

BOOKS

AMERICAN SCIENCE AND INVENTION:

A Pictorial History
by Mitchell Wilson
Simon and Schuster, 1954 \$10

THE JACKET BLURB on this book claims that it contains "more than 1,000 documentary pictures, combined with 130,000 words of dramatic narrative." One glance should convince anyone that the book contains *at least* this much material, since it measures 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches—making it a big book even by Simon & Schuster standards.

Happily, it's a good book too—as impressive in content as in appearance. Subtitled "the fabulous story of how American dreamers, wizards and inspired tinkerers converted a wilderness into the wonder of the world," it is a history of American inventiveness. It describes and shows the great American inventions and discoveries, the experiments and scientific thinking that led to them,

the men responsible for them, and the effect that these things have had on our lives and times.

It runs all the way from Benjamin Franklin's inventions to the Atomic Age. Along the way it covers the development of such things as the reaper, the sewing machine, the Pullman car, the telegraph, telephone, aeroplane and automobile tire—as well as the scientific discoveries of such men as Gibbs, Michelson, Millikan, Einstein, Hale, and Pauling.

The author, Mitchell Wilson, is as well-equipped to grapple with this mass of material as anyone could be. An established novelist (best known, probably, for *Live with Lightning*), he is also a physicist (best known, probably, for his work as assistant to the late Enrico Fermi). As a trained scientist he has some idea of what material should be covered in a book like this; as a writer he knows how to make this material both interesting and understood.

The result is a book that ought to have enormous appeal for readers

not ordinarily attracted to this kind of reading—and a book that will surprise professional scientists and engineers by having just as much appeal for them.

ART IN SCIENCE

A Portfolio of 32 Paintings, Drawings and Photographs from Scientific American
Simon & Schuster, 1954 \$6

ANYONE WHO HAS even flipped over the pages of *Scientific American* must have been impressed by the high quality of the illustrative material in that magazine. Now that 32 examples of this material have been collected, boxed, and labeled as Art they seem handsomer than ever. Each plate is beautifully reproduced on an individual sheet of 11x13 heavy coated paper—not only suitable for framing, but practically crying out for it.

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