

(Harper, \$3.50), is a story of migratory fruit pickers, chiefly in Florida. As a work of art it is a distinguished failure that immediately places its author near the top of the Southern Conference ladies' handicap, one slot below Flannery O'Connor.

Although this novel is in several respects Steinbeck and branch water (an attractive and palatable mixture), in "The Fruit Tramp" the conflict is between the hobo talent, or the roving stimulus, in the male and the nesting instinct of women. It would have been enough in the first place to say that Mrs. Williams is a woman. She is interested in persons and their marriages, not in class distinctions or injustice or economic theories.

Her novel is in disrupted sonata form, starting out with a clear and interesting statement of a theme which she later decides the hell with. The book is so well written, so real in atmosphere and characterization, that it is exasperating to find a *Redbook* ending slung at one in the closing pages. The novel is ruined, as spoon bread superbly cooked would be if it were all goosed up with molasses.

Here, in short, is a major talent that may (like Mrs. Keyes's) find its public before it finds itself.

—JOHN COOK WYLLIE.

MIDDLE-CLASS MATRIMONY: Penelope Mortimer writes a spare, effective, often bitter prose tempered with intimate understanding and pointed up by occasional savage irony as she unfolds the eventless *via crucis* of middle-class married life. "The Bright Prison" (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.50) is, of course, marriage itself, that double yoke in which two people so often stand, sit, and lie down side by side for years without in the least sense living and growing together. Mark and Antonia Painton have not so much come to take each other for granted as mislaid each other's identity. Their roles as parents and as householders have pre-empted the place their early love wished each to reserve for the mate. Mark is the harried barrister, supporting a wife and four children, three of them girls. Antonia is the coping mother, the wife battling with a cumbersome and hideous house, impossible to heat, impossible to keep neat, clean. How many years since they have had a few days alone together? Antonia cannot at first remember, then dates it logically enough from the birth of their first child.

This story turns on a weekend when, by frightening coincidence, that long-lost solitude is thrust upon them. Antonia travels with her two younger children to leave them for a vacation with her parents; on her return to

London late the same day, her second child, Charlotte, has been taken to the hospital for an appendectomy and her eldest, Georgina, has packed herself off to stay with a school friend a few blocks away.

Antonia and Mark, fortified by good news from the hospital, could at last have caught their breath, looked each other in the face. But the reprieve has come too late: Mark has wandered in sullen despondency into a messy relationship with a little tough he has met at the hospital; Antonia, momentarily beguiled by the will-o'-the-wisp of being loved for herself, turns away disenchanted when she finds that once more she is to be taken as "the mother figure."

After a crescendo of incidents of stunning credibility and impact, the brief, agonized stabs at escape are over—Antonia and Mark stumble home in silence, in acquiescence. They are kept together not only by their children but by a series of inadvertencies which, Mrs. Mortimer seems to be saying, play the decisive role in the acceptance of the marriage pattern.

Commenting on Penelope Mortimer's earlier novel, "A Villa in Summer," one critic praised the author's sharp eye "for precisely how little love, marriage, and parenthood have to do with one another." This devastating insight marks every line of "The Bright Prison," yet the novel is not defeatist nor lacking in humor. It is realism reflecting adult relationships so closely that the very pulse beat of Antonia or Mark becomes to the reader as present, as inevitable as his own.

—FRANCES KEENE.

LITTLE WORLD REVISITED: If "A Distant Drum" (Houghton Mifflin, \$4.50) were Charles Bracelen Flood's first novel,

it certainly would be considered a promising piece of work, because there are many good things in it. However, it is his second, and seen in the light of his first ("Love Is a Bridge") it is, although pleasant reading, in the main a reshaping of characters he knows very well, but about whom he has found not very much new to say.

Patrick Kingsgrant, the hero, is a student at Harvard, and is presumed to be following in his lawyer-father's footsteps. Patrick begins to suspect that he wants to be a writer instead of a lawyer, and it is the growth in this character as he begins and then finally succeeds in breaking away from the established pattern that makes the story. Patrick clashes with his father and his girl, establishes his independence and emerges, considerably more mature, from a grueling training course in the United States Army.

Mr. Flood attempts, with the rather awkward use of the flashback, to tell two love stories, Patrick's father's as well as his own. However, the author knows his characters, and he pays faithful attention to the details of action and setting which establish these people in a real world, however limited.

This world revolves around Harvard, a Park Avenue address in New York, and a family island in Maine. It is almost with a feeling of nostalgia that the Maine scenes are written, and, indeed, there are so many events which seem to parallel the author's own life that one suspects much of the book of being autobiographical. Curiously enough, although the author is obviously at home in a setting and way of life that has not had many serious spokesmen, it is when he

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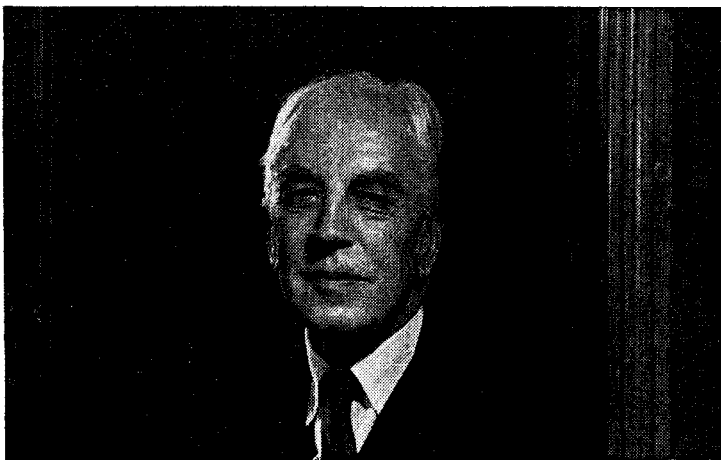


—R. H. Muir, Inc.



