

series, is perhaps the closest to the daily occupations of an eleven-year-old schoolboy whose truest loves are animals. Chief among these are the beloved dogs, Barker, Roger, and Pincher, whose personalities are as strong as that of their two-legged friend. In Tom's world the adults measure up well, and even these are all definite individuals, from Mother and Daddy and liberal-minded Granny to Miss Sabine, Miss Jimpson, and Mr. Holbrook. The vision of the boy, Ralph Seaford, who appears in Granny's old house at Tramore, where he had once lived, might be a conception of Walter De La Mere's.

The opening sentences of "The Retreat" do mark a sharp division between Tom's two realms—the actual one and the unseen one—for they describe a magician who might be a forerunner of Uncle Stephen: "An old man clad from throat to silver-buckled shoes in a wide loose-sleeved black robe, stood at a window peering out into the darkness. His silken

silver hair fell in one long smooth lock over a high narrow forehead; his face, minutely lined, was fine as a cameo and his skin the color of an ancient parchment. The ears were very slightly pointed . . ." And the angel Gamelyn, who acts as Tom's guide on a moonlight adventure, is not entirely convincing. Yet the arrival at the Garden of Eden is quite delightful (though some of the albatross's remarks smack too much of "Alice-in-Wonderland"—remarks for which the old serpent in his lively and amusing monologue on "Eva" atones).

But it is the last of the three stories which is really the most succinct and the most ambitious. It is the one called "Uncle Stephen," and that Bible character's magic power is benign and balanced by highly human qualities, the foremost of which are his deep love and his understanding of his nephew, Tom. This fantasy has a tighter weave than the others and is an adventure in time which is carried triumphantly to its climax.

Notes

THE SEA AND "OLD FOULGOODS": Contemporary writers are not much interested in the symbolic possibilities of a voyage by sea. The danger, isolation, and mystic communion of seafaring are today seldom used as Coleridge, Melville, and Conrad used them, but Calvin Kentfield has tried in a weird and eloquent new novel called "*The Alchemist's Voyage*" (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.95). And if you grant him the right to imitate those masters in theme as well as in technique you must admit that he succeeds.

Like most ships worth writing about, the *Alchemist* is strange. She is old and decrepit, with a master who deserves to command nothing better. Captain Faircloth ("Old Foulgoods") is a sly old bundle of excuses and plots, who is trying to frame his drunken purser—and anybody else he can catch—in a theft of ship's stores. Like a petulant Ahab, he pursues his obsession through the lives of his crew, hoping thereby to mask his own incompetence. He involves two young seamen: Blacky, who talks back to the officers and quotes the metaphysical poets, and Ira Garret, an ignorant young monolith of masculinity. Blacky and Ira become friends, admiring each other and learning from each other, and soon they begin to merge personalities in a way that is inescapably reminiscent of Conrad's "The Secret Sharer." Then, as Blacky jumps ship and the Captain sends Ira to pursue him through a tropical port and the nearby jungle, the novel flares up and burns out in a burst of what can only be called surrealism.

In spite of the fact that the reader is not wholly prepared by the earlier parts of the book to accept this climax "*The Alchemist's Voyage*" is a stimulating and satisfying novel. Mr. Kentfield's style, while occasionally pretentious, is richly metaphorical and coolly literal by turns, and it is therefore an appropriate vehicle for a narrative that is successful on both realistic and symbolic levels.

—THOMAS E. COONEY.

PACIFIST'S BATTLES: A very British affair in a Mr. Chips-Mrs. Miniver fashion, is James Lansdale Hodson's "*Return to the Woods*" (Morrow, \$3.50). It is about war, or thoughts of war, and the painful uncertainties of a man of good will who knows its absolute evil, yet who, being a man like others, knows he might go through it again if the need arose. His name is Hargreaves, veteran of that

(Continued on page 44)

Storm at Dingle

By A. M. Sullivan

THE witch of the Gulf Stream shapes fat kine
From her steaming vat till the sky is full
Of beasts that wallow from troughs of brine
Nudged by a fire-rampant bull.

The great udders bulge against sharp crags
Till the whitened waters spill in the glen.
The cows lope off with their empty bags
And the wet winds fill them up again.

Over Slieve Mish the dark herds bellow
And rumble north where the currags grope
Towards the Shannon's mouth till a shaft of yellow
Fashions swift pearls on a donkey's rope.

The leash hangs slack on a woman's wrist
As she gathers kelp from the broken teeth
Of stones that rise in the rainbow mist
As the blade of the sun comes out of its sheath.

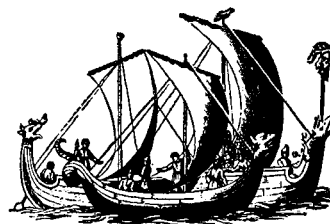
Her face turns up as the light pours down
On hair as dark as a midnight moat,
Her eyes blue—vast as Mary's gown,
Her cheeks more red than her petticoat.

The woman speaks and the donkey walks
With the dripping creels toward the silver bog.
She sings a song as the thunder talks
With the voice of a feel in a hollow log,

She weaves her music with a golden thread
And braids the ends with the color of grief,
Staring in anguish toward Brandon Head
At the hooker fishing at the hungry reef.

The song and the sunlight fade with the rain
As the sky shuts down like the hooker's hatch,
The donkey brays at the end of the lane
And a fisherman's widow lifts the latch.

