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GOLLANCZ



Thursday, September 28, 1972

By Anthony Powell

Aubrey and the Dying Lady: a Beardsley Riddle. By Malcolm Easton. (Secker & Warburg. £4.50). Le Morte Darthur. By Sir Thomas Malory. Illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley. (Dent. £12.)

Aubrey Beardsley (1872-98), mittedly one of them. duced, an artist of international achievement.

Cezanne landscape or an ab- what result. stract by Jackson Pollock.

20, still echoes Burne-Jones. drag" by his sister Mabel?

by Malcolm Easton in "Aubrey and the Dying Lady." This is certainly the best study of its equally required. He can praise Beardsley, show his exceptional gifts, without disparagin; those amongst whom he moved like Wilde, who knew himself no match for Beardsley where the arts were concerned.

There are, of course, those who can see in Beardsley no more than sneering masked faces. pierrots, dwarfs, hermaphrodites, but (setting aside his marvellous drawing) the myriads of imitators (specially numerous in Germany) thing approaching his "moral vision, his deep and biting irony. lot one could ever be mistaken for a genuine Beardsley by those spoken of as a ne'er-do-well,

Naturally the question arises in Mr Easton's book of Beardshas been suggested - I thin insensitively—that he was homo sexual. There can be no doub tha' he attracted homosexuals. sometimes he wrote them what seem rather flirtatious letters and he was, when dying, saved

DAVID MORRELL

"... all blood and ample evidence

that David Morrell is all storyteller'

- New York Times Book Review

October 5

BARRIE & JENKINS

24 Highbury Crescent London N5 IRX

a masterly new novel by Susan Hill

- Margaret Drabble, Evening Standard

A John Bull of a book... HE

THE RESERVE THE PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF THE

- Auberon Waugh. Spectator

Hamish Hamilton

A. J. P. Taylor, Observer

RICHARD FALKIRK'S

'This most unusual and excellent novel . . . Miss Hill

does an enormous service to the cause of truth in English

'She has the gift which is worth everything else, the gift of

writing books that one has to read, compulsively, to the end."

THIS year (Aug. 21) was the from absolute penury by the centenary of the birth of generosity of Raffalovich, ad-

the greatest pen-draftsman As against that, Beardsley himthis country has ever pro- self, more or less in so many sexual. Certainly he went on jaunts to Brussels and elsewhere Beardsley was, a great illus- with his publisher Smithers, trator, a term that has been where the goal would have been used in a derogatory sense, women, though no doubt prostithough absurdly, since most of tutes. There seems no evidence the Old Masters regar ed illust that Beardsley ever claimed anytration as an essential aspect of one remotely to be described as their art. It is, however, true a "regular girl-friend" - still that where, 'say, Breughel or less "boy-fiend" - though Goya are in question, "what the efforts to seduce him by Ada

Something else is indicated in Bursting on to the world at a letter to another of his pubthe age of 20 as illustrator of lishers, John Lane. "I'm going had, already appeared at 10 as a Restaurant, off Piccadilly] on masical prodigy. If his health Thursday night dressed up as THE difficulty of writing they may contain a grain of per- water sessions with cronies on

Beardsley's death from tuber- Mabel Beardsley, a year older line." cular disease at 25 showing no than her brother, a beauty, an hind scanty biographical mate- an extraordinary person. She always from celestial thoughts died in 1916. She is the "Dying to the affairs of what he calls title of Mr Easton's book.

