

ert. After small-time consular stints in Africa and South America he was finally appointed to Damascus, an important post and one he relished; but enemies soon contributed to his downfall there. He ended his career in comparative banishment in the consulate at Trieste, where he retired and remained until his death.

Admirers of Burton tend to see him as a lion caged by the bureaucracy of Empire, or as a misplaced Elizabethan whom the Victorians couldn't appreci-

ate. But Byron Farwell, whose book is, on the basis of its fresh data and its full, sensible presentation of Burton's career, the definitive biography, points out that Burton's lack of discipline and tact would have kept him down in any age. This temperate volume is far different from Allen Edwardes's fictional biography, which represents subjectivity running wild, dramatized history at its extreme. Not that it isn't entertaining to read, in an incredible way: the author's description of Burton's wedding night,

complete with exclamations from the Victorian bride, is a major contribution to comic erotica.

Mr. Edwardes also gives a histrionic view of the argument between Burton and John H. Speke as to which should receive credit for discovering the source of the Nile. At the time both men were putting forth their claims in England the nerve-stretched Speke died abruptly, possibly a suicide. Mr. Farwell, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, who sees Burton as an adventurer rather than an explorer, maintains that the greatest mistake of Burton's life was his allowing Speke to press on independently to find the lake he named Victoria, while Burton himself rested in Tabora. Mr. Edwardes launches a theory (without offering proof) that Burton and Speke were lovers—a statement he also makes about Burton and the poet Swinburne.

After Burton's death his pious Catholic widow burned his diaries and his translation of the Arab erotic handbook *The Perfumed Garden* (to be published by Putnam on Mar. 24). Her friend Marie Louise de la Ramée (better known as the novelist Ouida) says she "never spoke nor wrote to [Lady Burton] after that irreparable act," and most subsequent commentators have added their censure. Mr. Farwell is more sympathetic to the woman who manifested a stubborn loyalty to a difficult man over so many years, a man who, on his frequent changes of residence, would leave his wife a cold note: "Pay, pack, and follow."

Not that Mr. Farwell always sees Burton in a harsh light; he admires him, but within realistic limits. And he makes it clear that Burton loved the wife who both helped and hindered his official career. Mr. Farwell destroys various legends, among them the one that Burton's unbuttoned (or should it be disrobed?) translation of *The Arabian Nights* was icily received by the Victorians. Actually, it was praised.

As to Burton's own works, Mr. Farwell doesn't even try to make out a good case for most of them. Burton lacked the prose-writing gifts of C. M. Doughty and T. E. Lawrence, and even his book about Mecca is rather dull. *The Kasidah*, oddly enough, has remained in print. But the Burton volume that most deserves our attention, *The City of the Saints*, has fortunately been reissued in an elegant edition. Here Burton was at his finest as a reporter, and he provides a vivid and energetic narrative of his 1859-60 stagecoach journey from Missouri to California. It is a highly important contribution to the literature of the Far West, and makes an impressive memorial to "Burton of Arabia."

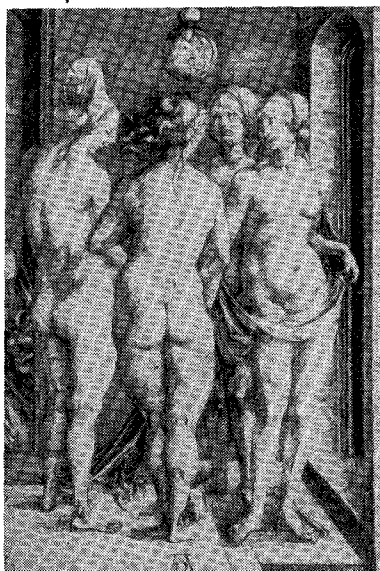


"Among Those Who Stood There," by Abraham Rattner, 1945.

With Needle and Acid: An arresting parallel between fingerprints and art prints is drawn by Frank and Dorothy Getlein in their text for *The Bite of the Print: Satire and Irony in Woodcuts, Engravings, Etchings and Lithographs* (Clarkson N. Potter, \$12.50). Both, the authors say, are associated with hands raised against society. The book's more than 290 reproductions run the gamut from an anonymous fifteenth-century caricature of "The Emperor and the Pope" to a 1961 Herblock cartoon.

"Four Witches," by Albrecht Dürer, 1497.

"You have lost your suit, it's true, but you have had the pleasure of hearing me argue," by Honoré Daumier, 1848.



The Locked and Lonely Hearts

The Children at the Gate, by Edward Lewis Wallant (Harcourt, Brace & World. 184 pp. \$3.95) the author's second posthumously published novel explores the redemptive power of suffering in a young man who has sought "the controlled illusion of indifference." Jonathan Baumbach is a teacher of creative writing at Ohio State University.