The Will to Explore



"New Found World: How North America Was Discovered and Explored," by Harold Lamb (Doubleday, 326 pp. \$5.75), and "Worlds Beyond the Horizon," by Joachim G. Leithäuser (translated by Hugh Merick, Alfred A. Knopf, 412 pp. \$6.75), are two books which, in retelling the stories of early explorers, attempt to chronicle the adventures of those who failed as well as of those who succeeded and made history. Here the two books are reviewed by Geoffrey Bruun, author of "The Survey of European Civilization" and other books.

by Geoffrey Bruun

THE RECORD of history preserves for us little more than the accounts of successful discovery. The failures are not written down." This philosophic observation, which Harold Lamb throws out in the midst of his colorful narrative on the opening up of the Americas, is rather wide of the mark, and fortunately for the reader neither Mr. Lamb nor Mr. Leithäuser limit themselves in their two books on the history of world discoveries to the expeditions that failed off. They are fascinated by the will to discover as well as by its results, and they devote as much attention to the hypotheses, the motives, the exertions, and the disasters of their heroes as they spare for the rare occasional triumphs that transcended all expectation.

The lusts and labors of the conquistadors who followed in the wake of Columbus were certain to claim Harold Lamb's attention sooner or later, and now in "New Found World" his writing about them is right and lively. He also knows how to simplify without falsification and how to characterize without undue subtlety. His heroes are larger than life but recognizably human and he weaves them from crisis to crisis of their careers as they act out their dreams. He has a sure sense for the *mystique* that distinguishes great leaders and he makes his audience feel it.

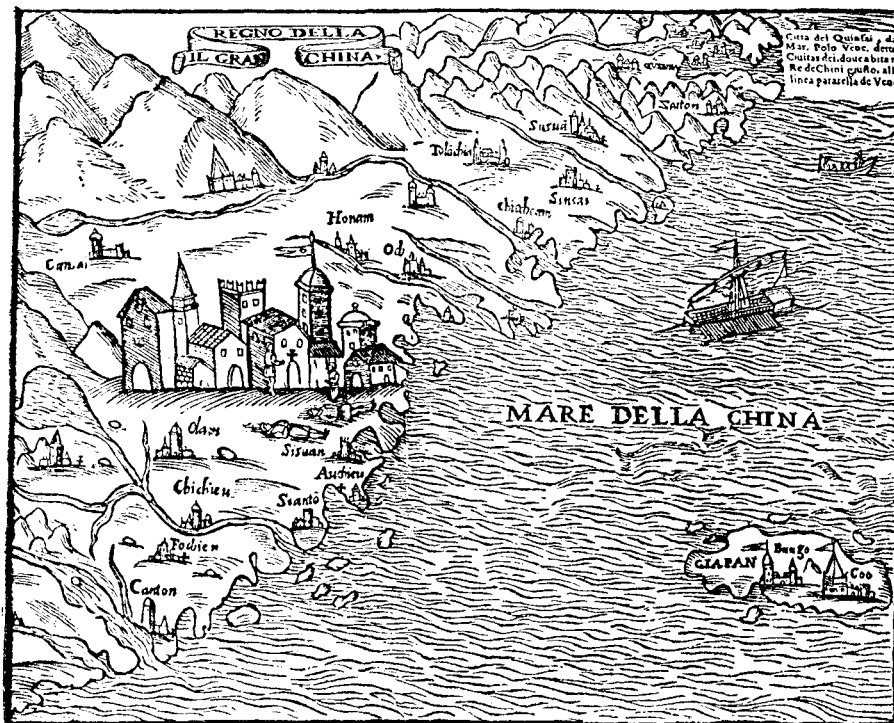
Joachim Leithäuser's "Worlds beyond the Horizon" is more ambitious

in scope for it takes the entire globe for its stage and six centuries of exploration for its theme. First published two years ago as "Ufer Hinter Dem Horizont," it is now issued in English translation. As a history of "the great age of discovery from Columbus to the present," it is vigorous and clear, containing much authoritative information, a hundred excellent plates or drawings, a score of maps, and a discriminating bibliography. Mr. Leithäuser is carried away on occasion by some particularly histrionic character or spectacular denouement (Captain John Smith's escapades, for instance, or Amundsen's dash to the South Pole) and then he tends to overwrite. But this is a dilemma familiar to every historian. The episodes he selects for detailed and graphic description are also not always of first importance, though they are justifiable enough as high adventure and then, as if recollecting himself, he will revert to a compact summation of several noteworthy expeditions in one swift synopsis.

THIS distortion of emphasis is the most serious flaw in a work so ad-

mirable that in most respects it merited more rigorous planning. Columbus is given two chapters, Magellan ten pages, Cook eight, Lasalle four, and the Lewis and Clark expedition two. But, though La Condamine's labors in South America are rightly rescued from obscurity, the twenty pages devoted to him are excessive, especially when Abel Tasman's exploits are dismissed in two paragraphs and Bougainville's in two lines. To spare almost as much space for Pocahontas as for the Russian conquest of Siberia is to confuse aims and values.

In fairness to Mr. Leithäuser, however, one must add that his book is exceptionally readable and that it is obviously a labor of love. Nor should it be forgotten that he had to write of lands he had not visited, for his opportunities for travel and even for study have been unjustly circumscribed. From 1933 to 1945—his twenty-third to thirty-fifth year—his chances for research and writing were meager because of his opposition to Hitlerism. Only since 1945 has he been able to take an active part in literary and journalistic activities.



—Illustrations from "Worlds Beyond the Horizon."

Jesuit map of the Celestial Empire (1589) —"the entire globe for [a] stage."