

Our Artificial Muscles

TOOLS OF TOMORROW. By Jonathan Norton Leonard. New York: The Viking Press, 1935. \$3.

Reviewed by O. D. MUNN

IN America we have become so accustomed to the plaint of critics of the so-called machine age that it is with no little pleasure that we find in Mr. Leonard's discussion a sane approach to the problem from a philosophical standpoint. In "Tools of Tomorrow" he outlines a complete pattern of science as applied to everyday problems and as they may be applied to the possibly greater problems of the future. And despite the fact that he ignores technological unemployment and the falling birthrate—being uninterested in either of these per se—we discover that all is not well. There is an "if" which runs like a refrain throughout this discussion!

We are likened to the mythical lamasery of Tibet whose monks were presented with a thrilling and fascinating gift by an American explorer as a measure of gratitude for their hospitality. This was a magical book, a Sears Roebuck catalogue! The open sesame to its magic would be a letter to Chicago enclosing cash. The monks, entranced with the idea, immediately began ordering electric refrigerators, lawn mowers, typewriters, and the like. These articles were scattered about the lamasery, used as depositories for sacred writings and as objects of veneration, but possession of them *did not* make the lamasery resemble any more closely an average American small town.

Science has created for the Western world an enormous number of new machines, new materials, conveniences, and methods, but many of these came long before their time and must wait until a niche is found for them. Mr. Leonard concerns himself with a study—and a rather close one at that—of all these artificial muscles which have been created to do man's bidding in mindless fashion. Even so, he considers that the machine is not always mindless, and a review of current scientific literature would bear him out in this, for there are many machines which seem actually to think. The man who does nothing but tighten "nut 13" hour after hour in an automobile factory resembles somewhat the human slave of old, but even he is but an indication of a transition period. Technical advance and further adjustment will, the author thinks, finally eliminate nut 13 entirely.

Applied science offers our modern civilization anything and everything for the asking—if. We have everything we need in great abundance—from fuels and natural resources to the knowledge of how to harness them to meet our needs and fulfil our desires. But, as C. F. Kettering says, "In applying these new facts in the future, we will have to use more intelligence. . . . We must plan for change, for change is our only constant!" That is the sense of the "if" used throughout Mr. Leonard's book: If we use our intelligence and if we demand the products of technical study and research in sufficient quantities. He believes that technological unemployment will be with us whether we will or no, and dismisses this as of no

particular consideration in his study. An intelligent evaluation of our possessions and powers and our old friend "demand" seem to him far more important. In this, we concur, for the future shows undreamed-of possibilities while the standard of living of most of the world is still very low. Intelligence in developing the demand for a higher living standard will assist quickly in solving most of the problems that are now so voraciously pounced upon by dealers in economic nostrums.

O. D. Munn is the editor of The Scientific American.

Open Sesame to Books

THE ENJOYMENT OF LITERATURE. By Elizabeth Drew. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1935. \$2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

AN author who has "grazed the common of literature" and sets out to communicate her delight in books to others can hardly fail to be interesting. Anyone who starts with half a taste for poetry or biography or fiction or drama, for the essay or for criticism, all of them subjects which Miss Drew treats in her discussion, will find in her analysis inspiration to further reading. Anyone, at least, who stands on the threshold of literature and still needs to be guided into its further recesses, for Miss Drew is neither original enough, nor brilliant enough, nor yet sufficiently pungent to engage very deeply the interest of those who have themselves read widely. It is only fair to say, let me hasten to add, that she makes no claim to do so but writes expressly for the unsophisticated. To them she has much to say, and she says it pleasantly, informatively, and with discrimination, better when she writes of poetry and biography than when she is discoursing of fiction, and best of all when she is concerned with gossip.

When she is writing of letters and journals, those unaffected chronicles which catch human nature in undress uniform and present men and women long since dead in their habit as they lived, she most successfully realizes her purpose of rousing her readers to seek acquaintance with the books of which she writes. There is a happy informality to her account of the works of a Dorothy Osborne, a Pepys, or a Charles Lamb, a fortunate selection of illustrative excerpt from their writings, which leaves the reader with a warm sense of having been in contact with fascinating personalities and a resolution to know more of them. Again when she is writing of poetry, Miss Drew is able to distil something of the elusive quality which makes the preëminence of the work she describes.

It is when she is writing of fiction that she is at her weakest. She is condescending to Thackeray, and belittling of Dickens, gives Arnold Bennett surprising rank in relation to them, regards the work of Dos Passos as "of greater significance than that of any other American novelist," and in general is neither penetrating nor subtle in her interpretation of novels. Nevertheless, "The Enjoyment of Literature" is an intelligent and illuminating volume for those who would widen their acquaintance with books.

