

contact with. I doubt whether Bunin intended his book to be anything but reminiscence, but he has nevertheless given us an extraordinary picture of Russia in the last century, not limiting it only to his home environment. We get glimpses of customs, of the decay of estates, of the peasantry, and the city dwellers. We are introduced to the liberals, dreaming ineffectually of a new Russia, and for whom Bunin seems not to have had much respect and in whom he had but little belief.

Fortunately the translators have managed to convey the atmosphere and feeling of the book, although their version cannot be called completely satisfactory. Some of the book's beauties in the original it is practically impossible to render adequately in English, and others, occasionally, have escaped the translators.

*In appraising Bunin's book Elvina Adams is projecting it against the background of her own knowledge, since she is of Russian birth.*

## A Tale of the Yukon

THE WORLD IS YOURS. By G. B. Lancaster. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by EDITH H. WALTON

WHEN a book is billed as "a powerful novel of the Yukon" one necessarily has misgivings. Nor is there anything reassuring about the title and jacket of "The World is Yours." Suspecting the taint of Hollywood one prepares grimly for handsome Mounties, for a stalwart, blizzard-battling hero, and for all the paraphernalia of the Jack London school of fiction. The paraphernalia is, indeed, present—but the use Miss Lancaster has made of it is another thing again. No doubt the readers of "Pageant," her novel of Tasmania, will understand why.

As the author intends, there is a legendary quality about the story of MacDonald's Tamsin and Kirk Regard, and the girl is consciously presented as a kind of earth goddess closely linked in spirit to the vast Yukon silences and the brooding Yukon hills. These two play out their drama against a background of rude, wild beauty; they are children of the wilderness both, and of the crude little boom towns which the waning of the gold rush left desolate and lonely. They were reared on the tall tales of old trappers and prospectors, and as youngsters they knew Dawson City when it was still gay with saloons and teeming with roisterous life.

During a spring and summer on the Kanana, blazing with incredible color, Kirk and Tamsin fell in love. Both gloriously robust and handsome, they were like young gods together. Kirk, however, lacked Tamsin's single-minded simplicity and generosity. He doubted his ability to live up to her; he still dreamed of other, lecherous loves. What really parted them, however, was a threat that an undetected murder committed by Kirk would finally come to light. He fled, giving Tamsin no explanation for his desertion and leaving her to face scandal and gossip. Muddled and cruelly misguided she marries the elderly man who is responsible for Kirk's final arrest, and the drama moves inexorably on to an ending which it would hardly be fair to reveal.

Such a retelling of the plot does scant justice to a book which depends largely for its effect on atmosphere and style. Miss Lancaster writes an astonishingly vigorous and lovely prose, rich but not ornate, melodious but not high-flown. Each description of Yukon scenery and Yukon life is better than the last, and the two camping episodes have all the magic of poetry. The characters also are real: Tamsin's elderly husband with his tortured, devious mind; Kirk himself; old Mat, the ex-saloon keeper, who turns religious and adopts as his guides Samuel Butler and William Blake. Unfortunately the book falls down at the end, when it becomes too consciously noble, and the ultimate fate of Kirk and Tamsin is unsatisfactory—an evasion of their logical destiny. "The World is Yours" is, however, a romantic love story of very superior quality, far too well written to be classed merely as another red-blooded tale of the adventurous North.

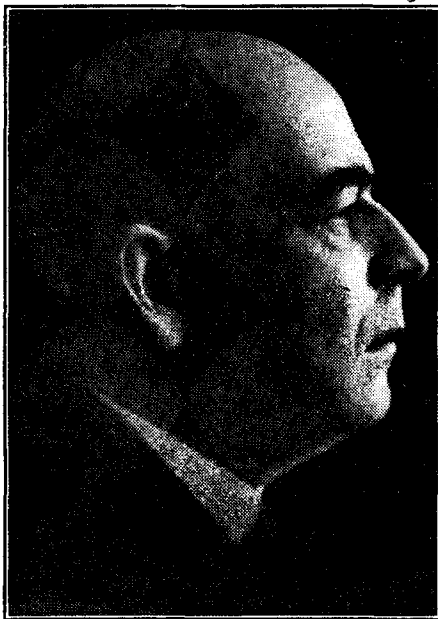
# Spengler's Fascist Manifesto

THE HOUR OF DECISION. Part One: Germany and World-Historical Evolution. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1934. \$2.50.

