

company histories (not all of them do) are at heart a little ashamed of this phase of their business. The result looks like a book; it feels like a book; it is often printed (sometimes wretchedly printed) on deckle-edged, sepia-toned paper. But it *isn't* a book. Almost nobody reads it. The trade sale is nil, and it is dropped from the publisher's catalogue quickly, if it was ever fortunate enough to get in. These are the books that salesmen forget to take on the road, or throw away once they are out of New York.

Sometimes a company will bypass a trade publisher and simply hire a printer. Pacific Mills did this on its hundredth anniversary some years ago in a unique way. It printed one chapter of its *Memoirs of a Corporation* each month for twelve months. Distributed to a selected list of customers and "influentials," this timed release reminded everyone that an anniversary lasts all year. The story was told in the first person: "I am a cotton mill. I spin and spin. . . ." (I quote from memory, and this may be slightly inaccurate. At least, I hope it is.)

Not every industrial biography, of course, is commissioned. Henry Ford and Charles F. ("Boss") Kettering have gotten into print on their own merits, and the current best-seller, *My Years with General Motors*, by Alfred E. Sloan (an "as told to" variant of the species), is proving that a corporation executive can be a subject of interest to the general public. Occasionally, too, a corporation will be maverick enough to blow its horn with the mute in. About seven years ago the Aluminum Company of America commissioned the architectural writer and critic Walter McQuade to prepare a book on school construction, including the problems of enlisting community support, financing, and projecting for the increase in school-age population. The only condition imposed on McQuade was that he was not to go out of his way to use the word aluminum.

Subcontracting the various sections of the study to experts, McQuade produced one of the handsomest and most useful books ever underwritten by an American corporation. Published by Simon & Schuster, it was made available to school administrators and board members throughout the country free of charge. Business firms that are itching to spend their money to promote a company "image"—and publishers who are itching to get it—could well study *School House* as an example of how the constructive expenditure of company time can buy legitimate good will.

—DAVID DEMPSEY.

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Publishing the Corporate Book," an article that considers the same topic from the author's standpoint, appeared in *SR* July 11.

From Camels to Cadillacs

***The Desert King: Ibn Saud and His Arabia*, by David Howarth (McGraw-Hill. 307 pp. \$6.50), assesses the achievements of the one Arab chief who managed to establish a kingdom capable of surviving him. Majid Khadduri is on the faculty of the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.**

By MAJID KHADDURI

WHEN World War I broke out and Turkey entered the war on the side of Germany, the Arabs realized that their future would depend on the victory of England and her Allies. England, due to her long connections with the Arabs, sought their support against Turkey by promising them help if they raised a rebellion against their Turkish masters. But the Arabs, though ripe for rebellion, were hopelessly divided, and their rival chiefs, the most prominent of whom were Sherif Husein, ruler of the Hejaz, and Ibn Saud, chief of Nejd, would not recognize each other's leadership.

Nor were Arabian affairs, from Britain's side, handled by one department of the British government. Eastern Arabia and the Persian Gulf had for a long time been the concern of the Viceroy of India and the India Office, while Western Arabia and the Red Sea had come under the jurisdiction of the Foreign Office. The matter was complicated by the fact that the Foreign Office and the India Office did not see eye to eye as to who should be the supreme leader of the Arabs. Without the advice of the India Office, the Foreign Office, guided by its Arab experts, made its fateful decision to acknowledge Husein as the supreme leader of the Arab revolt against Turkey. Had Ibn Saud been chosen instead, Arab relations with the West might have been established on a firmer and more harmonious basis.

Against this background, which David Howarth sketches in his lucid biography, one may well appreciate the forces that were brewing in Arabia after World War I. King Husein, intolerably obstinate and making no concessions to his rivals, steadily lost ground; while Ibn Saud, thoroughly at home in the desert and knowing how to negotiate with foreigners, gradually brought the entire central area between the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea under his control. He



—Aramco.

Ibn Saud—largesse.

remained the friend of the British, despite their support of King Husein, believing that Arab and British interests were not essentially irreconcilable. Husein, who was dissatisfied with the kingdom he had established with British help, was eventually chased out of the Hejaz by Ibn Saud, although the British attempted to reconcile them in order to save Husein's throne. The contrast in personality and character between the two monarchs is vividly pictured by Mr. Howarth, but it is, of course, to Ibn Saud that he devotes the principal portion of this study.

An Arab leader whose accomplishments were equal to his personality, Ibn Saud began his public life on the occasion with which Mr. Howarth has chosen to open his story: the dramatic capture of Riyadh in 1902. Previously, Ibn Saud and his father had lived as exiles in Kuwait for more than eleven years, having lost control over Central Arabia to Ibn Rashid. Without telling his father, the twenty-one-year-old Ibn Saud set out with a party of forty men to recover the lost kingdom. After a long and tedious journey, mixed with frustrations and dangers, the group reached Riyadh. But it was Ibn Saud who entered the walled city with a few men during the night, hid in a small house until morning, engaged the governor in almost single-handed combat, as he emerged from the citadel after the call to prayer, killed him, and captured the city. This episode was related with pride by the late king to many visitors, and Mr. Howarth depicts

it with vigor and color. From that time on, Ibn Saud spared no time in bringing under his control the remaining part of Central Arabia and eliminating his rivals, great and small, including the House of Rashid in North Arabia, the Turks in East Arabia, King Husein in West Arabia, and the petty chiefs who refused to submit to his authority.