A Royal War Nurse

ORDEAL. THE STORY OF MY LIFE. By Marie, Queen of Rumania. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935. \$3.75.

Reviewed by ARTHUR RUHL

THE second volume of Queen Marie's reminiscences—the first ended with her husband's accession to the throne—covers the war years; the little country's decision, in the summer of '16, to plump for the Allies, the disaster which followed, the turn of the tide, and the re-entry of Ferdinand and his Queen into Bucharest in November, 1918, at the head of an enlarged Rumania.

The "ordeal" was real enough, however you look at it, but that of the Rumanian people at large we see only indirectly. The greater part of the story is the ordeal of the woman herself, energetic yet helpless, ambitious but frustrated, a queen fighting for her queenliness, burning to help her country, and reduced to the role of a glorified Red Cross worker, dashing furiously from hospital to hospital, day after day and month after month, distributing chocolate and cigarettes.

There is an echo of the comfortable old days when kings were kings in the letters "Missy" sent to "Dear George," her English cousin, ingenuously stating the territorial demands (duly set down for her by Prime Minister Bratianu) which would be more or less the price of Rumania's entry into the war on the side of the Allies. "I am afraid all these geographical explanations must be Chinese to you, but the places can be found on a map! . . ." And she recalls with a smile ("for I can always see the humorous side") that in their childhood games in England, "geography had not been George's strong point."

She wrote similarly to her cousin the Czar, and received an answer beginning "My dearest Missy," in which we learn that "Sazonov and I took it for granted than Transylvania and the southern portion of Bukovina would be allotted to Rumania after the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary," and that even more might be done "provided Rumania takes an active part at once."

Marie's strong English sympathies undoubtedly played a part in swinging Rumania toward the Allies and her active, sanguine temperament not infrequently stiffened the back of her somewhat passive husband, but there wasn't much place even for the luckiest of sovereigns in such a cataclysm as the World War, still less for those of little Rumania, shut away from her Western allies, with the Central Powers on one side and on the other a crumbling Russia. Even Russian help, when it finally arrived, brought its own grotesque irony, and Marie gives one swift little picture of that tawny horde, tall men in overcoats, "color of the earth," reaching to the ground, singing their tremendous and melancholy choruses—and eating so much that presently, in the breakdown of transport, they were almost more of a worry than the enemy himself!

The Rumanian army was crushed, the Government withdrew to Jassy, and there followed a nightmare time, in the extremity of which there was even a suggestion of cutting a way through the south of Russia to "the still faithful Cosacks." The Queen was for it, "a forlorn hope, fantastic I know, hardly belonging to our days, but honorable, brave, and free! . . . O God, if only I were a man, with a man's rights and the spirit I have in my woman's body! I would fire them to desperate, glorious resistance, *coûte que coûte!*"

Throughout these two terrible years, in between all sorts of conferences with emissaries from the Allies, American Red Cross workers, even foreign newspaper correspondents, with anybody and everybody who seemed to have a helpful suggestion, the Queen kept up her tireless work with "my wounded." Whatever the poor devils of tortured Rumanian peasants may have thought about it, the Queen saw herself, in all sincerity, as their

Regina Maria, the mother of my people . . . Looking into the eyes of their Queen, they had sworn to stand up like a wall to defend the last scrap of Rumanian territory which was still ours. Many a

dying soldier whispered to me with his last breath that it was for me he was fighting, for was I not his home, his mother, his belief, and his hope? . . . My nurse's dress has become to them a symbol. As I moved all white amongst them, their reflectors singling me out, I knew I represented the star of hope. Something which showed the way; a living, existing something every man was ready to live for, die for, because all men need an ideal, something which stands beyond, above the everyday level; I, their Queen!" . . .

Marie was built for such a role—a century or two out of date, perhaps—and for such thoughts, noble or absurd, according to the point of view. She had beauty, vi-



WITH GENERAL GRIGORESCU DURING THE BATTLE OF MARASESTI From "Ordeal."

tal, stage sense, the will to rule. She was forty-three just before that triumphal re-entry into the capital.

I'm getting old, which is such a pity, for I have still such a lot to do; a pity also because each year must inevitably take from me something of my looks. My people always consider me pretty, and were proud of my *belle Reine*. In a way it was one of my royal duties to please their eye, and yet it is the only duty for which I cannot be held responsible! When I have lost all my good looks they are sure to imagine it is my fault, nor will they pause to think that it will be sadder for me than for them. I have never been specially vain, but my face has been like a friend, and if it changes it will be like living with someone who is a stranger to me, and it will be horrid. . . .