Reviewed by FABIAN FRANKLIN

A DISTINGUISHED American publicist, reviewing Spengler's "Decline of the West," said: "Even if most of his analogies are indefensible and his conclusions wrong, still his 'Decline' is a great work. . . . Yet it cannot be denied that it is full of holes, logical impossibilities, and contradictions." Nevertheless he declared that the high qualities of the book "make it a call to debate that cannot be ignored."

What Professor Beard said of "The Decline of the West" he might with equal truth say of "The Hour of Decision." And with what he said I have no fault to find except as regards the call to debate. The book is stirring, eloquent, powerful; but it is not debatable. There is hardly a page which does not contain some sweeping pontifical pronouncement, of which the basis lies in the inner depths of Spengler's personal *Weltanschauung*, and not in any



OSWALD SPENGLER

evidence sufficiently definite or important to be worth analyzing or rebutting.

It may be, for example, that Spengler is right when he declares that "Man is a beast of prey"; but, right or wrong, how are we to combat the assertion? There it stands, backed by several picturesque rhetorical sentences, but not otherwise fortified except by Spengler's declaration, "I shall say it again and again." Even as regards the tremendous conclusion towards which the book is directed, and which furnishes the key to its title, it would be utterly unprofitable to attempt to prove that Spengler is wrong. For nobody can be half so sure that white civilization will not be destroyed by the growing dominance of the colored races as Spengler is that, unless it turns back to the heroic ideals of its barbarian past, it will be so destroyed.

Not that there would be any difficulty in showing how far from sound are many of his leading arguments, and how far from accurate are many of his statements of fact. The trouble is that no follower of Spengler would admit that the validity of his message depends on the soundness of his argumentation or the correctness of his statements of fact. He is an oracle, a prophet; and even the coldest critic must acknowledge that the book makes a deep impress upon the mind through its spiritual power as a whole, however defective may be any or all of its parts.

Spengler attacks with a demonic fervor all the dominant ideas of modern liberal civilization. His ideal is represented by the word "Prussian." This word he uses not as meaning an attribute possessed by all Prussians or denied to all non-Prussians, but as designating a fundamental trait of character which he pronounces essential to the greatness, or even the preservation, of any nation worth thinking about. What that trait is cannot easily be stated in a definition; it involves, how-

ever, above all, a subordination of every softer impulse of mankind to the stern duty of rigorous discipline, the readiness to sacrifice both oneself and others to the welfare and greatness of the state, and the trampling under foot of all aspirations towards a sweeter world in which force shall count for less than it has counted for in the past. All such aspirations are scorned as idle dreams, not only futile but pernicious, since they make impossible a wholehearted devotion to the principles which must govern a state if it is to maintain its existence and greatness in this world of relentless struggle. What we used to call *Kultur* in the days of the Great War is pretty nearly what Spengler means by Prussianism; but what we detested he adores.

The style, always strong and clear, frequently rises to great rhetorical power; the richness and abundance of the historical parallels which are cited to enforce the moral, will make a deep impression on many readers; and so will the author's unquestioning faith in the soundness of his doctrine. But those who have some intellectual background and keep their heads level will see that the argument from the historical parallels is shallow, and will find in the unquestioning faith a reason for doubt rather than assent. Viewed in cold blood, the argument from the parallels is merely a somewhat glorified version of the vulgar doctrine that history repeats itself; Spengler nowhere attempts to answer the simple question whether the parallels are not invalidated by the stupendous changes that differentiate the present age of the world from any past era. He looks forward to the certainty of a series of world wars, extending through a hundred years or more, without any examination of the probable character of those wars.

