

And, yet, in the years after the fall of France she shuttled between London and Bordeaux with the regularity of a commuter, bringing supplies, money, and explosives to the French underground and smuggling out British airmen who had been shot down. The fact that her French was none too good and her geography uncertain did not seem to handicap the intrepid lady, either, in carrying out her hair-raising assignments as a secret agent. Mrs. Denham writes with chatty informality of her innumerable jaunts to the French coast and of her collusion with some highly individualistic Maquis and with a versatile English colleague named Jonathan. After several years of peregrinating about the French countryside Mrs. Dunham was caught and rescued from detention in a manner that Hollywood might have rejected as too flamboyant. There is a casual, do-it-yourself quality about the author's account of her exploits which is charming but somewhat deficient in relevant detail.

—MARTIN LEVIN.

A QUEEN'S LIFE: Shortly over a year ago young King Peter of Yugoslavia published his autobiography and in the course of it accused his Queen—whom he was then suing for divorce—of extravagance and mental inability to face the true duties of royalty, even the slight ones of a queen-in-exile. Almost immediately thereafter the royal couple became reconciled, and now in *"For Love of a King"* (Doubleday, \$5) the lovely Alexandra has her say. In most ways it is a more rewarding say than her husband's for where he showed himself to be matter-of-fact and self-centered she reveals a highly sensitive personality which probably would have considerable difficulty in adjusting to any marriage. But in hers Alexandra found a special challenge. She not only had to adjust to a man but to a king who still was capable of saying, "They spent thousands of pounds in making, as it happens, a useless individual out of me. But they succeeded in making me love my work. I want to be a king and I'm fit for nothing else."

In this royal duo it was Alexandra who—she says—was in favor of abandoning such high-flown attitudes and settling down to a life of reality. What makes this fact unusual is that her upbringing was of the sort calculated to make her, if not an extreme neurotic, at least the sort of frivolous girl-wife Peter's autobiography accuses her of being. She grew up fatherless, since five months before she was born her father—during World War I the King of Greece—died tragically from the results of a monkey bite. Brought up

in exile with the rest of the Greek royal family, the child Alexandra had one burning desire: for a home. Her mother persisted not only on sending the girl to boarding school but on living in luxury hotels, so that years later Alexandra, about to give birth to Peter's child, insisted that the accouchement take place in a suite at Claridge's. It was more like a home to her than anywhere else.

What makes Alexandra's book rewarding reading—and raises it above the level of Peter's—is the comprehension she appears to have achieved concerning his unique problem and hers.

—ALLEN CHURCHILL.

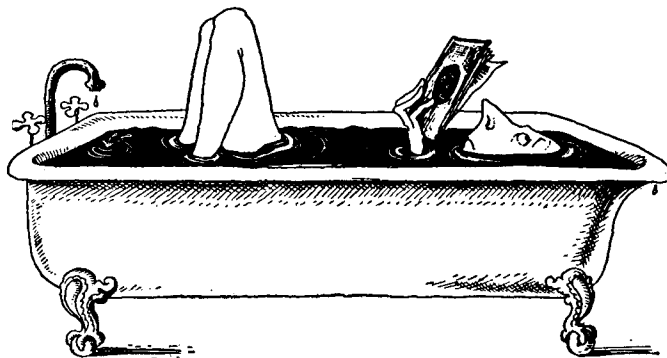
ACTRESS OFF STAGE: During the last twenty years our attitude toward the Victorians has conspicuously mellowed. Even their sins and their pleasures have returned to fashion through the current nostalgia for the Paris of Toulouse-Lautrec. Helena Modjeska (1844-1909) ranked high in this demi-monde of the theatre and the boudoir, but Antoni Gronowicz in his fictionalized biography *"Modjeska"* (Thomas Yoseloff, \$5) has failed to do her justice.

