

## Eastern Odyssey

*MONGOL JOURNEYS.* By Owen Lattimore. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1941. 324 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by HASSOLDT DAVIS

THERE can be no doubt that Owen Lattimore has written several of the best books of Asiatic travel and ethnic exploration in our time; his "Desert Road to Turkestan" is a classic of constructive adventure, and "High Tartary" reduces Peter Fleming, by contrast, nearly to Halliburton stature. Better than Sven Hedin, I believe, he can make both vivid and comprehensive the customs, folklore, and aspirations of the Mongol nomads. There is a greater modesty in him, an equally cautious learning, and a warmer use of words. Because, like Hedin, he has lived for many years in Asia and speaks Mongol and Chinese fluently, because his sympathy for the people is unaffected, he has been able to travel where few white men or none have been before.

"This book," he writes, "is partly a record of a vanishing way of life, partly a footnote on the processes of decay and destruction, partly a glimpse of that which is coming to pass." Here he tells of seeing and photographing the coffin which reputedly contains the bones of Ghenghis Khan, and of paying reverence, in that hidden desert sanctuary, to the Sacred Bows and Quivers of the great warrior. He visited monasteries inaccessible to travelers of less intelligent humility, and attended the Obo Festivals, the sacrifices and the games, over which the exiled Panch'an Lama of Tibet presided. Journeying with a single companion, the subtle native Arash, he went through the bandit lands, discovered the remains of a great ancient city, learned Mongol



Owen Lattimore

Bachrach

methods of stock breeding and the arcana of religion and geomancy. Dung became precious to him, as he lived in the native manner; rancid butter and crude millet were savory with his meals.

Holding hands with inferior lamas in the gentle Mongol way, he listened to legends whose origin was a thousand years ago, and these he makes as vital as good modern fiction. Equally curious are his contemporary tales, of the Mongol girl, for instance, who was taken in settlement of a doctor's bill, or of the gazelles which supposedly ate human flesh. But his primary interest is in the ultimate Mongolia, for he saw intimately the problems—Japanese, Chinese, Russian—which the country must solve before it attains the independence he envisions not too distantly in the future. There is less of travel in this book than in his others, but more sound reflection, humorously and gracefully recorded. It must not be overlooked by the broader student of Asiatic affairs.

*Hassoldt Davis is the author of "Land of the Eye," a narrative of the Denis-Roosevelt expedition.*

## Author, Author!

NATHAN SCHACHNER ("By the Dim Lamps") began writing adventure stories in 1930 when he bet a friend that he could turn out a tale as good as those in adventure magazines. He did a story in a spare moment and it was accepted. So were three more. But then he began getting rejections, which made him mad. He went at adventure fiction in earnest and has published something like 350 short stories and novels. Writing is his fourth profession. Mr. Schachner started out as a chemist for the New York Board of Health, testing food and milk. During the first World War he shifted to poison gas, in the Flame and Gas Division of the Chemical Warfare Service. Somehow, perhaps in the offhand manner in which he started to write, he began to study law and was admitted to the Bar in 1919. History was another passion and he published "Mediaeval Universities" and a biography of Aaron Burr. "By the Dim Lamps," his first serious novel, is about old New Orleans. Mr. Schachner arrived in the city to start his research on the opening morning of Mardi Gras. At the Association of Commerce a harassed young lady trying to solve the problem of room for tourists pointed out: "You'll have to wait your turn—rates \$10 a day." Mr. Schachner protested, "But I've come to New Orleans to write a book about your city, and I can't pay \$10 a day." Three girls grabbed phones and found the author a good place at reasonable rates.

Gwen Bristow ("This Side of Glory") used to get stiff shoulders from pounding away at her novels on the typewriter, seven or eight hours at a stretch. She has solved part of the problem by acquiring an electric typewriter, which is operated by a very light touch, much like a linotype machine. Different from many people with newspaper background, Miss Bristow is an expert typist. But she doesn't like to have other people fiddle with her machine. As soon as she gets back to Beverly Hills from a brief visit to New York, Miss Bristow expects to get ahead, on the new electric typewriter, with her novel of modern life in California.

Rumor has it that Benny Goodman, who described his career as the most famous swing musician in the country in "The Kingdom of Swing," will soon be married to the sister of John Henry Hammond, Jr., author of many articles on swing and discoverer of many popular swing musicians. Friends will not confirm the rumor; but they don't deny it, either.

EUGENE ARMFIELD.