In a book like this, minute accuracy would be a fault rather than a virtue, for it would clog the flight of the author's winged words. But in Spengler we have not merely inaccuracy but recklessness. He pictures the sinister aspects of the modern time—of which quite enough could be truthfully said—in such extravagant fashion as to weaken, not strengthen, the indictment. And on almost every subject that he treats incidentally—on such topics, for example, as the cause of the present depression, the doctrine of Malthus, present conditions in the United States—he "delivers brawling judgments unashamed." This, of course, does not spring from "blind and naked ignorance"; but it does spring from the spiritual pride of a man who thinks himself charged with an apocalyptic mission. The book is strong meat; but it is rhapsody, not reasoning.

## Allan Monkhouse on Russia

(Continued from first page)

States just after, it was England and Englishmen who laid the foundations of Russian industry. Even until the Bolshevik revolution there was a proverb which was well-known all over the country: "There is no church without its pope [priest], there is no mill without its Knoop [pro-

nounced like Pope]." Knoop was the millionaire firm which made its fortune by importing Lancashire textile machinery—and Lancashire men to run it. They were a fine class—honest, solid, incorruptible men who stood no nonsense, who worked hard, and who, even when England was unpopular politically, got on remarkably well with the Russian people.

Allan Monkhouse had been through this school and, although he has no particular talent for telling a story, he is interesting and instructive when he is telling his own. His remarks on the Russian working man, his comparison between pre-war and post-war industry in Russia, his appraisal of the Five Year Plan, are made with almost judicial impartiality and are by no means unfavorable to the present régime in Russia. One feels that he is a man who likes Russian life and who has therefore done his best to understand it in its Bolshevik form. Considering what he has been through, he shows no rancour against the men who arrested him.

He is less successful when he deals with subjects which are beyond the range of his special horizon, and his platitudes on religious persecution and other Bolshevik irregularities are a little tedious. They leave the impression that the author has suddenly recollected that he has been too fair to men whom the majority of middle-class Englishmen still regard as unclean, and then rushes back to blacken his picture with a savage daub or two.

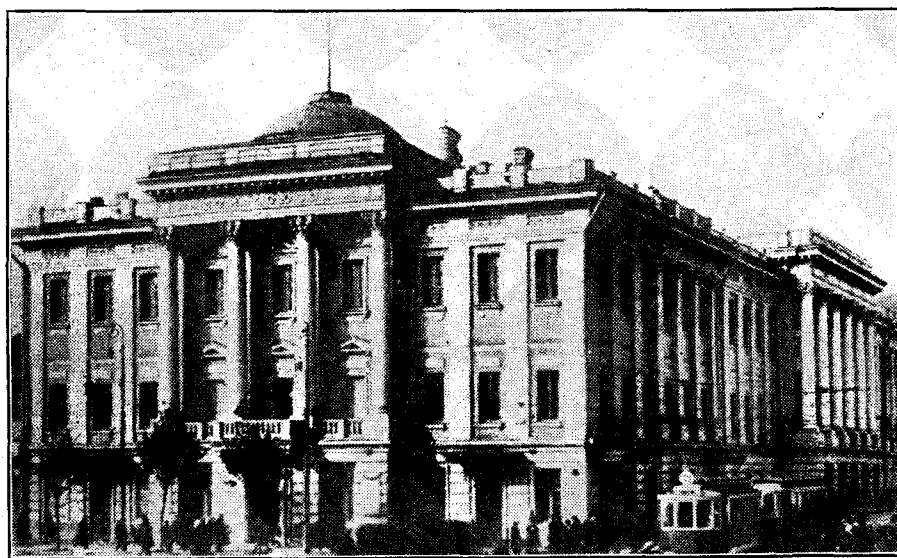
It is, however, on the subject of the trial that Mr. Monkhouse is most disappointing. His account of his arrest is graphic enough, but on the trial itself he throws no new light. He takes the official view that it was an OGPU "frame-up" to divert attention from the constant breakdowns of machinery due to Russian incompetence. He praises the British officials whose grasp of the situation frustrated the efforts of the OGPU "to bring the frame-up trial to a conclusion which would have been more satisfactory to their own prestige."

