

money could certainly deal with such minor problems as his relations with his wife, children, neighbor, and his own soul. The only difficulty was that not everybody could make a lot of money; indeed, nobody could unless several million people performed routine, ill-paid jobs, which they would only do if the sole other alternative was starvation—loss of all security. This difficulty was overcome by setting up what might be best described as an economic lottery.

To the young man starting his career, the cost of the ticket was the human effort he would put into work during the rest of his life. That effort might pay off in fantastic style and put him into the millionaire class; it might pay off pretty well and he would become one of the well-to-do; if it only paid off reasonably well, he was in the middle class; if his luck were very bad, he would land in that great group which just about managed to survive. This was the group which was expected to accept their bad luck and perform the routine, ill-paid tasks. The young man vaguely realized all this. All right, he would take his chance. In the bright lexicon of youth there *was* no such word as fail.

Of course, there were many factors other than productive work which entered into the lottery, although these were usually glossed over. Inherited wealth, lucky ownership of land which covered oil or minerals, a popular talent, are just a few. The women at first had only a lottery on a lottery—what man they happened to marry and what prize he drew. As time went on, these other factors tended to increase. A pretty face and figure, devoid of real acting talent, could still win fabulous prizes through the movies; a singing voice too small to fill a room could bring fortune over the microphone; the purchase of a little General Motors stock could yield a fortune twenty years later. There were, and are, some pretty unpleasant factors—getting into a position to offer political favors to those who could pay high for them, or simple, downright toadying to the powerful.*

**SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S
DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 727)**

PERCY LUBBOCK:

[Portrait of] **EDITH WHARTON**

She was a singular young woman . . . , so acceptably attractive, so properly gay—and such a sharp beak of intelligence within, that pierced where it would, and that all the forms and laws of the world couldn't hold from its natural prey.

With all its faults, the American system did two things better than any society had done before. It distributed the prizes with less inequality, and it offered more opportunities to get into the class which drew the very big prizes. It did another thing, perhaps even more important. While the Government was setting the rules of the game, there was growing up a conviction that there must be *fair play* under the rules, and this also carried a requirement that if you won the big prizes, you owed some moral duty to the unlucky losers. Some part of your winnings should go back to charity.†

The overwhelming success of this system was attested, if by no other fact, by the enormous immigration to these shores. We drew to ourselves much of the best stock from both Europe and Asia. These people came from countries which for hundreds, or thousands, of years had run their lotteries by very different rules. Indeed, you could hardly say there was any lottery at all.

In the old-fashioned aristocracy, a small group of nobles took the big prizes; everyone else got back only a tiny fraction of the price of his ticket. When you consider the deaths from famine, you could say some lost their ticket price altogether. Put in more conventional terms: there were only wealthy and powerful lords and penurious serfs, no middle class at all. Furthermore, unless you were lucky enough to be born into the upper group, there was almost no chance of admittance. Perhaps some notable service to the state, usually in war or exploration, might be an entry for a man; for a woman there was the possibility of a meretricious relationship. Because of this closed shop at the top, the only way to change was revolution, and as the demand for a redistribution of the output grew, the revolutions duly put in their appearance.

In some of these societies, something akin to a middle class did grow up. The craft guilds are a notable example. But the young man who apprenticed himself to a guild never could hope that he might end as the owner of a vast furniture company which made him richer than his early wildest dreams. There was a definite

*The ultimate satisfactions were, of course, balanced off with still other factors—public respect or disdain, happy or unhappy family life, sex satisfaction or frustration, failure or success of one's children. What the final balance would show could not be determined until the end of an individual's life. Solon might well have said, "Call no one happy or unhappy until he's dead." People are, however, just beginning to realize the proper function of money-making—necessary but not, of itself, enough.

†The importance of this last factor is frequently overlooked. The decline of charity can be a powerful wrecking force, even in a democracy. Gerald Heard has pointed this out, in regard to France, in his brilliant book, "The Third Morality."



My Current Reading

SRL's founder and present chairman of the editorial board, **Henry Seidel Canby**, reports below on his current reading. Since he is also chairman of the board of judges of the Book-of-the-Month Club, his reading includes books which will not be published until later this year. Dr. Canby is the author of many books including biographies of Whitman and Thoreau, and the recent "American Memoir." He is at present working on a study of Henry James and Mark Twain.

WASHINGTON SQUARE, by Henry James (Scribner's)

RODERICK HUDSON, by Henry James (Scribner's)

(Forthcoming)

THE STILWELL PAPERS, edited by Theodore White (Sloane)

THE GOEBBELS DIARIES, 1942-1943, edited and translated by Louis P. Lochner (Doubleday)

THE FOOLISH GENTLEWOMAN, by Marjorie Sharp (Little, Brown)

THE SKY AND THE FOREST, by C. S. Forester (Little, Brown)

THE HEART OF THE MATTER, by Graham Greene (Viking)

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, by Harold J. Laski (Viking)

ROAD TO SURVIVAL, by William Vogt (Sloane)

ceiling to the annual prizes he might draw.