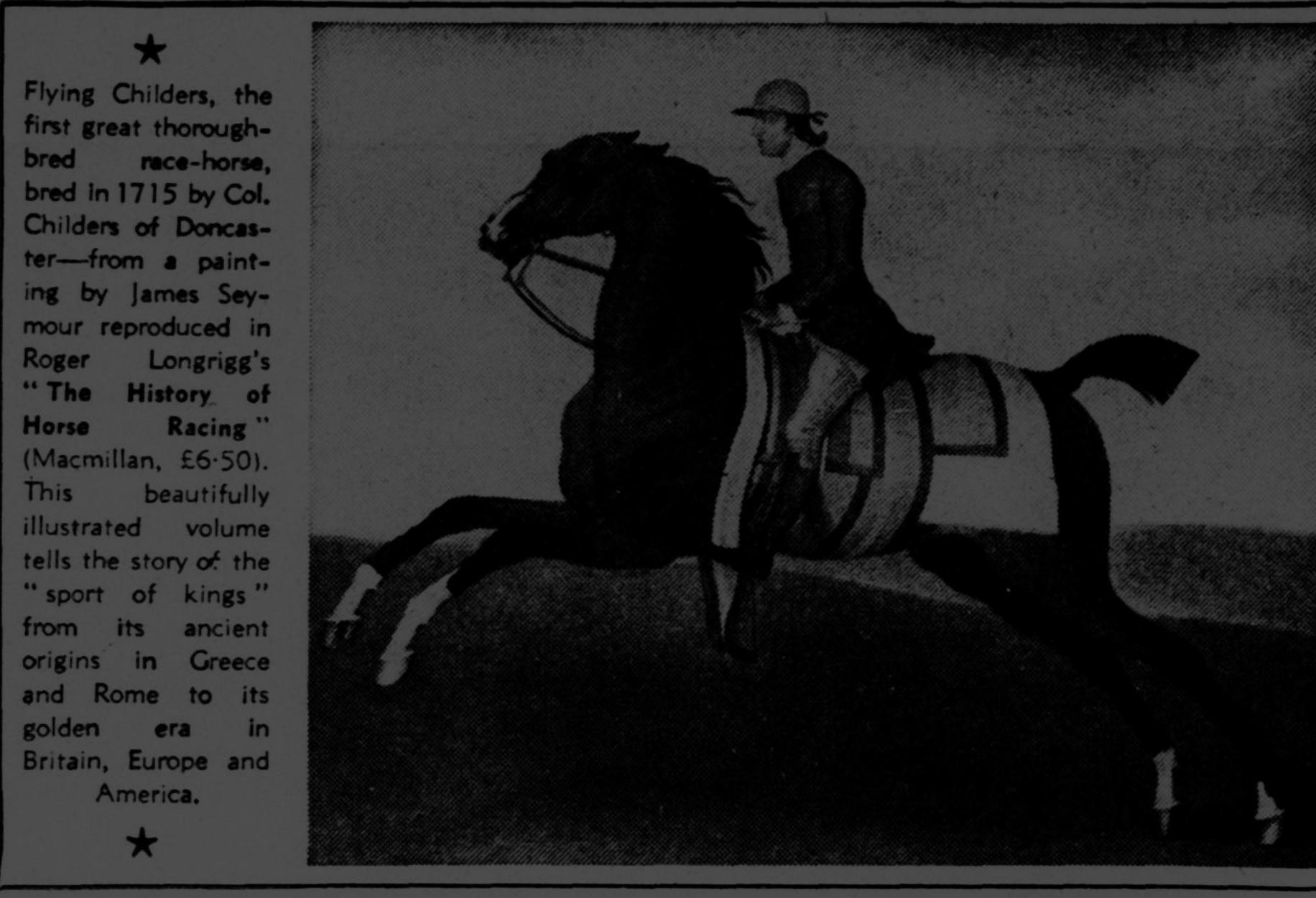
tionship? There can be no deplores his own weakness and mocked.

There seems reliable evidence This first volume of his

Beardsley's father, usually emerges with glowing testimonfather (a well-to-do brewer) one children were brought up as the could be won, or earthly solution Highest of High Anglicans. This found." played a great part in Beardssion to Roman Catholicism being idge cannot co-exist. He is Puck, no last minute hustle into reli- not Thersites. The charm of his quite keep it up. painful yet fascinating questions, kindness plus a dash of malice ideals, but can find no cause

first great thoroughrace-horse, bred in 1715 by Col. Childers of Doncaster-from a painting by James Seymour reproduced in Roger Longrigg's "The History of Horse Racing (Macmillan, £6.50). This beautifully llustrated volume tells the story of the "sport of kings" from its ancient

America.



artist meant" takes rather a Leverson, "the Sphinx," are different form from, say, a alleged. We do not know with Cezanne landscape or an ab- what result.