This is balderdash, and it is hard to believe that Mr. Monkhouse can subscribe to this story with a whole conscience. Even in England it is today painfully obvious to the dullest intellect that the OGPU finished the trial to their entire satisfaction and that, as far as the honors of propaganda were concerned, the Bolsheviks scooped the lot. But the initial blunder which rendered the trial inevitable was made, not by the British employees of Metropolitan Vickers in Russia, but by the British Foreign Office and by the British Ambassador. Able diplomacy would have averted without much difficulty an episode which brought little credit to British prestige.

Mr. Litvinoff was anxious to avoid a trial and was prepared to go some way to secure his end, but the initial British attitude made compromise impossible.

On the trial Mr. Monkhouse is therefore unsatisfactory. I cannot resist the feeling that he would have written a better book if he had not been and was not still in the employ of his firm.

*R. H. Bruce Lockhart, as readers of "British Agent" will know, is admirably equipped to write not only of Russia in its outward manifestations but also in its secret activities.*



THE HALL OF NOBLES, MOSCOW  
Where the trial of the British engineers took place



# The BOWLING GREEN

## The Folder

ADVENTURES OF A COLLECTRIX

SIR:—I was accompanying my husband some months ago, on a brief lecturing trip in Pennsylvania, and while he talked to the C. of C. in C—I amused myself in the upstairs lounge of a most attractive little Inn where we were staying, and there on an open shelf, among other books, for all and any to admire, yes, and to pilfer, was my long-coveted copy of "——." That book is as scarce as hens' proverbial teeth, and costs altogether too much money—and there, right before my covetous eyes, was this little green and gold book that I'd been longing for, for years. I'm a Puritan descendant, and never before in my life had I been so urged to theft: the book was small, my pockets capacious, and I was unobserved—but, mark you, I resisted. I sat there awhile, caressing the temptation, and then jumped up and ran downstairs to the desk, where I begged to be allowed to purchase the book. The clerk was not encouraging. It belonged to Mr. H——, the proprietor of the Inn, and he didn't think it could be bought. He consented, however, to telephone Mr. H—— and ascertain his will in the matter. The answer was an uncompromising refusal. I returned to the lounge, put the book back, and sat there brooding. All desire for lunch left me; I was possessed by one overwhelming urge, and that was, by hook or crook, to take the "——" home with me. It was too late for the crook, but was there not, somewhere, a hook—and with what could it be baited? I roamed disconsolately about the lounge—picked up the book again—and then deliberately hid it! I don't know why, except for a sort of dog-in-the-manger rage that possessed me.

As I sat there biting my fingers I saw a tall man walking through the hall, and without taking time to consider, sprang to my feet and accosted him thus: "Are you by any chance Mr. H——?" To my relief, he confirmed my hope. I told him I had been admiring the lounge, the corner cupboards filled with early glass and china, the old Windsor chairs, the admirable taste showed in the decorations, etc. To all this appreciation he showed a maddening indifference. I then led up to the subject of books. What an interesting and surprising collection there was upon his shelves. I was very much interested in books, but especially in ——, and there happened to be in his possession one volume which I very much wished to own but had not been fortunate enough to have acquired. Could he not be persuaded to part with it—for a consideration? No, no, he wasn't interested in selling books. They were just there for the use of his guests. (I could have bitten him with the keenest of pleasure.)

"But aren't you afraid of their being stolen," I persisted, "especially the ——?" It's so small, you know, and the shelves are open." He really was the most stubborn and bored person I'd ever seen. He plainly thought a lunatic had cornered him and he wanted to escape without arousing any violence in the creature. It would have been terribly amusing had it not, to me, partaken in some degree of tragedy. Nothing moved him, and I almost lost my temper. "Well, I've hidden your old book," I announced defiantly, "and now I almost wish I'd pocketed it; nobody would have been the wiser." Incidentally, he was a nice fellow, but fearfully diffident, and I rather gathered that women were his pet aversion. My outburst moved him, however. He demanded to know where the book was, and reluctantly and, be it confessed, somewhat shamefacedly, I showed him.