It would appear, however, that this had certain advantages as far as human happiness, the real goal, was concerned. Since the craftsman could not dream of untold wealth, he could wholeheartedly turn his attention to his skill. He could never employ thousands of workers, but he could always strive to make each cabinet a greater masterpiece than the one before. There was always the individual opportunity to grow and develop; as his skill mounted he could tackle more and more difficult problems of design and

(Continued on page 29)

The World. *Despite the myth of the special historical mission of Communism, the Russian Revolution was merely a violent incident in the history of a people on the march towards modern nationhood. And the foundations of the lusty Russian nation of today were laid in the times of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, described by Harold Lamb in "The March of Muscovy." . . . The Nuremberg tribunal has recently published a controversial decision on partisan warfare which emphasizes our rapidly changing attitudes as East-West antagonism grows. During the war we admired all partisans, whether in France (see Rémy's book, below), Greece, Poland, or Yugoslavia. But our present confusion of issues is underlined by such opposing books as St. John's "The Silent People Speak" and Lane's one-sided story of Poland (see below).*

Fabricator of a New State

THE MARCH OF MUSCOVY, *Ivan the Terrible and the Growth of the Russian Empire, 1400-1648.* By Harold Lamb. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1948. 309 pp. \$3.75.

Reviewed by HANS KOHN

THE WRITING and reading of history may fulfil two different purposes: to explain the present by uncovering and analyzing its foundations in the past, and thus to allow a clearer understanding of the forces at work in our own time and to view them in truer perspective, a task which involves also the re-interpretation of the past in the light of consequence and developments, unknown and perhaps unforeseeable to those who started and witnessed the trend of events; or to try to revive the past as those who lived it then experienced it and reacted to it. Such a reconstruction of the past is made easier if we allow contemporary sources to speak for themselves. If one deals with a distant land, at the outskirts or beyond the confines of civilization, these sources will be mostly the reports by foreigners, traders, and diplomats, curious wanderers and soldiers of fortune. This is the method used by Harold Lamb in his skilful description of the rise of the Russian Empire around Moscow and its relentless and dynamic expansion into all directions but above all into the immense spaces of Asia.

In the center of the story is the fascinating figure of Ivan the Terrible, who, following his grandfather Ivan III, may be regarded to have started, in the technique of government and in the ruthless art of war, a march that is still going on in his spirit. Under him the invasion of Asia began. In 1587 the Russians occupied Tobolsk on the Irtysh River and only sixty-odd years later, in 1649, they established

an ostrog or blockhouse fort at Okhotsk, where they reached the Pacific. But Ivan, like his successor Peter the Great, devoted his own energies and the resources of his people above all to an effort to master the West. "It was almost as if the Kremlin, under Peter, exploited the resources of inner Eurasia to batter at the West." The dwellers within Moscow, however, lay exposed more to the influences exercised by the vast hinterlands of the East. "The only frontier known to Moscow at first was

the steppes of Asia." When Peter started the effort of two centuries to make Russia enter the European community, he transferred the capital from Moscow. But the Empire had received its fundamental character in the Moscow of Ivan who conceived of himself "as the fabricator, divinely inspired, of a new state," a state in which everybody served the one authority and which was based upon the armed forces. "In a sense—and Ivan's clairvoyant brain grasped this clearly—the army was Moscow."

When the German ambassador Sigismund von Herberstein reached Moscow in 1560 he was received with amazing hospitality, but "when he asked questions about the Kremlin and its people out of frank curiosity, he aroused the suspicion of his guides." Thereafter, he got information only in roundabout ways. He was lodged splendidly but many courtiers shared the house with him and allowed no one to talk with him unless at least two of them were present. His audience with the Russian ruler took him through more ceremonial than any such reception in Europe. At the end the prince (Vasily, the father of Ivan the Terrible) gave him his hand, but immediately washed it in a silver basin to remove "the taint of the foreigner who was no Orthodox Christian."



THE AUTHOR: Penetrating Eastern antiquity has been "no nice Shangri La" for Harold Lamb, whose quest for original documents has been punctuated with bullets while scaling a crusader's castle, stones at Tigris shrines, and GPU detentions. The Persian Government decorated him, however, — "I think for being polite." Years before at Columbia, still plagued by congenital eye, ear, and speech defects, he found release in Asiatic lore, but he rebelled against the jigsaw of departmentalized learning. "Perhaps the painters, my ancestors [Colonial American]

had something to do with this need to visualize a thing as a whole"—a talent for which he first channeled at school into lively pulp fiction. He dummied a trade paper, reported financial news for *The New York Times*, joined the Army in 1917, got married. In 1927, an editor wired him that if he could produce a life of Ghengis Khan in six weeks it would be published that spring. He did it in four. Following "Tamerlane" in 1928, he delved two years around Palestine and the Vatican and wrote "The Crusades," a double-decker. The first book, BOMC-blessed, provided passage to Russia, Iran, and Istanbul, and leisure for "Omar Khayyam." By 1938, after four years of Hollywood scriptwriting, he was eager to return to the Mongols. In Russia, while studying the Tatar dominion for "March of the Barbarians," war broke. As "an escape task" during OSS detail in Western Asia, he wrote "Alexander of Macedon." Last year came the novel "A Garden to the Eastward." He knows Arabic, Chinese, and Russian, but is "more at home with Ukrainian and Turkish Tatar dialects." Now incubating is a companion volume to "The March of Muscovy" covering post-1648 expansion through Asia when "the Muscovite state became the Russian Empire—that rather inarticulate giant whose Western face, only, we know familiarly."—R. G.