

ing directly to adults and children, inviting interchange of thoughts and information. The questions do not allow complacency. The topics develop naturally as the child is first invited to examine his/her body and decide what he likes best about it. Emphasis is on developing a sense of pleasure in oneself.

The chapter on masturbation comes disturbingly close to being a how-to-manual; yet, it conveys to the child that there is a normality to this behaviour which may be comforting. The chapter on partners simply and matter-of-factly explains different sexual preferences. Again text and illustration necessarily complement each other and enhance the objectivity.

A kid's first book about sex is good at what it does. However, its promotion will require a risk-taker in the school library world. Perhaps it will be most enjoyed when purchased personally and shared with a child who is judged ready by those who know him/her best.

Barbara Graham is library consultant for the London Board of Education. She has lectured on children's and young adult's literature at Western's Faculty of Education for several years.

CLOTHES AND BUTTONS: HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The last great frontiersman, Leland Stowe. Paperjacks, Ltd., 1983. 253 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-7701-0251-4; ***Terry Fox: his story***, Leslie Scrivener. McClelland and Stewart, 1981. 176 pp. \$10.00 cloth. ISBN 0-7710-8017-4; ***The lure of the Labrador wild***, Dillon Wallace. Breakwater Books, 1977 (reprint of 1905 ed. published by F. Revell, New York). 285 pp. \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-919948-88-3; ***It's Jake with me***, J.D. Geller. Paperjacks, Ltd., 1983. 225 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-7701-0270-0.

In his *Autobiography* Mark Twain remarked that biographers could capture only "the clothes and buttons" of their subjects, never the real persons beneath them. Perhaps too harsh and hopeless, as were many of Twain's judgments, his observation is borne out in the four volumes under review and suggests why the two autobiographical works, though no better written nor dealing with more intrinsically interesting characters, are so much more interesting, provocative, and satisfying than the efforts at biography.

The life of Manitoba trapper, farmer, bush-pilot, entrepreneur, and conservationist Tom Lamb is chronicled in Leland Stowe's *The last great frontiersman*. Lamb was born in 1898 at Moose Lake in northern Manitoba. Beyond Grade Three, his education came from contact with the Cree Indians who formed the majority of the region's inhabitants and from his experience as a trapper, teamster, and trader. "Break them in early and bring them up tough," was

the motto of Tom Lamb's father, and the opening chapters detail the often harrowing experiences of the Manitoba frontier. Having married and bought his father's trading post in 1926, Lamb began a remarkably diverse career as a northern businessman. In the early 1930s, over the persistent and often petulant opposition of Winnipeg bureaucrats, he launched a successful scheme to revive the declining muskrat population and another to rehabilitate the beaver stocks in the region, decimated by years of overtrapping; he was ultimately commissioned to introduce the beaver to Chile and Argentina. Lamb gambled on new technology, replacing horse-drawn vehicles with Caterpillar tractors, and initiating the use of airplanes to transport fish from remote northern sites to market. Never able to rest on past triumphs, he surprised the agricultural world in the 1950s by converting marshland near Moose Lake into the country's northernmost Hereford cattle farm.

There is no doubt that Tom Lamb was larger than life. But Leland Stowe's portrait is so one-dimensional, so uncritically admiring, that the reader's suspicions are aroused. Stowe is too ready to divide his cast into the white-hatted friends of Tom Lamb and black-hatted officials whose rules and procedures obstructed his dreams. In time hagiography leads to a diminution of its subjects in reaction to its biases. A figure as truly compelling as Tom Lamb deserves better.

Leslie Scrivener's biography of Terry Fox attempts to avoid the cloyingly worshipful approach that marks much biography for young people and certainly has characterized most journalistic treatment of Fox, the one-legged cancer victim who ran over half way across Canada to raise money for cancer research. She reveals Fox's less attractive features — a boorish bad temper, a tendency to use other people, and, after his run began, anger with anyone who took his efforts less seriously than he did himself; yet she minimizes these characteristics and concentrates on his courage, stubborn determination to succeed, and his genuine desire to see money raised to find a cure for a terrifying disease.

Fox's intense competitiveness enabled him, despite his lack of height and natural ability, to win a place on his school's basketball team; this single-minded resolve both made his run possible and, perhaps, cut it short as he pushed himself beyond endurance. Scrivener does not avoid these paradoxes, but she fails to dramatize their tragic implications. The book's extensive quotations from Fox himself and his diaries contrast the rather banal character of his speech and expression — "great" seemed to be one of his few descriptive adjectives — with the magnitude of his physical and emotional achievement.

Historian Judith Fingard once wrote in one of Canada's departed weekend supplements that Terry Fox would not be long remembered as a Canadian hero, that his impact was ephemeral. Scrivener does not address the question of what constitutes heroism. The book was completed before Fox's death and his appropriation by the federal government as a symbol of its peculiar vision of national unity. Scrivener was an "authorized" biographer, chosen by Fox to write

his story, and she has responded with an honest, sympathetic tribute that younger readers will enjoy.

