

IN THIS the first year of the atomic era that marks a turning point for weal or woe in the rise or fall of civilization our historians have not been idle. With something like nostalgia they write of the epoch that is closing and peer into the future. No one knows what it portends but there are few who do not realize that in the chronicle of the generations to come the date 1946 is the starting point of a new chapter that will be classed with the fall of Rome and the discovery of America.

I am at a loss how to qualify the volume with which I begin my review. It is entitled "The River Jordan" and it comes from the pen, and the explorations in the much promised land of Palestine, of Dr. Nelson Glueck who has spent many fruitful years as director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. It is history and archeology — and romance — and, above all else, it is fascinating. Perhaps it can best be described as "escape" literature, of a very high order.



Dr. Glueck.

While the statesmen of the day battle over the port of Trieste Dr. Glueck leads us to the strand where once stood Solomon's port on the Red Sea, and with the claims of the diplomats and the economists for the oil deposits of Arabia and Iran ringing in our ears he leads us to the empty holes in the ground from which again that king among merchants, and big businessman among kings, Solomon, extracted his wealth of copper.

While our learned historian, who has the happy and most unusual faculty of living in peace and concord with all the inhabitants of the turbulent land, with Jew and Christian and Arab alike, is examining fragments of pottery on the plain of Moab he is approached by an Arab shepherd who listens intently to what these shreds reveal of the history of the past with which both Jew and Arab are involved. The nomad listened intently and then he asked, "And what do they reveal of the future?" "Only God knows that" was the wise answer. Truly a fascinating book.

From Nelson To Nimitz
"Empire and the Sea," by the naval historian, Fletcher Pratt, goes back to the days of Nelson but it is profitable and enlightening reading in the days of Nimitz when so much depends upon our naval supremacy not only upon

the Atlantic and the Pacific but upon all the seven seas as well. Mr. Pratt takes as his appropriate text Mahan's praise "of those far-distant, storm-beaten ships which stood between Napoleon's soldiers and the dominion of the world." It would seem that he regards Hitler as a reincarnation of the central figure of his book (Napoleon). He traces analogies between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Chamberlain and he leaves with me at least the impression that while tomorrow great ships will fly in the air and that every properly equipped submarine will carry planes and rockets and bombs, the problems are the same. If the United Nations fail in their attempt to save civilization, and cities and whole communities are destroyed by a weapon which can be carried in a satchel, we may look back with nostalgic appreciation of the boisterous broadsides of the 74s in the days which are in this volume so effectively described.

A Contribution to Current History

Dr. Charles A. Beard, that veteran in the labyrinth of history in his "American Foreign Policy In The Making," 1932-1940, has ventured to expound the responsibilities which America was forced to shoulder in the period which he describes. Some of his premises will be disputed and not a few of his conclusions will fail of general acceptance. The events which he describes are too recent for historic analysis but the book is stimulating and Dr. Beard, an expert in the field of research will know how to defend his views from the anguished cries that will come from the Democratic camp and the Republican as well.

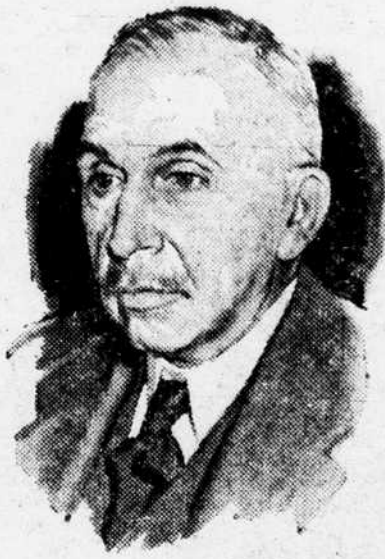
Certainly this veteran historian gives a very clear picture of the tortured world with which we are all confronted and he raises many controversial questions. He asks "Does our membership in the United Nations Organization determine American foreign policy?" And again he asks, "Are our historic relations rendered obsolete by this membership?" Obviously much will be said on both sides but the resulting controversies will prove interesting and, it is to be hoped, enlightening. The book is a contribution to recent, almost current history, that will outlast the political campaigns that now are raging.

The Beginning of The Mikado's Empire

"Black Ships Off Japan" by Arthur Walworth is an absorbing book and it has a peculiar interest for the present writer as

In the Light of History

By Stephen Bonsal



—Sketch by Newman Sudduth.

the correspondence between Commodore Perry and Townsend Harris engrossed much of my attention during the years 1895-96 when, as Secretary of our Legation in Japan, I had the privilege of reading the original letters which unfortunately, as I have reason to know, were consumed by the fire that followed upon the disastrous Japanese earthquake of 1923; however, few facts if any have escaped the author's attention and from copies or from other sources he gives us a well-rounded description of the opening of what became, but was not then, the Mikado's empire.

The appearance of the Black Ships off Japan ended an era in Far Eastern history and initiated a new one that is leading us we know not where. Were the energetic steps that were taken then wise is a question that I shall not answer and upon which Mr. Walworth himself wisely is reticent. The Japanese have not a fixed attitude on this question. I was present in 1901 when in the presence of an American squadron, under the command of a grandson of our pioneering admiral, a very handsome monument was unveiled on the shores of Kurihama Bay to commemorate the new era of friendship and international accord. In 1941, however, after Pearl Harbor,

the memorial to our friendship and our aid was destroyed by order of the Emperor.

Admiral Perry, better known as "The Commodore" in those epic days, carried out the instructions that came to him from Washington and so, as Bayard Taylor, who sailed with the squadron, said, initiated the first comprehensive policy of America in the Far East. Perry, wise man that he was, foresaw the great need of ports of refuge and coaling stations for our ships in time of war as well as in the days of peace. He asked for permission to occupy three island ports that were then unoccupied through some friendly arrangement with the inhabitants who at that time did not number a single Japanese; but the Navy Department was not as farsighted as the sailor-diplomat who was on the spot and his plan was rejected. Among these ports that he coveted was Okinawa, in the seizure of which in the recent conflict we lost more gallant men than those who died, both in blue and in gray, on the heights at Gettysburg. This excellent book sheds much light and rational understanding of the problem of today.

Behind Russia's 'Iron Curtain'

Having labored in the Russian vineyard since the days when MacKenzie Wallace was the preferred expounder of life among the "Dark People" I have no hesitation in saying that "Russia on the Way," by Harrison Salisbury, is the most illuminating of the many volumes that have fallen, and are falling from the press as



plentifully as ever did the leaves of Valambrosa. Mr. Salisbury makes no pretense of a profound knowledge of Russian and he insists very frankly that his sojourn behind what some call the "iron curtain" only lasted eight months but they were very important months and Mr. Salisbury is a

very intelligent and careful observer. He recognizes the ideological differences between Russia and America but he sees and stresses the remarkable similarities also. He describes with appreciation the work of the Soviets in Central Asia. How my old friend Arminius Van Very were he in the land of the living would be surprised to learn that the wild tribes he knew so well, the Turki and the Uzbeks, are represented in Leningrad today by very competent and wide-awake ambassadors who wear striped trousers and know all about the protocol!

The Stuff of Which History Is Made

It is natural that, with the world still in turmoil, we should turn for light and leading to the eye-witnesses of the tragedy which is so slow in subsiding for as Herbert L. Matthews says and says truly, in his remarkable and revealing book, "The Education of a Correspondent," only first-

(See HISTORY, Page 16.)

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