

in everyone's experience. Mr. Chesterton was able to enter into the thing and he had eyes to see; but, more marvellous still, he has been given the power of telling us what he has seen.

B.D.

FICTION

JOSEPHUS. By Lion Feuchtwanger. (Secker; 7/6.)

This crowded canvas is planned upon that vast scale which Dr. Feuchtwanger has by now led us to expect. The first impressions confirm the expectations which *Jew Süß* has aroused. The work is everywhere informed by a modern spirit and the judgments are in no sense banal. The character of Nero is refreshingly presented, the Senator Marullus with his jade lorgnette, the politics of the Agrippine Ward. The lighting effects in these early passage are excellent, the Emperor left in shadow and the carefully staged entry of Poppæa, with her amber hair and dark eyelashes and the Coan silk of her thin stola. It is here that one first notices that characteristic which re-appears throughout the book, re-incarnation. How clearly does Poppæa call to mind 'Marie Auguste . . . with her young ambiguous smile.' And when the generals appear with those coarsely inefficient and clumsy movements which this author can so seldom spare them, there is an almost painful similarity of outlook between Rome and eighteenth-century Germany. It is perhaps because of this lack of sympathy with the military mind that the entourage of Vespasian and the movements of his reign seem so much less convincing than those of Nero. In fact, compared to all the other characters the Romanized civilians, like the Neronian ministers and Claudius Reginus, alone possess intrinsically convincing life. To this company there should be added a single Jew, Jochanan Ben Sakkai. Among the wider sections of the picture the subtle characterization of the Roman scenes stands out in contrast to the over-simplified reactions of Agrippa's Court, while the too-facile antithesis of Alexandrian life seem platitudinous. At the same time the careful adjustment and accurate observation of the multitude of material facts in this packed volume is everywhere apparent. The reason for the comparative failure of the present book when compared with *Jew Süß* would at first sight seem to lie in the wayward interpretation of its central character, Josephus. The description of his early days in Rome, the relations with Caius Bazaarone and the priests of the High Council in Jerusalem carry conviction, but a sense of strain is introduced by the account of Josephus' action during his Galilaean Commissionership, while

Blackfriars

the tantalising changes of the Flavian and Alexandrian episodes are scarcely credible. Yet, even in this second portion, there appears such a delightful scene as Josephus' conversation with the peasants in the tavern in Galilee. The fact that Karl Alexander and Vespasian both seem to bear the same relation to their Jewish protégés throws a clear light upon the relative success of the two studies. Viewed from this standpoint a failure to envisage the first century Jewish Faith becomes apparent. It is under the stress of an uncomprehended Semitic religious background that the latter story fails. There is here in this intricate involved religious detail nothing of the confident humility of Judaism, the calm and constant spirituality which found expression in Reb Joseph's cry of 'Adonai.' It is only a praise to *Jew Süß* to point out that its author's later works have failed to reach that profound unity.

D.M.

COSMOPOLIS. By Rupert Croft-Cooke. (Jarrolds; pp. 331; 7/6.)

This is the tale of Utopia—the advanced new school, set high up on an alpine peak for the children of the rich. It tells how a young society beauty, disillusioned of life, comes to visit it, and learns the meaning of simple, unspoilt love; and how her introspection and hesitations bring tragedy to herself and ruin to the school.

These are but the bare bones of a novel packed with life and humour, satire and malicious wit. Whether Mr. Croft-Cooke is dealing with certain trends in contemporary education, whether he is illustrating the effects of nationalism on the universal brotherhood of man, his touch is sure, and his satire kept within bounds. Some of his writing is in places unnecessarily outspoken, but what may cause more pain to the Catholic reader is the atmosphere of futility and impermanence which pervades the book. The world is suffering to-day from knowing too much, without having any firm foundation on which to order this knowledge; the result is an outlook similar to that of the Epicureans of old, who were part of a civilization not unlike our own; a longing to be free of this vale of tears, and to rest for ever in unbroken sleep. There is only one force to-day which can save the world, and Mr. Croft-Cooke hints at it in an isolated sentence.

S.U.

GOLD OF TOULOUSE. By John Clayton. (Heinemann; 8/6.)

Mr. Clayton owes much to an older school of romantic novelists, but he writes with a vigour to which they seldom at-