"Poor Cousin Bill! I cannot say I like it!" she wrote a little later, when the news came of Kaiser Wilhelm's abdication. She had wanted him beaten, but not destroyed. "Abdication—it hurts me somehow. A country should stand and fall with its ruler, its King, a father with his family." She was a real woman, ingenuous in some ways, but direct, warm, likable—and possibly as real a Queen as there could be in days like these.

A German Autobiography

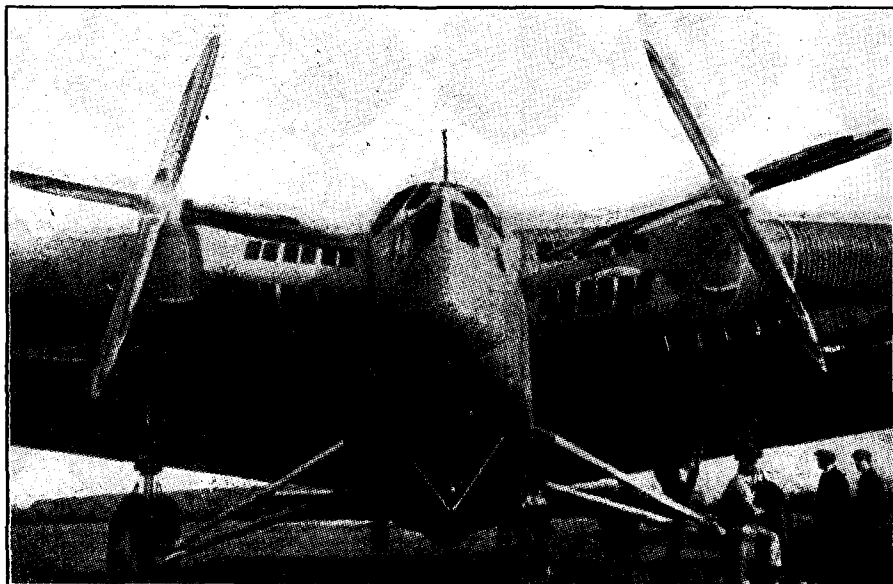
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from close quarters, its outstanding events and active figures, are much more shadowy and impersonal than the figures and events of her childhood and of the Wandervogel movement. It is difficult to give the colors of life to something already doomed to defeat.

Miss Linke's autobiography makes good reading for anyone who wishes to understand how the aftermath of the war was reflected in the generation which grew up in Germany and what it is that has made National Socialism a success.

Miss Linke has now left the Germany of Adolf Hitler and lives in England. She is still very young. Her autobiography shows her strong, lively, unafraid, open-minded. There are many good causes left to fight for, if one is a woman who "believes in a masterful spirit, knowledge, understanding, and justice." We wish her the best of luck.

Rosie Graefenberg in her recently published "Prelude to the Past" depicted a girlhood and young womanhood spent in the Germany of the immediately pre-war and later years.



JUNKERS G-38 WITH ENGINES AND PART OF CABIN SPACE IN WINGS Reproduced in "Tools of Tomorrow" by courtesy of Aviation magazine.

The Saturday Review of LITERATURE

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A Library for Cliff Dwellers

Garden books drop on our shelves daily in this hesitating month of April, but they are all for suburbanites or country dwellers. The highly mechanized American city has burst out at the creases of its skyscrapers into gardens of its own, and no one is writing books about them. It is one of the few subjects now remaining upon which some one has not written a book giving advice.

The penthouse garden is something new in geography. Whether in high-skied New York or east-winded Boston or lake-margined Chicago or hot and rainy Philadelphia, it is not to be regarded as part of the adjacent soil, but has a climate of its own, and such earth as the owner is able to procure for it. Hazards beset it. A toppling flower pot may turn into shrapnel and puncture the roof of a taxi two hundred feet below; a dropped trowel becomes a projectile likely to bring on a law suit. The playful wind which shakes the hard-won daffodils may land a quart of treasured loam in someone's living room a storey below. Dead plants go not to the mould heap but down the elevator to the ash cans. The enthusiastic digger doubles his toil, for he must first dig out upon the tiled floor and then back again into some receptacle, or risk stopping the drains for thirteen stories under him.

