

her spouse at annual intervals. There is a pirate raid, the Princess Zel is kidnapped, and with Tangaloo held as hostage Barneveldt sets off to rescue the damsel from the Osirian dinosaur who is currently bossing the pirates and running a dope factory.

All this is recounted with the author's broad humor and taste for contrast, but I regret to report that it reads more like a travelogue—perhaps one of Igor Shtain's—than an experience on a strange world. I'm afraid Sprague de Camp is far too civilized a person and a writer to believe in either strangeness or skulduggery, so that he fails to get the impression of reality that less sophisticated and less polished writers often convey. Even so, it's fun and one of Avolon's best in quite a while.

LORD OF THUNDER, by Andre Norton. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York. 1962. 192 pp. \$3.25.

Here we go again with another Miller paean of praise for an Andre Norton interplanetary adventure yarn, this time a sequel to "The Beast Master." Hosteen Storm, the young Navaho whose rapport with his animal and bird companions was so well developed in the earlier book, is asked to undertake a mission into "the Blue" beyond the farthest explored ranges, where a lifeboat is thought to be down. But this is the very region to which all the Norbies—the horned natives of Arzor—have been summoned for a great powwow of civilized and savage tribes alike. It is a region of mystery and magic, where an ancient race once had a hidden stronghold and where remnants of the Xik, the alien foes who destroyed Earth before they were themselves destroyed, may still be hiding.

Of course Hosteen Storm does go into the Blue and does encounter mysteries of the Norbies and of the Ancient Ones. He solves the fate of the lifeboat and the reason for the Norbie migration. As has been pointed out in an excellent article in the fanzine, *Salamander*—which I have no business or intention of discussing here—Miss Norton's plots are simple, and intended for teenage readers, though most of her science fiction has been very properly reprinted as adult fare.

I keep raving over these books simply because I read them for the "plus" values that are in every one of them, quite apart from the maneuverings of the plot. I am not much concerned with what is going to happen next, but with *how* and *why* it happens and what the happening will do to fill in the incomparably rich tapestry the author is weaving. In this book we get glimpses of the intricate society of the Norbies, and with Hosteen Storm begin to understand them as people whose world is being usurped by mankind—as the America of Hosteen's Indian ancestors was usurped centuries before by European invaders. We learn more about Arzor, completely strange and completely real, unlike Earth even in its similarities. We get more brief, vivid, paradoxical glimpses of the mighty lost civilization of the Ancient Ones.

Most important, to me at least, is the fact that as fully and richly as

Andre Norton paints her pictures and weaves her tapestries of other worlds, she always leaves something for the reader to fill in—a chance for an unexercised imagination, dulled on TV gunfights, to stretch itself and come to the very important understanding that there is always something more to know and unsuspected ways or finding out. The very fact that all the loose ends are never neatly and explicitly tied up in the last chapter gives these stories a value far beyond the average. Or so I will continue to believe, while I enjoy what I am shown of worlds as real as ours.

THE SCIENCE-FICTIONAL SHERLOCK HOLMES, edited by Robert C. Peterson. The Council of Four, 2845 South Gilpin St., Denver 10, Colorado. 1960. 137 pp. \$3.00.

By vagaries of the mails, my original comments on this fascinating little volume seem never to have reached your editor. Meanwhile it has also developed that the original \$5.00 price was wrong—so here we go again.

The volume at hand represents a hybridization of two interlocking enthusiasms, the disciples of Sherlock Holmes and science fiction fandom. As Anthony Boucher points out in his introduction, Holmes was a scientific detective and some of his most potent adversaries were scientists. The pastiches and Holmes-related yarns in this collection, however, are all by authors identified with the science fiction and fantasy fields. In Poul Anderson's "The Martian Crown Jewels," for example, the mystery of the missing jewels is solved by Syaloch of the Street of Those Who Prepare Nourishment in Ovens, a Martian emulator of the great detective. In "The Adventure of the Misplaced Hound," by Anderson and Gordon Dickson, those inimitable hazards to sanity, the Hokas, become Holmes and Watson when there is a mystery to be unraveled. And in "The Return," by H. Beam Piper and John J. McGuire—published here in 1954—we have an excellent "straight" story in which explorers surveying the wreckage of a post-atomic-holocaust civilization come upon a vigorous center of culture here at Pittsburgh, based on a strange group of Sacred Books.

Anthony Boucher has himself contributed two stories: the very short "The Greatest Tertian," in which scholars of the far future try to unravel the puzzle of Sherk Oms and Sherk Sper, and "The Anomaly of the Empty Man," a science-fictional mystery solved by one Dr. Verner, a relative of Holmes' on his mother's side. Mack Reynolds and August Derleth have collaborated in two of the adventures of that most Holmesian of non-Holmeses, Solar Pons: "The Adventure of the Snith in Time," in which Pons comes to grips with the theft of a set of Pogo originals via time-machine, and "The Adventure of the Ball of Nostradamus," in which the problem is tampering with the future.

Grand fun, let me assure you—whether you are a follower of Holmes or not. But dig Holmes and you'll enjoy the book all the more.