And all of a sudden he became more than kind; really superbly magnanimous. "I'll tell you what," he said, "now that I

think of it, there was a book removed from the shelves once, a book I particularly valued—a copy of 'Historic Inns on the Lancaster Roadway,' and I've never been able to locate another." I nearly fell on his neck and kissed him, but with admirable presence of mind restrained my emotion to demand, "But what if some one steals it in the meantime?" "Well, to satisfy you, I'll put it in the safe."

That was over three months ago. It has taken me all this time to procure a copy of the wretched "Inns." Last week I obtained one and straightway wrote to Mr. H——, who mailed me the —— and wrote me a most appreciative letter upon receipt of the "Inns"—which really was a very nice book.

P. H. W.

New Jersey.

Auction catalogues are often exciting, but I remember few with such a painful thrill as the Anderson Gallery booklet of some years ago which listed the chair in which Abraham Lincoln was sitting when he was shot at Ford's Theatre. It was a black walnut rocking chair, upholstered in red damask, described as "worn, blood-stained and water-stained." The chair, said the sale catalogue, had been taken from Mr. Ford's house to the theatre for the special use of Mr. Lincoln. The furnishings of the private box where the tragedy occurred were bought by the War Department in 1902 and shown at the Smithsonian Institution, but the chair was never put on exhibition. I do not know who is its present owner.



CHAIR IN WHICH LINCOLN WAS SHOT

### THE TWO MORIARTIES

SIR:—"Gasogene" is right—damn him!—about the date of Queen Victoria's death. I had hoped that the error (discovered in the publishers' office just too late to correct) would escape public notice. It is being corrected in the second edition, now printing; and the London edition (Nicholson & Watson) will not carry it—I have attended to that.

Before Miss Priscilla Anderson (of Smith College) writes to the Baker Street Irregulars about me, I hasten to expose another error, and present a very curious problem. Miss Anderson points out, in a charming letter, that on page 141 of *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, I assert that neither Holmes nor Watson knew that Moriarty's name was Robert—the name given him by William Gillette in the stage play, *Sherlock Holmes*. Whereas, Miss Anderson reminds me, both Holmes and Watson knew the professor's name very well indeed; it was James, as recorded in the *Adventure of the Empty House*, along toward the end of which episode Holmes remarks that "Professor James Moriarty . . . had one of the great brains of the century."

The communication upset me more than, in my reply, I allowed Miss Anderson to suspect. But tracing back the source

of my error, and finding it, I have come upon the curious problem referred to. My error arose from a line in the first paragraph of *The Final Problem*, in which it is set forth by Watson that his hand has been forced . . . "by the recent letters in which Colonel James Moriarty defends the memory of his brother."

We have then the unique problem of the Moriarty brothers, James and James, both clearly of record.

When was the Doctor right—when he wrote that line in *The Final Problem* or when he quoted Holmes in *The Empty House*? It may be argued that Watson, at the time of the earlier episode, was distraught; writing, as he was, of his friend's death (as he supposed) in Switzerland: yet at such a time would he not have been particularly careful?

And it is to be remembered that he was also distraught at the time of the *Adventure of the Empty House*: he had just received his friend back from the dead!

Which occasion would be more likely to plunge him into error—death or resurrection?

Or were there really two brothers Moriarty, each of them named James?

Chicago.

VINCENT STARRETT.

### THE BAKER STREET IRREGULARS

Of course it is for the study of just such savory problems that the BAKER STREET IRREGULARS propose to meet together. One of the most soundly documented Holmesians now comes forward with a suggested Constitution for the club. It runs as follows:—

#### ARTICLE I

The name of this society shall be the Baker Street Irregulars.

#### ARTICLE II

Its purpose shall be the study of the Sacred Writings.

#### ARTICLE III

All persons shall be eligible for membership who pass an examination in the Sacred Writings set by officers of the society, and who are considered otherwise suitable.

#### ARTICLE IV

The officers shall be: a Gasogene, a Tantalus, and a Commissionaire.

The duties of the Gasogene shall be those commonly performed by a President.

The duties of the Tantalus shall be those commonly performed by a Secretary.