By JONATHAN BAUMBACH

EDWARD LEWIS WALLANT died in 1962 at the age of thirty-six. *The Children at the Gate*, his fourth novel, is the second to be published after his death. The four books that survive him, and which I suspect will survive us all, are dark visions of disquieting, often apocalyptic seriousness, haunting, desolating books about the improbable possibilities of redemption in a corrosively malignant world. Wallant is at his best in *The Pawnbroker*, at his least successful in *The Human Season*. At his best, he belongs with Saul Bellow, Ralph Ellison, William Styron, Bernard Malamud, and (on faith) Norman Mailer, in the front rank of our serious novelists. Each of Wallant's books is a kind of pilgrim's progress about those blighted innocents who, damned to disbelief, keep vigil at the gate.

Angelo, the nineteen-year-old hero of *The Children at the Gate*, is a loner, an old man of a child, who escapes the pain of living through the controlled illusion of indifference. Though raised by a devoutly Catholic mother, Angelo has never been to confession and refuses to believe in anything that is not scientifically verifiable. His commitment to science, "imbued with a priest's fierce dedication," becomes a substitute religion, a rational and ordered defense against the chaos of feeling.

Working as a clerk in his cousin's drugstore, Angelo makes daily and nightly visits to the Sacred Heart Hospital, where he solicits trade from the patients, a microcosm of sufferers. Angelo's religion of science is put to the test when he is befriended, against his will, by an officiously benevolent hospital orderly named Sammy, a prophet of unreason who seems in his clownish way to have magical powers. Sammy's am-

biguous behavior—is he fraud or saint, madman or savior?—poses a threat to Angelo because he is unable to comprehend it within his own categories of possibility.

In order to retain the security of his isolation, Angelo feels compelled to make sense of "the orderly's game" which, given the preconceptions of Angelo's position, can only lead to madness. For all his resentment, Angelo finds himself both touched and pained by Sammy's friendship. As Sammy tells him, "It's so lonely not to suffer, so lonely."

Suffering in Wallant's world is a precondition of humanity. As a result of Sammy's death, a quixotic re-enactment of the crucifixion, Angelo learns, despite

himself, the grace of suffering. Passing by the Sacred Heart Hospital at the end, Angelo "was surprised and puzzled as he walked with that mortal wound in him that although the wound would be the death of him, it would also be the life of him too." Sammy's sacrificial death creates the occasion of Angelo's spiritual resurrection.

Wallant's prose startles with the knifelike shock of its accuracy. For example, his description of the old orderly, Lepedov, who has just confessed to the rape of a little girl: "His eyes were an atrocity; they could have belonged to a tiger who acquires, in the midst of feeding on the flesh of a man he has just killed, the curse of human understanding."

THIS is a beautifully written short novel of almost unbearable impact. Out of the final depths of depravity and horror Wallant's children of darkness discover the terrible luxury of feeling that provides, at the price of pain, the redemptive possibility of love.

Black Market in Red Square

Honey for the Bears, by Anthony Burgess (Norton. 256 pp. \$3.95), records the adventures of a would-be swindler from England who sets out to conquer the Russian black market. Charles Alva Hoyt teaches English at Bennett College in Millbrook, N.Y.

By CHARLES ALVA HOYT

LIKE one or two others, perhaps, I lost track of Anthony Burgess a few novels ago. He has written five of them in what seems to me a very short time, and not one of them, I am told, is bad. The latest, *Honey for the Bears*, is one of the best-planned and most brilliantly executed books I have seen in a long time. The reader may quarrel with some of Burgess's ideas and question some of his conclusions; but he will have to admit that he is in the presence of a virtuoso.

Honey for the Bears is the story of a small-time antique dealer and would-be swindler, Paul Hussey, who travels from England to Russia with his wife in order to peddle some driloon dresses on the black market. After many adventures Paul returns to the West alone, having left his honey with the bears. He has also learned a few things about himself, mostly catastrophic.

Mr. Burgess, who has been a professional musician, has always had an exceptional ear. His short, swift plot is presented in a marvelously compact style, rich, juicy, every rift filled with ore. For example:

"That will do, Madox," said his master or mistress indulgently. The face was trenched and riven, as by a killing life of metaphysical debauchery. That was it, decided Paul: a head that philosophy had unsexed, some final Shavian achievement. He had seen a head like it on television newsreels: an old proud eagle squatting in Whitehall among students, banning the bomb. But these oyster-colored eyes surveyed with disdain the scruffy redbrick layabouts who nearly filled the Cultural Saloon, the nose twitched at them.

This either-sexed ancient of the passage quoted, aptly called Dr. Tiresias, sets the tone of the novel, although the reader is not aware of it at once.

Gradually, as events unfold, we find Paul detaching himself from his silhouette against the bright red background of farce and communism. The comedy of his ruinous venture, so diverting to the reader, forces him to a personal crisis through which he becomes a man. His doubt of his masculinity, repeatedly hinted at in the early chapters but overwhelmed by