His failure, both on the grounds of style and approach, is the more regrettable because of the genuine interest of his subject. Modjeska, Polish by birth but during her later years a Californian by adoption, made an international reputation on the stages of Poland, Germany, France,

England, and the United States. Bernhardt acknowledged her, as much as it was possible for the divine Sarah to do so, her only rival. Modjeska's career as an actress merits our attention, but Mr. Gronowicz chooses to spend too many pages on her "life and loves." The brutal truth of the matter is that off stage, like so many other actresses, she was a person of little interest. In accenting her amorous adventures and misadventures the author has failed signally to recreate for us the theatrical atmosphere of the period or her contribution to the stage. Though Modjeska came into contact with Edwin Booth, Ada Rehan, Sarah Bernhardt, the Maurice Barrymores, they pass through this book like a procession of ghosts.

Mr. Gronowicz fails as well on stylistic grounds. Throughout the reader is confronted with long arid stretches of clichés broken only by the lush vegetation of purple patches. One can readily enough sympathize with the stylistic problems of describing, for example, a soiree at which Bernhardt and Modjeska in a trial of skill each played a scene from *"Camille"* in the nude. But the style throughout is consistently one of trite and vulgar journalism. By contrast, Modjeska's own notes, made during a tour with Edwin Booth in 1889-1890, have a refreshing directness and simplicity to them, and it is this brief diary which constitutes the chief merit of the book.

—WILLIAM APPLETON.



CAPERS WITH CAMPBELL: The submerged and oblivious fellow in the drawing above is actually, if he is to be believed, a reasonable facsimile of *Punch*-writer Patrick Campbell, who in a newly published collection of his essays entitled *"A Short Trot With a Cultured Mind"* (Simon & Schuster, \$3.95) tells of the harrowing experience which befell him shortly after the moment portrayed in the drawing. Discovering that he had brought no towel along with him Campbell, then somewhat younger than he is now, hopped wet-footed and bare-backed down the hall to the linen closet, only to find the parlormaid inside, to the mutual embarrassment of both. The result is amusingly chronicled in a piece entitled "Taking for a Lowel" (which is what Mr. Campbell says he then said to cover his confusion), one of thirty-nine such featherweight reminiscences and inconsequential essays (including one that conclusively proves that Brunnhilde was really Wotan's uncle) which form a volume of readable but very British humor.

How to Get to Mars and Back

"The Exploration of Mars," by Willy Ley and Werner von Braun (Viking Press. 176 pp. \$4.95), discusses the optical exploration of Mars and what will be necessary for humans to visit it in person. Our reviewer is Robert H. Baker, author of *"The Universe Unfolding"* and other books.

By Robert H. Baker

MANY observers of Mars have reported a network of fine dark "canals" on the planet's surface, and have made drawings to show its appearance. Many other observers, sometimes with our largest telescopes, have been unable to see the network at all and have been inclined to regard it as illusory. If the network is really present the opportunity to photograph it has never been better than it will be with our increased optical power and improved technique when Mars comes unusually near us in the late summer of this year. The closest approach to the earth will occur on September 7 when this planet, then only thirty-five million miles away, will glow in the south like a brilliant red star.

Willy Ley's and Werner von Braun's book *"The Exploration of Mars"* is timely because of the coming favorable opposition of Mars. It also has special interest now when prepara-

tions are being made for the launching of temporary artificial satellites of the earth. Some people believe that this project may be the forerunner of more extensive adventures in and around the Solar System.

This book is in the style of two previous ones to which the same authors have contributed. *"Across the Space Frontier"* (1952) presented the concept of three-stage rocket ships capable of carrying men and cargoes aloft to assemble a space station moving in a permanent orbit around the earth. *"Conquest of the Moon"* (1953) described as a feasible undertaking an expedition to the moon launched from that station. The third book goes on to the proposal of a similar expedition to Mars. This book, like the others, is illustrated with pleasing paintings by Chesley Bonestell.