The duties of the Commissionaire shall be to telephone down for ice, White Rock, and whatever else may be required and available; to conduct all negotiations with waiters; and to assess the members pro rata for the cost of same.

#### BUY LAWS

(1) An annual meeting shall be held on January 6th, at which those toasts shall be drunk which were published in the SATURDAY REVIEW of January 27th, 1934; after which the members shall drink at will.

(2) The current round shall be bought by any member who fails to identify, by title of story and context, any quotation from the Sacred Writings submitted by any other member.

*Qualification A.*—If two or more members fail so to identify, a round shall be bought by each of those so failing.

*Qualification B.*—If the submitter of the quotation, upon challenge, fails to identify it correctly, he shall buy the round.

(3) Special meetings may be called at any time or any place by any one of three members, two of whom shall constitute a quorum.

*Qualification A.*—If said two are of opposite sexes, they shall use care in selecting the place of meeting, to avoid misinterpretation (or interpretation either, for that matter).

*Qualification B.*—If such two persons of opposite sexes be clients of the Personal

Column of the SATURDAY REVIEW, the foregoing does not apply; such persons being presumed to let their consciences be their guides.

(4) All other business shall be left for the monthly meeting.

(5) There shall be no monthly meeting.

ELMER DAVIS.

Another nautical picture which has drifted into the Folder is Captain Howard Hartman's sea chest, made by him from what he describes as a "portable cabinet" used by Robert Louis Stevenson aboard the schooners *Casco*, *Equator* and *Tiahieva* and at his home on Waikiki Beach. We forgot to ask Captain Hartman what kind of a cabinet. At any rate it was discarded by R. L. S. aboard the *Tiahieva*, where Hartman served as mate. Captain Hartman refabricated the material as the photo shows.

CAPTAIN HARTMAN'S SEA CHEST

### THE BOSWELL PAPERS

The last two volumes (17 and 18) of the great *Boswell Papers* are now in the hands of the fortunate subscribers, thus completing (except for the Index volume now in compilation) this extraordinary work. It is a lasting monument of human comedy and one looks forward with eagerness to its eventual publication in popular form also. It is a monument not only to Boswell himself but to the owner of the documents (Colonel Ralph Isham), the printer (William Edwin Rudge), and the editors and experts who collaborated. After the lamented death of Geoffrey Scott, Professor Frederick A. Pottle took charge. The Acknowledgments rendered by Professor Pottle in the final volume markable tribute to one of the youngest of 18th-century scholars:—

"To Helen Cohan" (says Professor Pottle) "I acknowledge indebtedness that amounts to co-editorship. Every word in these 18 volumes has passed under her scrutiny. She reads Boswell's hand better than anyone else in the world, and she can read it through any number of layers of superimposed ink. I think that it will be of interest to the subscribers to know that after six years of work on the Boswell Papers, she is still only 24 years old."

### SPICED ROUND

SIR:—We have here at Nashville a noble dish known as *Spiced Round*, which appears on the market every Christmas, and then only. It is prepared by the butchers from large cross-sections of rounds of beef. Holes are bored into the meat and these holes filled with ropes of suet which have been rolled in spices. The meat is then pickled in brine and cooked by boiling in a tight muslin bag. It is served cold in thin slices, and the pink meat, be-gemmed with the little circles of spiced suet, is a dish for the gods.

I have heard all my life that spiced round is peculiar to Nashville, but I have also been told that it is known and served in Philadelphia. Did you ever encounter it there?

STANLEY F. HORN.

Nashville, Tenn.

No, our only experience with that worthy viand was in Nashville, at a lunch in Uncle Alfred's cabin at The Hermitage (Andrew Jackson's old home). And our first thought was, what a nice title *Spiced Round* would be for a book of poems (or essays) by one of the many young writers of Tennessee.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

The late Stella Benson, according to *John O'London's Weekly*, packed much adventure into her life. She wandered over Mexico, shot tigers in India, narrowly escaped death in a West Indian earthquake, did X-ray work in a Pekin hospital, and ran a shop in Hoxton.