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SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEW

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN by Ray Bradbury, drawings by Joe Mugnaini, Doubleday, New York, 250 pp., \$3.00.

IN THE long-awaited anthology of Bradbury short stories, science-fiction readers can take heart from the fact that hardened reviewers, enchanted by the author's poetic prose, are giving science-fiction more than a passing nod.

This collection contains some exceptional short stories, a few of which are readily recognized as science-fiction, set as they are in the challenging world of tomorrow. Most reviewers agreed on the merit of *The Pedestrian*, *The Murderer*, *The Wilderness*, *A Sound of Thunder* and the title-story of the collection. More subtle, perhaps, are the beguiling fantasy, *April Witch*, the story of an adolescent witch who wants to taste human love and *Embroidery*, which we found an effective parable of the Three Fates and the A-Bomb.

However, the most important science-fiction story of them all, as we see it, might easily have escaped notice. It would take an *aficionado* to spot it.

The Flying Machine, set not in the world of tomorrow, but in the shadow of China's Great Wall, circa 400 A.D., tells the fable of the first man in China to fly. Equipped with a flimsy structure of bamboo, paper and reeds, the inventor's only concern is that he has, indeed, made like a bird. The Emperor whose responsibility it is to plan for the future, sees in the discovery a threat to the security which the Great Wall represents. The flying machine serves to illustrate the eternal conflict between progress and security. How far security can be insured at the expense of progress is not yesterday's problem alone; it is today's, and surely tomorrow's as well. And this may well be the most significant contribution of the science-fiction genre: to point to these conflicts which have dogged the steps of man from the caves of Cro Magnon to the craters of Luna, and to present them as effectively and entertainingly as Mr. Bradbury can do.

A word of praise to the illustrator here: his line as poetic as Mr. Bradbury's prose, and his sensitive drawings add greatly to the beauty of the book.—P.J.

Answers to Quiz on page 121

1-e, 2-i, 3-l, 4-k, 5-h, 6-d, 7-j, 8-b, 9-g, 10-a, 11-f, 12-c.



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By J. E. Thompson, B.S. in E.E., A.M., Dept. of Mathematics, Pratt Institute

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