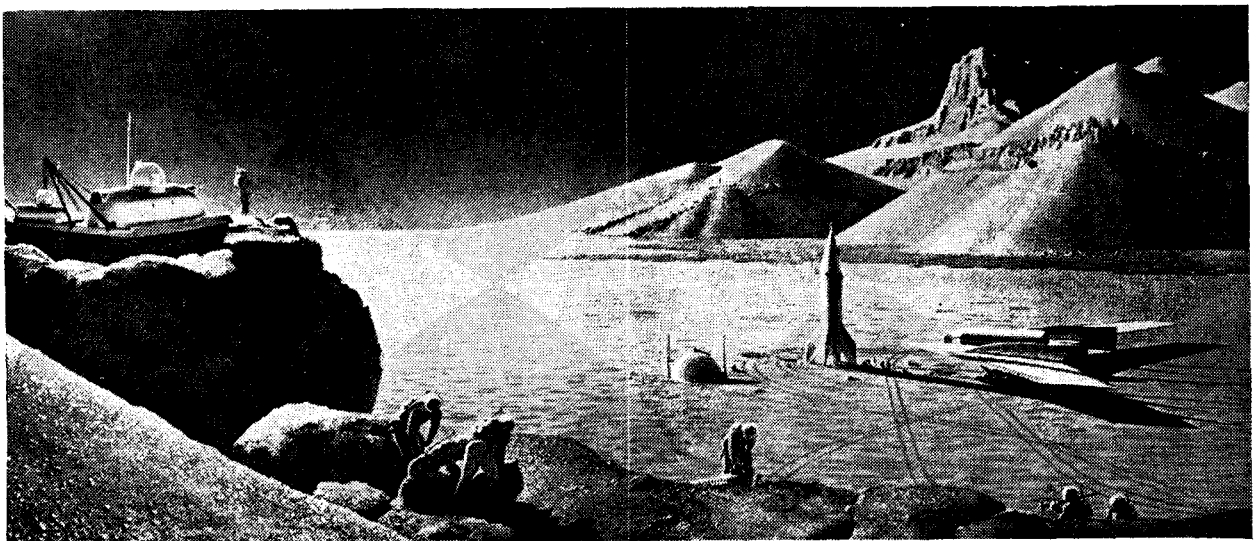
The first half of this book, the work of Mr. Ley, is concerned with the optical exploration of Mars. It relates how observers from earlier times to the present have examined the planet with telescopes of increasing power and have tried to picture what they saw. They have observed white caps around the poles of Mars, which grow and shrink with the seasons. They have observed dark areas in contrast with the red deserts, areas which seem to turn green in the Martian spring and revert to brown with the approach of winter. The "canal men" have added their dark

network to the scene. A chapter on "Opinions, Hypotheses, and Theories" brings out the diversity of views concerning the larger and finer markings and the presence of life of some kind on the planet.

The final sentence of this chapter is appropriate in the context. It is: "Because we, the *genus homo* of the earth, will set foot on Mars within a matter of decades." Perhaps so. Technology is indeed advancing in a remarkable way. Yet this *genus* is still the original model produced in the Garden of Eden; it is designed to dwell, like fishes in a pond, in the shallow atmosphere around the earth. Some of us may prefer the more conservative remark of Heinz Haber in his informative article on the space satellites in the April issue of *The National Geographic Magazine*. He belongs to the guild of space medicine which strives to keep space flight down to earth. Haber says: "But no one is equipped to tell us at this time when man himself will venture into space." There is caution and not defeatism in his statement.

IN THE second half of the book the reader is in the hands of Mr. von Braun, an engineer who is thoroughly conversant with his problem and who proposes to solve it with the tools that are now available. Many new scientific discoveries will be made before the time is ripe for a voyage to Mars, he reminds us. But only by using our present knowledge and by avoiding any speculation about future discoveries can we bring proof that this fabulous venture is feasible. On this realistic basis he presents a dispassionate and at the same time exciting account of the proposed voyage.

The expedition to Mars launched



—Painting by Chesley Bonestell.

Explorers setting out from a ground station on Mars to investigate vicinity—"genus homo will set foot on Mars within decades."