"Le Morte Darthur" Beardsley to Jimmie's [the St James's Chronicles of Wasted Time: the Green Stick. By Malcolm Muggeridge. (Collins. £3.)

doubt whatever that mutual carnality. He is a man who that he will never find it.

responsible (never very credible) age of 30. It covers a Socialist up his street platform for the of them is done with such fine are specifically denied by Mr boyhood as son of Croydon's faithful, and had Scotch and tenderness and sympathy. Easton on available evidence. first Labour councillor, life at One would guess that nothing of Cambridge, three years as teachthe sort ever took place, but Mr er at a Christian college in aston draws attention to Southern India and later in Beardsley's undoubted preoccu- Egypt, enlistment into journalpation with pictures of embryos. ism and a freelance visit to Russia in 1932 with his wife, RIAN GLANVILLE starts undertaken with the idea of settling there for good. The illu- fascinating thesis, a disreputials from Crowley's Alton Ale sion was soon destroyed (remark- able set of characters-the Stores. Was Aleister Crowley's able that a natural sceptic should Jews sharp and vulgar, the of the directors? The Beardsley the idea "that any earthly battle

A gloomy conclusion? But abroad, the writing flags. ley's life, his deathbed conver- depression and Malcolm Mugger- Like Portnoy, Glanville can't gion, brought about by Raffalo- personality is that perpetual Zeke Vine, son of an East vich. Mr Easton is admirable in enthusiasm and curiosity we End orthodox Rabbi, shows real the way he deals with many have seen on the box, as with chutzpah. To begin with he has

By Julian Symons

Had allowed, he might well have a tart, and mean to have a about Malcolm Mug- manent truth. become a professional musician. regular spree." Was he pulling geridge's memoirs is that he "The Green Stick" is brilli-"Le Morte Darthur," a facsi- fact that transvestites are by has made all the best com- antly amusing, immensely lively, were his mentors, the Webbe mile of the third, includes three no means necessarily homo ments himself. Suggest that full of zest. It contains several additional drawings, and the sexual-and this was (if carried he feels a passionate attach- comic portraits of Labour and cover Beardsley missbelt. Many out) undoubtedly a rag-another ment to the publicity media liberal worthies, seen perhaps of the designs are magnificent, question arises, which is the crux he condemns as at best with malice plus a dash of kindthough the figure-work, aston- of Mr Easton's study. Was ephemeral, at worst plain lies, ness. Here are beautiful elonishing as it is for an artist of Beardsley accompanied "in and he immediately agrees. gated Beatrice Webb, whose 20, still echoes Burne-Jones. drag" by his sister Mabel? "Pulp to pulp-this was my and her plump little husband, bubbly - oozing, glistening sign of failing powers left be- actress of some note, was also Point out that he returns Kingsley Martin, pompous C. P. Scott riding his bicycle

excellently sifted and arranged Lady" of Yeats's poem, and the plastic, vulgar, destructive streets. The whole Fabian Bloomsbury liberal culture you to a dozen places where he anatomised and sparklingly him in this volume is a meeting This determined excoriation of devotion felt by Beardsley and longs for certainties but lives by causes and people with whom he is sister went far beyond feel- doubt. He detests dictators, but has been closely associated leads ings between most brothers and sometimes gives the impression back to the Socialist boyhood sisters. It should be noted that that he hates slide-rule Socialist which is the most moving part Beardsley (considering the text- theorists even more. His life of the book. The relationship book psychology of his situation), has been a quest for truth, between the first Labour counwas by no means obsessed with undertaken with the assurance cillor, who later became briefly

an MP, and his son is done with that Mabel Beardsley had a mis- "Chronicles of Wasted Time" Muggeridge senior was an old- containing the message "Vote carriage in her early twenties. which he entitles "The Green style Socialist (a figure no less For Muggeridge." It is the more Suggestions that her brother was Stick," takes the quest up to the absurd than the Webbs) who set remarkable that his re-creation

"The Financiers" with a

-and everything in the City

promises to be fine. Unfor-

tunately when the action goes

attracted to Trotsky, and his

"synthesis," and when, under

Types of Ambiguity," Zeke sets

disappointingly peremptory.