## The Great

# MONTEZUMA

BY JOSEPH O KANE FOSTER

Limited edition

\$3

- DIEGO RIVERA** "I liked not only the colored pages but also the beautiful writing."  
**MRS. D.H. LAWRENCE** "I loved the book! It seems to me quite a new way of writing."  
**EDWARD ARNOLD** "I can't tell you how much exciting pleasure I derived from your very fine book."  
**WITTER BYNNER** "You have done a vivid, arresting and original thing. My compliments!"  
**DR. A. A. BRILL** "Allow me to congratulate you on 'The Great Montezuma.' I learned a lot from it."

AT BOOKSTORES OR FROM RANCHOS PRESS RANCHOS DE TAOS N.M.

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH EDITORS

(Continued from page 4)

submit the revised MS to you with a note: "I hope the changes appeal to you. If not, please do not hesitate to call me and I'll take another crack at it." You accept the revised article; it contains my own ideas in my own words; I am happy.

Two months before the article is to be published, I ask for proofs. One month before publication when the magazine is closing, you finally call me into your office late one afternoon, give me page proofs, tell me that the proofs must go to the printer that night. No changes can be made beyond adding a few words here and subtracting a few there at the cost of close calculation of characters. When I have read the proofs, you say, "I wanted to see whether there was anything that would make you rise out of your chair." I tell you, "It's an interesting article but I don't recognize most of it."

You have rewritten my MS "to make it conform to the style of our magazine." Editorial thumbs have been stuck in the nostrils of my brain child; it is beyond resuscitation. Words and phrases, worn smooth as politician's patter from long use, have been substituted for fresh expression; a standard brand of sentiment has suffocated the original fizzy touch. My article now reads like a school-girl composition on my-summer-vacation-and-what-I-saw-there. "We think we know best," you say, "the style which our readers enjoy." Then, blandly, "We only bought your article for your ideas."

Now an author's ideas are a part of his stock in trade; but so also is his style. I legitimately assumed that acceptance of and payment for the revised MS implied satisfaction with both style and substance of the article which would appear as I wrote it, barring only changes thereafter mutually agreed upon.

Whatever your legal right as editor may be, I do not believe that under ethical standards the purchase of a MS carries with it the privilege to more than edit the MS to meet space limitations. Even then you should take care to submit proofs of the edited MS in *galley* form and in sufficient time before publication to allow the writer to make what may seem to him pertinent suggestions. When, for example, you, this time as editor of a business publication, write that you would like to re-arrange portions of an article of mine and add, "Naturally, we will send you a copy of the revised MS before publication," I con-

sider your changes reasonable; I approve them all the more readily because you recognize the fact that there are two parties whose interests and reputations are tied up with the publication of any piece of writing: the publisher and the author.

You as editor should give me, the writer, the opportunity not only to keep my self-respect, but also to approve or disapprove what after all is going out into the world under my name. It is not enough to say that writers are an impossible bunch of prima donnas who will haggle over "which" as against "that." I may have my own ideas as to what may make my name an asset to me.

Faced with the choice of having "my" article published anonymously and thereby losing virtually all benefit of long hours at hard labor, or allowing the questionable product to appear under my name, I did what almost every victim of this type of edi-

torial squeeze-play will do who has not arrived at the point where he can afford to be independent.

If the habit of some editors of reshaping all material to a common mold were carried to its logical conclusion, all magazines would be staff-written, their contents as monotonous as radio commercials. It is variety of style as well as subject matter which make reading a pleasure. You, as editor, may in the long run prove unwise to fail to respect the natural interest the writer has in presenting his own ideas in his own words. If he hasn't this interest, he is a hack whose work is highly valued neither by editors, nor by his fellow-writers—nor by the public.

And now one final point: your English! Certainly no writer has been so long in the trade as to become accustomed to your smug editorialese, your quaint patter about MS which "don't quite make," "don't make a place for

*Just  
published*

AN INTENSE, PROB-  
ING NOVEL BY A YOUNG  
WRITER WHO TOUCHES THE  
DEEPLY-HIDDEN FEELINGS  
OF HIS READERS

PATRICK  
WHITE

When *Happy Valley* was published last year, the literary world was quick to recognize a new and original talent. There was excited talk of great promise; there were comparisons with Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, Proust, and Joyce.

White's new novel is an excursion into the minds and secret lives of a small London family. Its author is now serving in the R.A.F. Better, more human, more compelling than *Happy Valley*, it more than fulfils its author's high promise. Confirming White's place in literature, it stands—in its own right—as a remarkable modern novel. \$2.50

# THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

THE VIKING PRESS, NEW YORK