

a mockery in his mouth—or so it may seem to us. For, in truth, the very contradictions within his nature make that figure something like a symbol of the Middle Ages—when, to quote J. Huizinga, “all experiences . . . had the directness and absoluteness of . . . child-life.”

Haguennier, Herbert's son—and, in the end, the man who in a fight kills him—already belongs to another age. His manliness, wrenched from a tender and dreamy disposition, seems already touched by the dawn of humanism. That sense of time's passing which Mme. Oldenbourg conveys in her treatment of three generations is another of her remarkable achievements.

“The Cornerstone” cannot boast all the dramatic sweep of her first offering; it contains no counterpart to the dazzling canvas painted there of the Third Crusade (passages still vivid in at least one reader's mind)—although, on another plane, the scenes involving Eglantine, Herbert's half-sister, and his maltreated mistress, offer drama enough. But this is a novel deeper than the first one, and rises higher above its author's learning. Vast pleasure is in store for both the readers who want a grand story and those who read for the pleasure of reading.

Broken Apollos and Blasted Dreams

“One Arm and Other Stories,” by Tennessee Williams (New Directions. 211 pp. \$4.50), is a collection of eleven stories, one of which was revised for the present volume, originally published in 1948 in a limited and now extremely rare edition.

By William Peden

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS'S “One Arm and Other Stories” contains some stories which have greatness in them; of some of the others, however, John Randolph's irreverent comment about Henry Clay seems appropriate: how like a dead mackerel in the moonlight [are they], that shines and stinks, and stinks and shines.

Characteristic is “Desire and the Black Masseur,” the story of Anthony Burns, a little man with “an instinct for being included in things that swallowed him up” who is even-

tually devoured—literally, figuratively, and symbolically—by his Nemesis, a gigantic masseur. Here we are transported from the world of accustomed responses to one which is uniquely Mr. Williams's special province, a dimension compounded of fantasy, surrealism, allegory, and Gothic sensationalism. With a pen that smokes and burns, Mr. Williams has created some horribly memorable chapters in the history of what one of his characters calls the “mad pilgrimage of the flesh.”

Mr. Williams, fortunately, does not always write with the almost subhuman detachment of “Desire and the Black Masseur.” In his title story he has created an equally disturbing but much more memorable figure. Oliver Winemiller had been light heavyweight champion of the Pacific fleet before he lost his arm in an auto accident. With his arm went the center of his moral being, and Oliver becomes, successively, a bum, a male hustler, and a murderer. In jail, awaiting execution, he feels finally the desire and passion he had for so many years aroused in others. But it is too late, and he goes to the chair incomplete, unfulfilled, “with all his debts unpaid.” Oliver exists both as individual and as emblem; as such he remains in this reader's consciousness.

Perhaps the most moving of Tennessee Williams's characterizations is found in “Portrait of a Girl in Glass,” the story of the family he was later to make famous in “The Glass Menagerie.” In creating the girl “who made no positive motion toward the world but stood at the edge of the water, so to speak, with feet that anticipated too much cold to move,” Mr. Williams displays the understanding of betrayed and bewildered individuals which is the source of much of his power. If such a story makes us remember that Tennessee Williams was to become a major dramatist, “The Field of Blue Flowers” reminds us also that he began as a poet; and perhaps it is as the poet of the blasted, the doomed, and the defeated that he will be remembered.

At his best, as he is in at least two or three of these stories, Tennessee Williams is in a class by himself. Even at his worst he creates magical, terrifying, and unforgettable effects; his only limitations appear to be self-imposed. These stories make



—From “Life's Picture History of Western Man.”

The king granting charters to “deserving” barons—“subtle sense of beauty and color.”

one pause. About them there is the same kind of paradox that makes the medical students hovering around the one-armed body of Oliver Wine-miller (unclaimed after his execution) draw back in a half-understood and sorrowing wonderment: it "seemed intended for some more august purpose, to stand in a gallery of antique sculpture, touched only by light through stillness and contemplation, for it had the nobility of some broken Apollo that no one was likely to carve so purely again."

Notes

SALT WATER YARNS: Jealous, unshaven second mates, intransigent old wind-jammer captains, young officers with their bravery as yet unproven, truculent Newfoundland sealers, and hardly any women at all, are to be found in the hearty chronicles of *"The Best Sea Stories from Bluebook,"* edited by Horace Vondys (McBride, \$3.95). *Bluebook* has always ranked well in the virile hierarchy of pulp adventure fiction, and this collection shows why. The people in these tales, engulfed in blustery action, are given no chance to reveal more than the rough outlines of character, but the stories are told with such a direct, sometimes almost Homeric, simplicity that they often generate great narrative power, a power that reverberates compellingly in the atmosphere of ships, the sea, and seafaring. Although conceived and written to satisfy the tastes of a commercially exploited market, they demonstrate that the well-worn narrative situation of people thrown together in isolation is a classic part of human experience. Few writers can fail with this device, and such old masters as Jacland Marmur, H. Bedford Jones, Albert Richard Wetjen, and Samuel Taylor certainly do not in this volume.

