

"The Adventures of Wesley Jackson," by William Saroyan.
Harcourt Brace & Co., New York,
\$2.75.

THE CENTRAL CHARACTER of this book—*Wesley Jackson*, age nineteen, favorite song "Valencia," is none other than our old friend William Saroyan gotten-up as Alice in Wonderland.

He is drafted, has his basic training at a camp near Sacramento, and is sent to a post in New York where they make training films.

Then he is exiled to Ohio for making a bad impression. He wangles his way back to the New York post due to the influence of a call-house madame.

He is shipped to London where he sits in an office for some months. The serious occupation of this time is hunting for "His Girl." The one who is going to have a son for him. He meets the seventeen-year-old *Jill*, who has run away from home to become a streetwalker. But she has not yet sinned. *Wesley* is her first pickup. Still not sinning, they live together for a week. Then he *knows*. This is his girl. There is a broomstick wedding and they settle down to the production of an heir.

Then comes the invasion. *Wesley* is captured, liberated, and returns to *Jill*.

In so short an outline, the book could be good or bad. I think it is both. What makes it good is what always made Saroyan good. In this case his wonderful satires on army life, wangling, and the weird faunas of his private universe. What makes it bad is the overdose of soliloquies, hymns, and plain mutterings on love, death, life, paternity, and the appeasement of divine wrath by means of a scapegoat.