—John Sadovy, London.

Vinnie Williams—"Redbook ending." Penelope Mortimer—"devastating insight."



Arnold J. Toynbee—"... a new view of history."

—Karsh.

A New View of History

"A Study of History," by Arnold J. Toynbee, abridged by D. C. Somervell (Oxford University Press. 415 pp. \$5), digests the latter part, volumes VII, VIII, and IX, of a monumental work. Professor Hans Kohn of the City College of New York here considers its significance.

By Hans Kohn

THE FIRST six volumes of Arnold J. Toynbee's "A Study of History" reached only a relatively small number of readers in the original edition, but they became a best-seller in the skilful abridgment by D. C. Somervell, who not only mastered the complex contents of the vast work but entered into the writer's outlook and purpose. Now Mr. Somervell has accomplished the same task for the latter, and in many ways more important, part of Toynbee's work. It may be confidently expected—and should be sincerely hoped—that the new abridgment will again become a best-seller and will acquaint the American reading public with one of the significant thinkers of our day.

For Toynbee is not primarily a historian. He is less and more than the average historian: less, because expert historians of nations or epochs may take exception to several of Toynbee's sweeping generalizations; more, because he faces up to the great problem of the 1950s, and has anticipated it—the need for viewing mankind and its history for the first time as a whole. Toynbee has outgrown the parochial limits of a historical view centered around Western man. With an unforeseen rapidity, the Asian and

African peoples and their civilizations are emerging into full partnership with the West. A new reappraisal of their relationship in this respect is due, and with it a new view of history. Mr. Toynbee's lasting merit will be that he has taken the first step in that direction.

Woodrow Wilson foresaw this change as far back as 1901. "The East is to be opened and transformed whether we will or no," he wrote. "Nations and peoples which have stood still the centuries through are to be quickened and made part of the universal world of commerce and of ideas which has so steadily been a-making by the advance of European power from age to age. It is our peculiar duty, as it is also England's, to moderate the process in the interests of liberty; to impart to the peoples thus driven out upon the road of change, . . . the habit of law which we long ago got out of the strenuous process of English history; secure for them, when we may, the free intercourse and the natural development which shall make at least equal members of the family of nations." Wilson would have contemplated with deep satisfaction the transformation of the United Nations from a body in which the West was overrepresented to one of a worldwide equal participation.

TOYNBEE, who started his long and fertile career as a Hellenic scholar, first compared the experiences of 1914 with those of Greece in the Periclean Age, but he has learned meanwhile that as the result of the dynamic vigor of Western civilization itself, the historical, political, and cultural horizon of man in the middle of the twentieth century has broadened be-

yond expectation, and that the political map of the earth, familiar to the student of 1914, will have been changed out of all recognition by the end of the 1950s. The generation which had grown to maturity in the West before 1914 lived under the impact of the doctrine of progress. The generation which entered the war of 1939 and which has witnessed the rapid shifts in power and cultural relations all over the world since, has inclined toward a doctrine of doom. Toynbee teaches us to see both doctrines as appropriate to relatively brief spans of history, and he opens before us a much more hopeful picture of the future. In opposition to Spengler, who foresaw the doom not only of Western civilization but at least for a long period to come, of all civilization, Toynbee recognizes the great potentialities of the present situation. "War and slavery," he writes, "had been twin cancers of civilization," since its beginning. The conquest of one of these cancers, which would have seemed impossible to past ages, is a good omen for the prospects of the campaign against the other.

The burning problem of social justice, greater equality, and respect for human beings in Western society is well on its way to a solution. Western society has found the solution by successfully forcing a passage between the Scylla of unrestricted economic individualism and the Charybdis of state control of economic life. The West has faced the task of absorbing its proletariat—Toynbee rightly uses the word in a psychological sense—and of giving it the feeling of fully belonging. It has thereby defeated the Marxist-Leninist expectation of the destruction of Western society by class war within it.

There is good hope that the West may solve also the more difficult problem ahead of it, the reconciliation with the non-Western world, which in the nineteenth century was transformed, above all psychologically, into a vast proletariat on the rim of the Western world. This proletariat was heading toward secession from the West, into the wide-open arms of the Leninist promise of total equality. Recent events which occurred after Toynbee concluded his book—the rejection by the English-speaking peoples or by their large majority of the invasion of Egypt, the effectiveness of the United Nations in clearing all Egyptian territory from invading forces, and the simultaneous brutal suppression of Hungary's liberty by Communist Russia—have confirmed his hope that the non-Western world may change its course toward the alternative goal of partnership on terms of equality with its former Western masters. The