

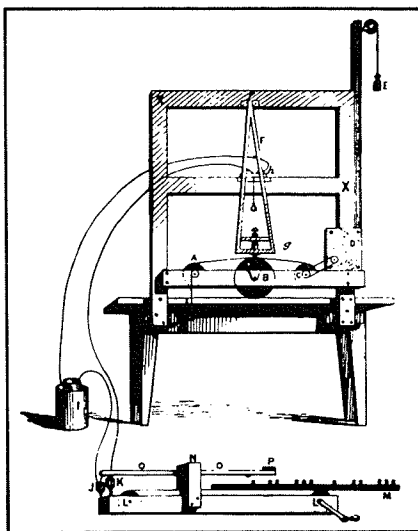
death (of tuberculosis) at age 24. Appearing in these stories were characters whom another great Meiji writer, Mori Ogai, praised as "real human individuals" superior to "those beastly creatures of Ibsen and Zola."

A GOOD MAN IN AFRICA. By William Boyd. Penguin, 1983. 312 pp. \$3.95

Morgan Leafy, protagonist of this novel, may be one of the more engaging Everymen to emerge in recent English fiction. On his first diplomatic assignment to the tropical African state of Kinjanja, Leafy is letting his unruly appetites, particularly for drink and women, get the better of him. A "dose" contracted from his African mistress brings a quick end to his courtship of the chief of mission's attractive, vacuous daughter. More seriously, Leafy's lechery exposes him to the blackmailing schemes of a local politician. Boyd, a lecturer at Oxford, describes the cancerous progress of corruption—and the men who resist or submit to it. He also describes the disorderly urban hodgepodes that grow in postcolonial Africa like "some ominous yeast culture, left in a damp cupboard by an absent-minded lab technician." Boyd's touch is comic, but, like Graham Greene, he explores a serious theme: the moral education of an average, sensual man.

EMULATION AND INVENTION. By Brooke Hindle. Norton, 1983. 162 pp. \$5.95

The development of the steamboat and telegraph tells much about invention in early America and about the general



workings of mechanical ingenuity. While there were two earlier American pioneers of the steamboat (James Rumsey and John Fitch), it took the American painter and artisan, Robert Fulton, to bring all the parts together in an efficient, workable design. The overlap of technology and the arts was also epitomized by Samuel Morse, the portraitist and NYU professor who in 1832 designed the first telegraph on a canvas-stretcher. The artist's skill in copying, redefining, and conceiving images is crucial to the inventor, argues Hindle, a Smithsonian historian, and was recognized as such 100 years ago. He shows, in pictures as in text, that technology and art are at bottom always linked. A sense of their connection enabled 19th-century Americans to fill a relatively undeveloped, unregulated environment with images that worked.