15 pages, yet.

Saturday nights to talk about the overthrow of capitalism. Ruskin. Carlyle and William Morri and Tawney his guides.

The portrait of this good little man, catching the Workmen's Train up from Penge every morning to sit on his high stool in the City, met off the train almost every evening by his adoring son, taking his children or country walks or bicycle rides at the weekends ("Just look at those trees! What a view across The last glimpse we have of

with Malcolm at Naples, on his return from India, "his bowler hat on his head, and that look about him that I knew and loved so well, of expectancy, a bovisl conviction that something won derful was going to happen." In a sense the whole of Malcolm's later life can be seen as an attempt to cancel out those years of nationalist hope and belief when he licked down envelopes

RECENT FICTION

By David

Benedictus

Glanville. (Secker & War-

Anna Apparent. By Nina

Harriet said . . . By Beryl

The Love Bite. By David

Jackarandy. By Leo Madigan.

frailties and fallibilities of mere

"Anna Apparent" is a sara-

on the rocks, Anna grows up

punished by the car crash which

Miss Bawden's scalpel is sharp.

Sale. (W. H. Allen. £2.)

Bainbridge. (Duckworth.

Bawden. (Longman. £2.)

burg. £1.95.)

(Elek. £1.95.)

£2·35.)

the influence of LSD, he has is described as having "often

an eloquent vision about the used literature as a sounding

power of money to free both board for life." Miss Bawder

workers and bosses from their tends towards the literary at the

chains, the concept of Creative expense of the lively, but her

Capitalism is born. All this in merciless ability to pin down the

And when Zeke, and through mortals makes her dryness for-

In association with his partner into a serious young woman

Jake Frank, fat poet-financier whose Cockney origins are re-

from Manhattan, whom we first pressed by the worldliness of

out for Kabul, where he converts Always anxious to please, she

men. What do they sell? An in- riage, then marries the appalling

surance-linked offshore trust ly smug Giles herself. Pardon-

fund with the slogan: "Money ably unfaithful to him, Anna i.

Such edgy satire gives way to -as I have mentioned before

it comes, culminating in a riot rative she has manipulated those

at Madison Square Gardens, it's who in her life manipulated her.

Lots of anger, lots of ideas, and her surgery deft; the oper-

ONE of the characters in extremely original and discon-

meet reading Empson's "Seven her foster-mother.

TELLING THEIR OWN STORIES

By David Holloway

Escape from the Shadows. By Robin Maugham. (Hodder. £3.50.)

The World in Ripeness. By H. E. Bates. (Michael Joseph. £3.)

THERE are roughly speaking two ways in which a novelist can write his autobiography. He can either produce a novel of his life with the events smoothed down or roughed up to make a better read or he can provide a sketch book giving the background in which he came to think up his plots.

Shadows" Robin Maugham employs the first method, while half malicious, about these two H. E. Bates in a third, very slim "shadows" take only a part of slice of autobiography, "The this sizeable autobiography. The World in Ripeness", uses the main theme is to show how these second. A pity this, for the first two played their part in making two volumes, very much novels the author what he is, a not of his life, were more enter- particularly happy bi-sexual with

The "Shadows" in Lord . laugham's life were the austere figure of his father who tended to treat his son in childhood as a hostile witness and as a young man as someone appealing a very bad case, and the glamorous and slightly scandalous figure of his Uncle Willy, Somerset Maugham, a daunting presence for any young writer to have in the background.

Lord Maugham has already recorded something about these two in "Somerset and All the Lord Maugham's exciting ac-Maughams" but now he goes count of his war in a tank in into further detail, as well as the Western Desert, his woundrepeating some of his best ing and invaliding out with stories. If it is true that Willy shrapnel lodged (and to this day sent his pander, Gerald Haxton, still lodged) in his brain and his appears now as an even more dislikeable figure. Maugham's father, for all his lack of capacity for inspiring or giving affection, certainly to me, reappears in a better light, though it was monstrous of him even to try to suppress his son's first novel because he disapproved fit.