And the climate, whatever the longitude, is semi-arid. Even in gently rolling New York, it is the climate of a mountain chain over which the wind sweeps and on which the sun beats with rigor. Lucky the penthouse gardener who does not find his precious plants some morning swept like tumble-weeds into a cleft of his mountain-terrace.

Cypresses hold up their gentle fingers for moisture and die, even with water at their roots. The tough arbor vitae stretches its palms into the too often smoke laden air and slowly withers to bronze. But the little mugho pines, bred in an arid South, shake in the constant winds and keep their dark jade green fast as they have for centuries on the slopes of the Mediterranean mountains.

No ordinary stimulus suffices for the city-dwelling flowers of these peaks. The primrose yellows even though dosed with plant food. Azaleas, having the adaptability of the Oriental, stand anything but freezing and ask only mulch and water; but to see what can be done with a hardy plant, apply raw ammonia to the morning glory in about the same strength and quantity as the cocktails fed to city brokers, and see how they grow. The chrysanthemum, too, is a tough guy that takes city dirt out of the air and likes it.

May we suggest also a pent-house ornithology? One long chapter should be on pigeons, both wild and tame. The wild ones are not descendants of those famous flocks that once broke down the trees of American forests, but escapes from the numerous cotes that every pent-house dweller looks down upon. What distinguishes them is their capacity for year-long amorousness, another instance of the nervous stimulation of city life. It is a sluggish day indeed when store clerks and male pigeons are not ruffling their wing feathers at their lady friends on the pave-

ments below or the cornices above. Our cities are not all mechanical yet.

The tame pigeons deserve a book in themselves. Beautiful creatures, bred either for squabs or racing, they spend their lives dodging the long pole with a rag on it of their custodian, who spends his life keeping them on the wing, lest they get too fat for racing or too lazy to lay eggs, one does not know which. But ever again the flock soars upward past the cliff walls and over the pent-houses until they flash in the high sun. And once in a blue moon a darker flash follows when like a tiny plane diving from the empyrean a duck hawk falls from his perch on high and bursts the flock asunder.

Or was it a duck hawk? We pent-house dwellers need an ornithology, which would specialize also in female warblers who perch in the mugho pines and look like all the female warblers, and stray juncos, and the habits of those waterfront bums the starlings, and the tough sparrow, and most of all the strange bird cries heard overhead at night when the weather rushes over our mountain terrace carrying migrants with it to the north.



"HELLO, DARLING, I JUST SAW SOMEBODY BUY MY BOOK, AND I DON'T KNOW HER FROM ADAM!"

Letters to the Editor: Some Personal Tributes to Edwin Arlington Robinson

"Final and Inclusive"

SIR:—Those of us who loved Mr. Robinson did so responsively to a human sympathy in him more comprehensive than we found elsewhere. Not only by choice but also by manual and social ineptitude his great vitality was diverted early from conventional gestures of body and mind, and his imaginative or spiritual growth was therefore uniquely concentrated. Hence came the poetry, and hence came that enveloping human sympathy on which we depended.

As part of his ineptitude, Mr. Robinson suffered an almost pathological timidity of the world. Incapable of growing a "shell," he confronted strangers in quivering and tortured silence; then, if the stranger endured this "coldness" (!) a little while, suddenly the deep brown eyes that had avoided him before were full on him without self-consciousness. Nothing was said. The stranger knew he was accepted, and both he and the eyes were at ease thereafter. Then, as friendship progressed, Mr. Robinson's understanding became uncanny, expanding until it enclosed the world of the person before him. But always with deference. One of the most passionately objective imaginations that ever lived, he was as afraid of intruding on a friend as he was afraid of being himself intruded upon.

His telepathy was remarkably acute, and silence was frequently his medium of communication. I remember one occasion when, after we had been silent for several minutes, he broke in with an answer to a question I was forming in my mind, a question that had only the remotest relation to the last topic we had discussed. I remember another occasion when I rushed up to his room in the throes of a difficult personal dilemma which I had not before discussed with him. He was in his suspenders as I came in. He rose and no word passed between us as he stood looking down at me through a calming moment. Then he told me the solution of my problem, his voice and body trembling with the emotion of his understanding and his conviction.

Altogether there was something final and inclusive in his presence. It was like the early dawns I remember in the small town where I was a boy. I came out on the still street, and every familiar hedge and tree and lawn stood distinct and important, to the limits of my then horizon. Also there were great houses standing in

the twilight, with people asleep in them. In the whole world I alone was awake, and I knew everything. Mr. Robinson's presence made his friends feel like that. Everything was very integral and clear and quiet.