"A Bedouin," says Mr. Howarth, "expected three things of his ruler: to keep order with a strong hand, to protect the poor against the rapacity of the rich, and to defend the grazing grounds against marauding neighbors." Ibn Saud proved to be a successful ruler not only because he met these Bedouin requirements, but also because he laid the foundation of a kingdom capable of surviving him. His greatness lies in his realization that the fanaticism of his Wahhabi followers, with whose help he had established the Saudi kingdom, would not be compatible with the new spirit needed to fit his kingdom into the modern world. He therefore made it clear to them at the point of the sword that their real interest lay in peace and cooperation with the outside world, not in carrying on intertribal warfare and raiding their neighbors.

But peace and stability also called for the distribution of subsidies and generous gifts to tribesmen. Ibn Saud, whose largesse was wellknown throughout the land, never disappointed his visitors

with his gifts or turned down an appeal for help. His liberality often seemed prodigal to outside observers, but it was in keeping with the best traditions of desert princely life. The country's poverty did not limit his munificence; rather, it prompted him to seek new riches, and thus he threw open the doors of his country to enterprising foreigners. His preference was for American experts, and their exploits produced wealth such as his countrymen never dreamed of attaining. But, as Mr. Howarth rightly observes, although the impact of these immense material gains helped to hasten a revolutionary change in the structure of Arabian society, it also led to frustration and evil consequences. Some of the evils were apparent even during Ibn Saud's lifetime, but he could not completely stop them. After his death, it became clear that the forces of economic change, thrust upon a society unprepared for them, were beyond the control of his successors. The resulting problems are clearly and adequately discussed by Mr. Howarth in the last four chapters of his book.

Several writers—H. St. J. Philby in particular—have published detailed biographies of Ibn Saud, but Mr. Howarth has provided us with a readable and informative narrative in a single small volume. He has not merely examined earlier studies, he traveled to Arabia and spent two years interviewing the

persons who took an active part in the events dealt with in his book. The result is a balanced assessment of the achievements of a notable Arab leader.

Modern-Medieval Chaos: The memory of a pleasant time with *Persian Adventure* years ago made me look forward to Anne Mehdevi's account of her experiences on returning to her husband's family in Teheran. Nor was I disappointed; the same crisp observation, the same gay, astringent sympathy are present in *Persia Revisited* (Knopf, \$4.95), and the same unspoken but pervasive certainty—strange perhaps to the Persians, and sometimes strange to me—that all things American are best. Though not the wise traveler's philosophy, it is an attitude that allows a natural amusement to communicate itself to the reader.

The author shows the tribal family in all its medieval-modern chaos, its appendages of personal retainers, its surface struggles and deep inherent loyalties, lifelike and friendly under the Western beam. It is rather like watching the dancers when out of earshot of the music that makes them move. Yet the descriptions are vivid and sincere enough to make it possible to reconstruct the forces that brought this many-times-millennial civilization out into the uncertain climate of our day.

The rocklike figure of the father-in-law, head of the clan in every way, and the gentle strength and firmness of the mother are conveyed with a fine sense of value; and there is a superlative study of young Persia's female adolescents coming out into life:

Sometimes when the weather was too cold the three girls would sit inside. Then I could hear them. They spoke about American movie stars and jazz singers as if these people were intimate acquaintances. And they quarreled over these celluloid figures; each girl was jealous of the other's knowledge . . . Such flare-ups were the only bursts of vitality in the languid afternoon. And then the girls would lapse again into their half-awake communion. Far behind them, visible through the glass doors, were the chauffeurs . . . ready to take their charges back at a signal, back to a velvet-lined home where they would be packed away in tissue paper until the next day.

One wonders why Mrs. Mehdevi in all these years has not learned her husband's language; it would add so greatly to understanding and pleasure. But, although this is not the real Persia, which is made up of elements far more permanent and profound than are visible under the fleeting modern fashions of Teheran, the book is so witty, graphic, and agreeable that one can even forgive the misspelling of nearly every Persian word.

—FREYA STARK.

Two-sided Moon

By Tim Reynolds

THROUGH a 12-inch reflector facts
elbow intuitions, vision
vision: the moon is a dead thing.

There's no change beyond

that wanderer's sphere. Its likeness
to a glassed cell culture under
microscope is spurious; its
waxy fluorescence

that nacre peculiar to things
drowned. If seeing's not believing
there's none: no man, crow, cheese, woman,
rabbit in the moon.

Leaving the university
then, and walking home across the
tracks, shadow incised beside me,
the moon reasserts

her repellent fascination,
tugs again, urging always: *Let
breakwaters crumble, mind founder
in my smoothrunning*

*cold tides—god torn from the world's side
as Eve from Adam's, I am you
yet, your births and intersections,
fabulous Artemis.*