I like particularly the story of his buying a car, although he could not drive, and being shown how things worked by a mechanic between London and Reading and then sending the man back and continuing to Bath alone. True he removed both mudguards but he made it. And there is a splendid story

other on to dangerous experi-

ments with a tragic and vulner-

Harriet said he was like the

witch in Hansel and Gretel, who had a house made of

sweets and candy, only instead

who was made of sugar.

through and through."

they are all too credible.

of a house it was he himself

"If we broke a piece off him,"

she said, "even a bit of his

little finger, it would be sweet

novel was submitted remarked:

"What repulsive little creatures

you have made the two central

characters, repulsive almost be-

yond belief!" He was wrong-

CANNIBALISM in fiction (pace

Evelyn Waugh) retains its power

to shock. David Sale in "The

Love Bite" envisages a time

when the mentally subnormal

will be bred and kept alive

solely to feed the rest of us-

they may not be subnormal

sanity," it was hard to bring one-

KEIRON DORRITY is a mer-

chant seaman, extremely able-

bodied, who returns a hero from

job stoking the boilers at a num-

between drunken benders, homo-

sexual orgies, and consoling the

wife of his best friend killed

in the disaster, writing the

Great Novel of the Sea. He

also writes a journal, which

forms the bulk of "Jackarandy."

is contrasted with the squalour

of his whoredom, his gaiety,

The tranquility of the convent

nery (!), and works away, in

self to care.

ruption.

of Willy writing him a silly letter saying the two of them might be confused like Shake-speare and Bacon. The first Lord Maugham replied:

Dear Willie, You may be right in think-ing that you write like Shakes-peare. Certainly I have noticed an adulation of your name in the more vulgar portions of the

popular press. But one word of brotherly advice. Do not attempt the sonnets. Stories, half affectionate and a greater affection for young

men than young women. We are told of his refusing seduction at his prep. school but accepting it at Eton. When later he shared a lover with his uncle, it is possible to feel mild distaste, not so much at the incident which does not seem to have done either of them much harm, and certainly none to the male prostitute involved, but because the author found it necessary to tall the story.

Of less prurient interest is subsequent intelligence work in the Arab countries.

few years ago Lord Maugham, staying at a new hotel at the suggestion of T. S. Eliot, was buried in the rubble after the Agadir earthquake. He was extraordinarily lucky to survive. The stories, indeed, throughout are good, so much so that one could wish that the author had had that slice of luck and success that would have enabled him to remove the strong strain of self pity.

H. E. Bates had that slice of luck. Hilary St George Saunders conceived the brilliant idea of recruiting Mr Bates to the R.A.F. as short-story writer. He was sent to various air force stations to live in the mess and listen to aircrew and then write fiction. This led to the series of "Flying Officer X" stories which greatly Lagnified Mr Bates's reputation and later led to the novels, "Fair Stood the Wind for France" and "The Purple able victim whom they nickname

Mr Bates writes of his war with some gusto (on the whole Miss Bainbridge's imagination ever have nursed it), and with it govim hypocritical and thick The Financiers. By Brian is dark, her landscapes — it must have been one of the Formby, Lancs, just after the most pleasant of service careers) last war-reek and threaten, and shows how he turned hints and her images smell of corfrom here and there and casual meetings into finished prose. His post-war life seems perhaps to have bored him a little as an autobiographer.

> The author does say how he came to invent the Larkin family though I wish he would not describe these undoubtedly successful though rather vulgar novels as Chaucerian. They One publisher to whom this

Dramatists in outline

By John Barber

Modern World Drama: an Encyclopedia. By Myron Matlaw. (Secker & Warburg. £8.75.)

THIS monumental compendium is as easy to read as it is heavy to hold (3lb 10oz). It is up-to-date enough to include Despite its sensational sub- references to drama in 1971, but ject and readability—it belts the bulk of the work consists of along at a great pace—this is a synopses, and I have not found tawdry novel, and its heroine, a one later than 1968. The author, sensual little beast, remains an America professor of remarkshadowy. Although at one point able industry, has a forgivable "the burden of unbearable tendency to feature old Broadyearning and horror" sent her way hits like "Dinner at 8"

"tottering over the brink of (which rates two pages). No play by Joe Orton, Peter Nichols, or David Storey gets a separate entry, though all these writers are treated briefly, and ample space is given to major dramatists of the period. There are synopses of virtually all an explosion at sea. He takes a Shaw's plays, besides 40 by Strindberg and almost as many by Brecht.