—THOMAS E. COONEY.

SHAKESPEARE WAS A LADY: So suggests Cothburn O'Neal in a juicy concoction entitled *"The Dark Lady"* (Crown Publishers, \$3.50). According to Mr. O'Neal's fascinating thesis, Will Shakespeare was merely the literary agent for lissome Rosaline de Vere, illegitimate daughter of the Earl of Oxford. Rosaline was not only an exceptionally gifted actress (masquerading as a boy offstage), but she was the real "ghost" of Hamlet and the rest of the Bard's creative output. And, if this weren't distinction enough, the little lady also produced a love moppet yclept Miranda, with the assistance of Henry, Earl of Southampton. As the jacket puts it, the author of

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SCIENCE AND NATURE

Gadgets and Goodies

"American Science and Invention," by Mitchell Wilson (Simon & Schuster. 438 pp. \$10), tells the whole story of our science, invention, and technology, from the beginning to the present, in word and picture. Our reviewer, Bruce Bliven, is the author of *"Preview for Tomorrow: The Unfinished Business of Science"* and other books.

By Bruce Bliven

MITCHELL WILSON'S "American Science and Invention" is an heroic concept, magnificently performed. Mr. Wilson set out to tell the whole story of American science, invention, and technology, from the beginning to the present, in text and pictures, and he has succeeded brilliantly. If he has omitted any famous name or important discovery I can't remember who or what it is; the only exception might be in the field of medicine, where he gives the early revolutionary developments in anesthesia and then stops.

Even in a big book like this the field is so vast that discussion of individual men and inventions is necessarily brief, although as far as I can judge the important facts are all here, and the author never seems hurried. Each subject is given at least a double-page spread, and a minimum of two or three pictures; a fine aura of Currier and Ives hangs over the first three-quarters of the book. A lot of the pictures are drawings from patent applications, or others with equal detail and clarity; without much more information than this volume contains you could build a rough working model of a primitive cotton gin, sewing machine, reaper, or telephone—and such a project would be a pleasant winter's occupation for a "hands boy" with a home workshop. Here may be found all the essential facts, and many amusing side glimpses, about Franklin, Rumford, Whitney, Morse, Fulton, McCormick, Ericsson, Pullman, Goodyear, Bell, Westinghouse, Edison, the Wright brothers, Baekeland, Henry Ford, Willard Gibbs, Michelson, Millikan, De Forest, Langmuir, and a whole cluster of atomic scientists. Dozens of American inventions sprang, of course, from European

sources, and Wilson is careful to give proper credit. Perhaps his chief complaint against American science is that we have produced so few purely theoretical men—he mentions only Willard Gibbs—and have leaned so heavily on Europe in this regard.

The overall conclusion to be drawn from the story of American invention down to about the time of the First World War, when the individual began to be supplanted by the research team, would be that to be born with inventive genius has been almost as unfortunate as to be born an artist. Our tradition has always been, it would seem, to abuse our inventors mercilessly. At the beginning every possible obstacle was put in their paths, until they finally managed to produce something of value—whereupon everybody in sight tried to steal it, and often succeeded. The inventor first spent weary years trying to prove he was not crazy, and to bring out the queer dream that was in his head, and then had to fight equally long and hard trying to get at least some share of the profits. Few of the men in this book made fortunes; a surprising number of them committed suicide.

The people around them were contemptuous of the inventors long after their ideas had become a reality. The first Atlantic cable was ruined, at a cost of millions, because workmen, disobeying rigid instructions, left the insulated wires lying in the sun. After President Garfield was shot his life might have been saved through a device, invented by Alexander Graham Bell, for locating the bullet; the doctors nullified the electrical field by leaving the President on a bed with iron springs. The U.S. Navy threw out De Forest's audion tubes because operators on ships, not satisfied with a performance better than had ever been seen before, ruined them with excessive heat.

MR. WILSON effectively counteracts the popular notion that an invention springs fully formed into the inventor's head while he is out fishing. Nearly all the important advances that are described came because something was seen to be needed. Hundreds of ways to achieve a desired result were sometimes tried before the right one was reached.

The author has included social history when events affected the advance