

and REVIEWS

National Book Award Winners

The ninth annual National Book Awards were presented March 12, to the most distinguished American books of fiction, non-fiction and poetry written in the past year.

John Cheever received the fiction award for his novel, "The Wapshot Chronicle." Catherine Drinker Bowen received the non-fiction award for "The Lion and the Throne." Robert Penn Warren received the poetry award for his book "Promises: Poems 1954-1955."

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A Henry Adams Reader

Henry Adams (1872-1918) was one of the most versatile writers of any other age, and "The Henry Adams Reader" is a fair sampling of both his versatility and wide range of interests. Adams was a journalist, novelist, essayist, translator, poet, biographer, a traveler, a medievalist and a close observer of both the world and himself. His active mind ranged over religion from Buddha to the Virgin of Chartres; from "A Law of Acceleration" to "The Rule of Phase Applied to History." In short, he was a renaissance man born out of his time and in the wrong country.

ALTHOUGH he had sufficient wealth to live as he pleased and to indulge his interests, Adams was not a dilettante. He was a searcher. He sought those things which would make his life interesting and meaningful. He found much of interest and became himself one of the most interesting men of his time; but in his eighty years of living, he never found

Edited by Elizabeth Stevenson. 392 pp. New York, Doubleday & Co. \$5.

Reviewed by Byron Farwell

the wisdom he sought to make his life completely meaningful. Elizabeth Stevenson has edited her book with care, bringing out as many facets of Adams' writing and intellectual and spiritual gropings as the space of the book allowed. One finishes the book with the feeling that more has been left out—indeed it has—and with a desire to re-read his famous "Education of Henry Adams" and find other unread works of this curious and fascinating American. As well as the avowed purpose of Miss Stevenson's efforts, the book must be judged a success.

ADAMS' youthful meeting with Garibaldi in Sicily, a letter from Samoa written in 1890 in which he describes his meeting with Robert Lewis Stevenson, an interesting account of the battle of Tippecanoe, and a questioning of the sometimes conflicting accounts of Captain John Smith all are to be found in "A Henry Adams Reader." The price is five dollars—and well worth it, too.

A Place Without Twilight

This first novel by Peter S. Feibleman is tragedy in the Greek style. All the characters except Cille, the heroine, are engulfed by inexorable fate. They do not shape their future; it is already foreordained.

The setting of the story is the colored section of New Orleans in the 1930's and '40's where Cille and her two brothers, Dan and Clarence, have the misfortune to be born almost white.

Mama's color, however, was "close as black can get to night." As a result, the children are social outcasts, ostracized by their own race and patronized by the whites.

THE NOVEL is at its best in the early chapters when Cille is a child trying to find her way in an alien world. Here she tells the story of her life in stylized, poetic prose.

On her father reading Keats aloud, she says: "... then he began on a long poem and I got lost in his voice. It rolled and tingled and hushed up the day. First, it was something you held on to, and then it was all over you—a world of itself. It was morning and midnight in one, the sun around the moon, and it was the only thing that was important, while it was.

By Peter S. Feibleman. 382 pp. Cleveland and New York, The World Publishing Company. \$4.75.

Reviewed by Josephine Mason

God, a practice Cille found difficult to understand.

"MAMA SAID our blood and our color made the cross which God put on us in this life."

"But sooner or later everybody likes to know what they are. I never had a chance to see why I didn't fit. I only knew I didn't."

"Supposing it ain't His fault neither. Maybe He had assistant ones who botched it up monkeying around with people's colors and things. That would make sense. I know what they are. Of the tight-knit family group that Mama tried so desperately to shield, only Cille outlives Mama, Papa, Dan and Clarence are one by one destroyed by a world they are powerless to fight.

THE UNADULTERED sadness of Cille's tale becomes ponderous in the second part of the book, though the writing is still imaginative, and in places quite beautiful. In this reviewer's opinion, there are few Negroes without the gift of laughter. Yet, in all the 382 pages there is not one hint of humor.

Perhaps it is for this reason that Cille, though she maintains her integrity to the end, never becomes a live, vivid personality. She is at her best describing others and Dan, Mama, Clarence and "our father" are all unforgettable characters.

THE AUTHOR has not attempted to give any answers to the race problem; he has simply stated the case history of one family who were unable to cope with their surroundings. There was nothing they could do. They were doomed before they were born.

There is no doubt that Peter Feibleman is a young writer of great promise. However, he has apparently never learned the wisdom of a Latin proverb: "Laugh, if you are wise—for the man who laughs is the man who knows the truth."

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Edit With Lead

By George Madison Grooms. 196 pp. New York. The Macmillan Co. \$3.25.

Reviewed by Tom Phillips

The publisher's blurb on the dust jacket describes "Edit With Lead" as an "offbeat western" which "delivers enough excitement to satisfy the most demanding reader."

This is so right! Author George Madison Grooms apparently is out to become the Mickey Spillane of the Western novel. In the first six pages of his novel, his hero, John Wallace, reveals that he killed a man who objected to having Wallace make love to his beautiful wife; gets involved in a gun fight in which one man is killed and Wallace is created as a bullet; and also gets picked up by a beautiful girl who spends the rest of the novel leading him in and out of Wallace's bed while betraying him to his enemies at the same time.

WALLACE allegedly is a newspaperman. After killing the irate husband, he finds Omaha too hot for him and buys a partnership in a newspaper in Nevada. This paper, the Union Eagle Weekly, has been smashed by the local hoodlums who also killed the former editor for crusading against crime.

Wallace gets the paper going again and when not writing blazing editorials denouncing the local bad guys he is busy hunting off, or accepting the advances of, beautiful girls. He also drinks a lot, runs for political office and shoots it out with the bad guys almost daily.

HE ALSO absorbs a terrific amount of punishment. He gets shot, never fatally, and he gets beat up. But none of this abuse, which would have claimed the lives of a dozen normal men, fazes John Wallace. In fact, he gets shot in the head once but, instead of taking to his bed, he casually brushes the blood out of his eyes and admires the legs of a passing girl.

In "Edit With Lead," author Grooms has developed an entirely new genre of novel. The book combines the mystery, anti-fur, detective, and conventional western schools into a pot-pourri that ought to earn honors as the silliest novel of the year.

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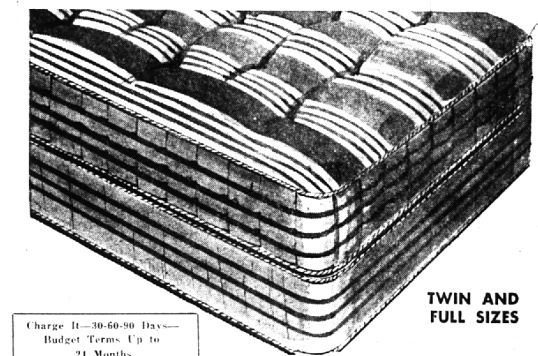
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