His timid and indirect approach was reflected in the circumlocutions of his earlier narrative manner, and in other important qualities of his style. In the circumlocution he approached his characters in the story as he approached them in life. He glanced at them timidly here and there to see where he could pierce their armor, then, perceiving their humanity, he looked squarely at them, and they lived. This walking-around method has been called a fault by the professionally simple and sensuous. If it is a fault it is a petty one. The more important obscurities of Mr. Robinson are not even suspected by the boy-critics who have risen to plume themselves by detracting from him. His real subtleties demand many readings, when they unfold as understanding used to unfold with the man's friendship. His longer poems move on different parallel planes like the "Bhagavad-Gita"; you understand what you are qualified to understand, and of the rest you have no suspicion. For a poem of middle length "Merlin" has only "Hamlet" for rival in English. After a dozen readings or so it now gives me the feeling I mentioned before, the sense of the dawn of the world. Always something new appears, and it is not likely that I shall ever read it all.

It was Mr. Robinson's seemingly universal comprehensiveness that chiefly bound his friends to him. In this short sketch there is room for no more than mention of some of his other qualities: the impregnable personal philosophy that emerged from his worldly failure during the first two-thirds of his life; the humor that stayed with him to his last articulate moment; the delicate sympathy with women that came from experience at first more intense than that of other men, and in the end more utter in renunciation, and more complete in sublimation; the quiet strength that gave up an alcoholic habit of many years. And over these deeper qualities there played all the absurd and endearing and annoying foibles that will eventually be told.

But ultimately there was that in Mr. Robinson that none of us will ever really know. We felt the effects of what he was.

We indulged ourselves in the warmth of it. But we never saw it. His poem "Flammonde" expressed perhaps an intuition, or an aspiration; for he became Flammonde not only to us personally but through his poetry to the world; Flammonde, the all-seeing, the "myriad-minded," as no other poet in English, except Chaucer and Shakespeare, had been before him.

CHARD POWERS SMITH.

New York City.

Edwin Arlington Robinson

APRIL 7, 1935

Dreamlands vain or the coasts of Maine alike are under the pall,
And the music is stilled that should have filled our souls with festival.
His neck was not bent to the ten per cent we strive for one and all,
The thing he sought was not to be bought in the common carnival.
He was calm and clear and cavalier, noble and strong and tall;
He labored greatly and still and stately has left us beyond recall.
O "bitter perfume"! But the iris will bloom under the grey stone wall,
Though the man be dead who might have said what never was said at all.

LEONARD BACON.

"Tilbury Town"

SIR:—The passing of Edwin Arlington Robinson recalls very vividly to my mind an afternoon spent in "Tilbury Town" almost ten years ago, before "Tristram" and the author's subsequent popularity.

When I got off the train, I looked first for a bookstore as the natural source of information. Failing in that quarter, I went back to a newspaper office I had noticed on the way from the station. It was probably the editor and proprietor himself who looked up pleasantly from the proof he was reading, shoved back his eyeshade, and gave consideration to my evidently unusual question, "Can you tell me where E. A. Robinson, the poet, used to live in this town?" After a pause he was pretty sure he knew; and calling to "Ed," who was in the back room setting type, he was confirmed in his recollection that the Robinsons used to live in the So-and-so place. Directions were easy—through the park, past the Soldiers' memorial, and on to a certain corner.

As I walked around that corner, taking in the typically New England two-story white house with the barn attached, a friendly old woman came from across the way and wished me "Good afternoon" with such an inflection as to ask my business. I satisfied her curiosity (or allayed her suspicions), I trust, with the simple inquiry as to whether E. A. Robinson, the poet, used to live there. "Oh, yes," she said, bringing it up from a rather distant past, "this is the old Robinson place." And to make certain—"Now which one of those boys did you say turned out to be a poet?" I gave his full name, and she remembered it. He had come back two years before, she told me, and "Mrs. So-and-so let him go all through the house!"

ESTHER VINSON.

Madison, Wis.

The Saturday Review recommends

This Group of Current Books:

GREY GRANITE. By LEWIS GRASSIC GIBBON. Doubleday, Doran. The last of a trilogy but a novel of Scottish life complete in itself.

TOOLS OF TOMORROW. By JONATHAN NORTON LEONARD. Viking. An account of things known to science today that portend changes for tomorrow.

QUEEN VICTORIA. By E. F. BENSON. Longmans, Green. A lively biography full of incident and anecdote.

This Less Recent Book:

ROMAN DAYS. By PERCY LUBBOCK. Scribner's. Charming vignettes of Rome.