

THIRD TEMPTATION

Nathan W. Harter

he stretched an arm across the whole expanse
And loudly boasted to the other One:

“Seest thou the teeming regions at my hand,
Far-flung to every corner of the globe?
Behold the Mongol hordes on horses swift
Ride spirited out on the Orient plain.
Grand Romans, masters of the Western World,
March legions, legions, legions through the land.
Thy Father’s Empire!—passive, little sheep
Who join crusades and conquer Turkish wives.
Look, look on yon adventurous fleets
Teach natives how to pray, make love, and hate—
Brave lads! Cortez, who died in golden fits;
Columbus, who also found the New World.
Look out on Salem at the Puritans,
Devout and humble anti-witchcraft folk.
Or scan the Afric coasts for useful goods:
Cheap souls whose hands are strong and faces stupid.
The sun ne’er sets on Britain’s widespread might—
All purchased with the ocean’s greatest force
And processed with the progress of machines.
One man restored to Germany its last-
ing grandeur and supremacy o’er all.
Out on the East horizon looms the cloud
Of this world’s ultimate discovery:
The power that is man’s (and therefore mine).
Here, i give it to Thee if Thou but grant
i own a fine, a splendid universe.”

With eyes cast o’er the broad and battered world
He helped create, o’er each proud state and soul,
Christ wept to think He dared not claim His throne
Till He had bought it, bought it for His own.