpose of showing how dangerous it is to gloss over a public betrayal of these dimensions, and to awaken in those who excuse or condone, a sense of their own unconscious complicity.

Ready Sept. 1st, \$1.00 postpaid

SOCIAL DISCOVERY, by Eduard C. Lindeman

*With an introduction by
HERBERT CROLY*

THE first edition of Social Discovery, published a few weeks ago, is now exhausted. More than 100 copies were sold at the recent convention of Social Workers in Toronto alone. In this important contribution to the social sciences, Mr. Lindeman attempts to clear away some of the mythology and astrology which interferes with the ability of educated human beings to consider what the behaviour of man in society really amounts to. It is a profound and scholarly survey of the social sciences.

\$1.00 postpaid

DOLLAR BOOKS

N EARLY everybody is familiar with the paper-bound books which are sold everywhere in Europe so cheaply that every one buys. All books, good books as well as bad, are first published in "paper backs" and seldom cost more than one dollar. This accounts in a large measure for the fact that more books are bought and read in France, Italy and Germany than in this country, where the price is two dollars or more. Considering that we have a much greater literate population than any of these countries, it is apparent that our high prices of books have a great deal to do with limiting their sale.

The Republic Publishing Company is undertaking the experiment of determining whether good books in paper covers will go in this country. It will publish new and worth-while books to sell for a dollar a volume. Typographically they will be equal in every respect to the books that ordinarily sell for two dollars or more. The best paper, printing and craftsmanship will go into their manufacture. The above volumes are the first in the series.

THE REPUBLIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

421 West 21st Street
New York City.

For the enclosed \$.... please send me one copy of each of the following books:

- ☐ The Labor Spy. ☐ The Story of Oil.
☐ Social Discovery.

Name

Address

In Full

8-20-2