To take a random sample, full synopses are provided of Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?", Wedekind's "Spring's Awakening," and all of Coward's nine "Tonight at 8.30" playlets. What practical use is a play

synopsis? It helps to recall a half-forgotten evening and is no substitute for 10 minutes with the text. But I found myself skipping the useful biographies Madigan settles his debts to an individual touch and are en-Genet, Montsarrat, and a host livened with juicy scraps of the of other curiously assorted original dialogue. Unputdown-

innocence and zeal ("to write simple things simply . . ."—if only we could!) with the victims so as to remind myself exactly for a mere 147 pages of text, he leaves scattered in his wake. what happened to Giraudoux's "Jackarandy," rude, exuberant, Ondine" or the hero of shapeless and clumsy marks a Andreev's fascinating début, and when Leo Slapped." These outlines have

creditors, he might do anything. able.

One man v. the SS

The Odessa File. By Frederick Forsyth. (Hutchinson. £2.) IT hardly needs to be recalled rocket warheads of nuclear that "The Day of the Jackal" waste and bubonic plague with was what its publishers call, for which Odessa is supplying the

once without exaggeration, "a Egyptians. phenomenal success." What is even more phenomenal is that Frederick Forsyth looks like achieving the same thing with his second book.

concentration camps. Some- last second of the 59th minute thing he reads in it makes him of the 11th hour, a piece of decide to hunt down and des- timing which I rather boggled troy the SS captain who had at swallowing. been in charge.

He is soon approached by a member of Mossad, the Israeli Intelligence Service, who offers to help him infiltrate an organihe is prepared to pass on to them anything he learns of convincing.

Odessa activities. In particular the Israelis are concerned about

Miller's faked credentials are accepted by Odessa, but being a pig-headed young man he disobeys Israeli orders and sticks to his very distinctive car, thus Peter Miller is an enterprising putting the SS on his track, young Hamburg journalist who and soon the hunter becomes gets possession of the diary of the hunted. He is saved only a former victim of one of the by a timely intervention at the

But that is the only criticism I can make of a superbly exciting story. Mr Forsyth's research has been so painstaking that everything else—SS atrocities, the sufferings of correcties, sation of former SS men in Ger- the sufferings of concentration many, the Odessa of the title, if camp victims, the reactions of

Violet Grant

his delicacy and intellectual he questions holders of the most worthy of them. He flirts with appreciation always tempered bizarre beliefs in the hope (of Zionism, but the kibbutz disawith good sense and good jokes. course always disappointed) that points him. He studies student An unwanted child's

The Case of Mary Bell. By Gitta Sereny. (Eyre Methuen. £2.75.)

cause you have made it so dangerous she is!" nice . . . love, May."

attempted to give Mary away? Throughout this ghastly

passion and sincerity (constantly

turbed and twisted mind.

into the kids' lives and circum- topical in the light of Myra under his rich, fertile topsoil. stances." And the matron at Hindley's "walk."

Master potters

THE "Illustrated Guide" subject. Extensive details of chiefly to the 19th century—and comprehensive illustration of the purchasing range of a fair number of people. Mr Godden ment to the Ridgway dynasty in

& Jenkins, £6). Through one branch of the family it descends directly from Job Ridgway in 1792 to Ridgway Potteries (now part of Allied English Potteries) today, while another branch has been absorbed (on the porcelain side) in the ample bosom of Coalport and (on the earthenware side)

