

THE PRESS

Amazing! Astounding!

Sold at U. S. newsstands are about a dozen pulp magazines with such titles as *Amazing Stories*, *Astounding Stories*, *Startling Stories*, *Strange Stories*, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Unknown*, *Marvel Science Stories*, *Weird Tales*. In the pulp trade they are known as "pseudo-scientifics" or "scientifiction." This week in Manhattan this amazing group of publications produced an amazing show: a convention of their fans.

Scientifiction, which deals almost exclusively with the world of tomorrow and life on other planets, was inspired by Jules Verne's and H. G. Wells's fantasies.

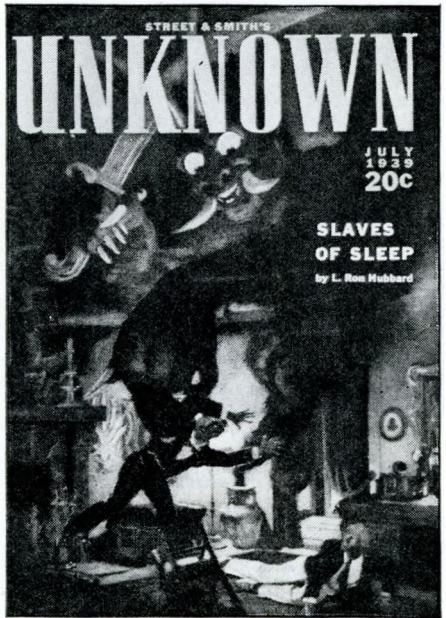
The World of Tomorrow. Says he: "It is astonishing how many things come true."

Chief themes of scientifiction are rocket trips by earth-dwellers to other planets, invasions of the earth by Martians, Mercurians. Authors may be as fantastic as they like in their inventions but publishers warn them not to do violence to the commoner scientific principles lest readers denounce their errors.

Scientifiction's fans, mostly boys of 16 to 20, are the jitterbugs of the pulp magazine field. Many keep every issue, and a copy of the magazine's first issue often fetches \$25 from collectors. Publishers soon discovered another odd fact about their readers: They are exceptionally artic-



Ziff-Davis



Street & Smith

SCIENTIFUNCTION

"Gosh! Wow! Boyohboy! The mosta and the besta!"

Father of pseudo-scientific magazines was a shrewd, fat old man named Hugo Gernsback, an old-time radio fan, who in 1926 started *Amazing Stories*. It zoomed like a moonward rocket. Today the magazines in this prosperous publishing group (chiefly controlled by the big pulp firms of Street & Smith, Standard Magazines and Ziff-Davis), average about 150,000 readers apiece (sometimes much more), make a good living for many a shamo-scientific writer.

Among famed writers of scientifiction are Edgar Rice Burroughs, Eric Temple Bell (penname: John Taine), Abraham Merritt, editor of the *American Weekly*, and onetime Wisconsin State Senator Roger Sherman Hoar (penname: Ralph Milne Farley). Pay is 1¢ to 4¢ a word. Many a well-known author who commands higher rates in slick-paper magazines writes these stories for fun. But writers as well as readers take their predictions seriously. Ray Cummings, a veteran pseudo-fictioneer who once was Thomas Edison's secretary, claims to have originated in his stories the word *Newscaster* and the phrase

ulate. Most of these magazines have letters columns, in which readers appraise stories. Sample: "Gosh! Wow! Boyohboy!, and so forth and so on. Yesiree, yesiree, it's the greatest in the land and the best that's on the stand, and I do mean THRILLING WONDER STORIES, and especially that great, magnificent, glorious, most thrilling June issue of the mosta and the besta of science fiction magazines. . . ."

Having formed, through correspondence, an organization called the New Fandom, some 200 fans gathered in a small Manhattan hall this week from California, New Mexico, the metropolitan area for three days of speeches, pseudo-scientific movies and discussion of stories with their authors. Cried Fan Will S. Sykora, from Astoria, L. I.: "Let us all work to see that the things we read in science fiction become realities." Said Leo Margulies, managing editor of Standard Magazines (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Startling Stories* and *Strange Stories*): "I am astonished. I didn't think you boys could be so damn sincere."