Although Dillon Wallace's *Lure of the Labrador wild* is dedicated to Leonidas Hubbard, Jr., the inspiration for and leader of an expedition in 1903 to the interior of Labrador, the book is largely autobiographical. First published in 1905, it tells of the misbegotten journey of Hubbard, a romantic New York nature writer, Wallace, a lawyer, and their half-Cree guide George Elson. A mistake in map-reading and a series of other blunders left them short of their goal of Lake Michikamau, short of food, and sufficiently behind schedule to be overtaken by the Labrador winter.

The explorers were reduced to boiling bones and pieces of maggoty caribou skin just to keep alive. Ultimately Leonidas Hubbard had to be left to die on their desperate scramble back to settlement. On one level the story is an alternately amusing and gripping adventure tale, with sufficient attention to danger and discomfort to interest many adolescents. On a deeper level, however, the book becomes an intriguing story, as Patrick O'Flaherty writes in his excellent introduction to this edition, "of three men starving to death, turning in upon themselves psychologically, indulging in fantasy and daydreams about past comforts, and, slowly but surely, weakening. (14)"

Subtly but clearly the book portrays the attitudes of whites toward Indians at the time of its writing and the equally naive and patronizing view of the North itself which the explorers carried with them on their expedition. Yet the bravery of the three men emerges from their tale as strongly as, and perhaps linked with, their foolishness about the land they sought to conquer.

The last title, J.D. Geller's *It's Jake with me*, is a more traditional autobiography. The Windsor newsboy, who became one of North America's most successful newspaper circulation managers by always listening to newsboys, tells his remarkable story of fortunes made and lost in every line from comic books to jigsaw puzzles. In 1918, at the age of eighteen, Geller bought the Windsor News Agency. Hard work, organizational ability, entrepreneurial daring, and an unusually accurate sense of what the public wanted soon made him into a successful businessman. Less fortunate in his choice of relatives, most of whom appear in this memoir as rascally, incompetent, or both, and involved in a highly competitive sector during the depressed years of the 1930s, Geller would begin to turn a profit only to find a bad investment or a misappropriation of funds by a brother had sunk him into debt. Such events led him to work for several American newspaper chains, notably the Field and Hearst organizations, usually managing to raise circulation on a series of moribund papers in Chicago, Boston, and Milwaukee.

The gritty world of newspaper publishing in its heyday prior to the Second World War brought Jake Geller into contact with bankers, bootleggers, gamblers, politicians, press barons, and union bosses. His blunt and often salty style, suits his world. Bouts of annoying self-justification, and a jarringly

bitter diatribe against his ex-wife, humanize the narrative, as does his anger at being called "Jakey" on a picket line, the only point in the book where he alludes to the anti-Semitism which almost certainly was a factor in his being denied advancement on several occasions. The book proves surprisingly difficult to put down; even at the end of his life Jake Geller proves that he knows what readers want.

All four titles repay reading, but good biography requires greater skill than either Stowe or Scrivener can bring to their works. Christopher Moore, in both *Louisbourg Portraits* and *The Loyalists*, has set a masterful standard for popular biography, and J. Murray Beck's two-volume study of Joseph Howe, while perhaps too much a work of finished scholarship to have a direct appeal to younger or more general readers, illustrates the depth of understanding a writer must have of a figure before undertaking a truly satisfactory biography. Autobiographies, on the other hand, are judged by a different standard, for they reveal information even as they seek to conceal it. They take us, perhaps unintentionally, beyond "clothes and buttons", and when people such as Dillon Wallace or Jake Geller talk about themselves — as when our parents or grandparents do — we not only come to know them and their times better than any textbook can teach, but we better understand ourselves.

Robert Nicholas Bérard is an historian and Co-ordinator of the B. Ed. Programme in the Department of Education at Dalhousie University in Halifax, and he is the author of several articles in the areas of history, historiography, and education.

LEADERS OF CANADA — CELEBRATED AND UNSUNG

Matthew Baillie Begbie, David Ricardo Williams; *Adam Beck*, James Sturgis; *Alexander Graham Bell*, A. Roy Petrie; *Henri Bourassa*, A. Roy Petrie; *Timothy Eaton*, John M. Bassett; *Samuel de Champlain*, Stan Garrod; *Thomas Keefer*, Larry Murphy; *W.L. Mackenzie King*, J.L. Granatstein. *Wilfrid Laurier*, Martin Spigelman; *Paul-Emile Leger*, James Duggan; *Aimee Semple McPherson*, Alwyn Austin; *Louis St. Laurent*, J.W. Pickersgill; *Clifford Sifton*, D.J. Hall; *Thomas Carbide Willson*, Carole Precious, Fitzhenry & Whiteside "The Canadians" Series. 63 pp. \$2.75 paper. ISBN 0-88902-2186, 246-1, 209-7, 208-9, 210-0, 683-1, 227-7, 228-3, 245-3, 655-6, 657-2, 687-4, 223-2, 681-5.

Here is a crowd of "new Canadians" to join Fitzhenry & Whiteside's fold. Covering many subjects and categories, these biographies are hard to compare, except in their virtually unvarying format. The format works well and if the books