series edited by Geoffrey history, pattern books and

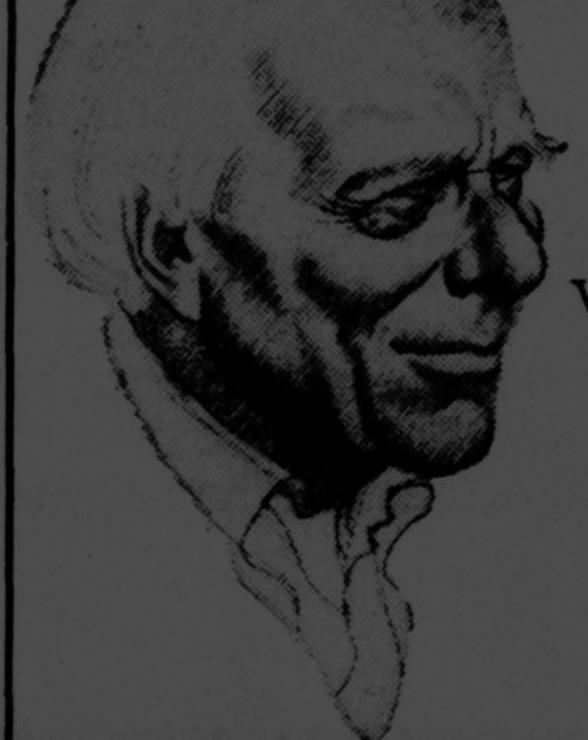
& Johnson, another outstanding producer of stone-china services.

way brothers often succeeded in recapturing some of the rococo virtues of a century earlier without too much of the fussiness and sentimentality which marred the work of many potters. Mr Godden's researches have greatly enlarged the range of products which can be attributed with certainty to Ridgways. This enlargement can only enhance Ridgway's reputation.

Bawden's intriguing new novel, girls of 13 and 14 who egg each

Are they worth collectors' interest? Assuredly, yes. What the Ridgways produced was at all times of great technical excellence. They could rival anyone in the luxurious if often heavy elegance of the early 19th century. They were one of the keenest contenders with Mason's in the early years of stone-china, and also absorbed Hicks Meigh

One of the greatest SUNDAY TIMES CHRONICLES



Vol. 1 The Green Stick

In mid-century both the Ridg-

Who would guess this to be the letter of an 11-year-old psychopath, the strangler of two tiny boys, written a couple of days before the conclusion of that nine-day trial in Newcastle in December, 1968? Assuming the presence of some allpowerful impulse (murder of a stranger is rare), were these killings the symbolic assault of a severely rejected child. Mary had once said, "I like hurting tle things that cannot fight

back "-perhaps the cry of her own hurt when she was small. This is not simply the case of Mary Bell. What went wrong ith Betty Bell to turn her into the suicidal mother who twice

Zeke Glanville, turns his caustic midable. ' DEAR God . . . I would the remand home: "She was a eve upon the City, battle is truly like to thank you for the perfectly normal child if one joined, and shareholders' meet- bande of a book in which we springtime . . . and for the but knew how to handle her; ings, stockbrokers and merchant follow the career of Anna, an world being a lovely place be- all this hysteria about how banks shudder under his mortar- evacuee child, whose mother fire. (The novel also contains killed in the blitz. Rescued from either! some startling investment a sadistic farmer by Crystal, a theories which should make us pampered lady with a marriage The unobvious indications-

the petrifying stare, the bizarre grin and the non-reaction to affective situations which, to the acute observer, could be giveaway signs of the deadly dangerous, anti-social personality—all merest flicker of excitement would be aroused by a sober dynamic force of young sales- down of Crystal's son Giles's mar-

Among other fundamental legal issues, Gitta Sereny questions whether children should 'face the awesome formality of an assize court." One wonders, too, whether the less sophistichronicle, narrated with com- cated jurors would grasp the judge's involved summing-up, a brusque what they used to call ation succeeds, but the patient reminded though one is of Miss Sereny ends on a shrewdly muscular style, a love/hate rela- never really comes alive. of evil"), what strikes most danger" is that Mary "may suc- erful, distinguish Glanville's observation by those closest to her that she has changed . . . Mary Bell. Her teachers: long before such an assumption little deeper; he might find some Beryl Bainbridge for Duckbetter not poke too deeply is safe for her and others." How fascinating old bones buried worth's greed in charging £2.35

Godden is performing a useful artists virtually all stem from service in researching deeply research into first sources. The into the potters who belong 152 plates represent the first who may therefore come within Ridgway wares. "Ridgway Porcelains" (Barrie

in Cauldon Bristol Potteries.

This is the first book on the