

FANTASY REVIEW

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SIXPENCE

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REVERSE

By WALTER GILLINGS

The paper shortage has forced the suspension of *Fantasy—The Magazine of Science Fiction*, after only three issues. It is not expected that it will be able to resume publication for at least two years.

It is no less than 17 years since, impressed with the growing interest in the American science fiction magazines entering this country, I began to draw the attention of British publishers to the possibilities of this field. That was in days when an English magazine so specialised in its appeal was a rare thing, and the number of readers keen enough to seek out "remainders" of *Amazing* and *Wonder Stories* at threepence a copy was comparatively small. Looking back now, I can see that the publishers I pestered were probably right in their contention that it was not enough to make a British magazine a profitable proposition; though I never would accept the objection that, anyway, Verne and Wells had done it all before.

However, one very reputable firm did issue a twopenny weekly which sought to emulate the Gernsback touch and, when it transpired that all its readers were not errand boys, tried to make itself more respectable, only to fail dismally and wind up altogether. After that another big publishing house, affected by the trend towards specialisation in fiction, seriously considered the project of a shilling magazine which would interest the enlarging fraternity of science fiction readers and appeal to a wider public at the same time. This project occupied them, and the few British writers competent to meet its literary requirements, for over a year before it was decided to abandon the idea.

Then, as a result of my importunings elsewhere, came *Tales of Wonder*, whose first trial issue was followed in due time by its regular quarterly publication—and, in turn, by revival of the project which brought forth three issues of Newnes' *Fantasy*. Then, inconsiderately, came World War II. Only *Tales of Wonder* struggled on, until after 16 issues the beginnings of the paper shortage forced its suspension.

In between times the American "remainders" (always a thorn in the flesh of British publishers) had given place to home-produced editions of *Astounding* and *Unknown* which, fortunately, are still with us. And when, before the war was over, more impressed than ever with the prospects for

[Continued Over]



British science fiction, I inveigled yet another publisher in an ambitious scheme for its post-war development through a new publication, I fondly imagined we had won through at last. That was nearly four years ago, when none could see how long the paper shortage was going to remain with us, let alone how much more acute it was to become.

It was only after the project had been in active preparation for a full three years that publication of the new *Fantasy*, which I have been privileged to edit for the Temple Bar Publishing Co., was actually embarked upon. And now, after three issues at intervals of four months, it is with a sense of exasperation rather than mere regret that we have to announce its suspension for an indefinite period—perhaps for two or three years.

The reason for this early discontinuance—and the only reason—is the persistently difficult paper situation which has held up the project from the start. So long as this situation lasts it is impossible for the magazine either to appear more frequently or to increase its circulation, which has been severely limited by the Paper Order applying to new publications. The effect of these restrictions, which it was hoped would by now have been relaxed, has been to prevent its becoming an economic proposition for the publishers, who are

thus compelled to shelve a project which was intended should be developed on the most ambitious lines.

Having waited in vain for many months for an improvement in paper supplies to permit it to be launched on the scale originally conceived, they eventually started the magazine, last December, in hopes of an early betterment of the situation. But although the contents and price remained unchanged, the idea of monthly appearance had to be abandoned and the circulation was only a small proportion of what would have been essayed had more paper been available.

That the venture has been worth-while in all other respects is evident from the enthusiastic reception the magazine has been given by science fiction readers on both sides of the Atlantic, most of whom only secured copies with difficulty owing to the limited printing. The publishers were, in fact, in the peculiar position of having to decline subscriptions because there were hardly enough copies to meet the demands of their regular distributors.

So, once again, a British science fiction magazine has been strangled at birth by prevailing conditions. This time, too, the circumstances are especially regrettable since the experiment showed every sign of being highly successful, its sponsors having spared no expense in the preparation of a magazine which would appeal to the general reader (who had very little chance of encountering it) as much as to the science fiction devotees whose tastes British publishers have never adequately catered for.

In anticipation of regular monthly publication, material enough to produce at least a dozen issues had been accepted and paid for. Of this only a small proportion has been used to date, and many fine stories by the new roster of British writers encouraged by the project will have to remain in cold storage much longer than they have already. Development of the magazine's editorial policy, which had been delayed unduly, will also suffer a further postponement.

In the last issue of *FANTASY REVIEW*, John Carnell related how he had succeeded in reviving an abortive project of eight years ago which has, so far, produced two issues of *New Worlds* in 15 months. We wish in all sincerity that the worsening of conditions with which we are threatened will not mean the cessation of that publication and the virtual surrender of British science fiction to the fate which has seemed to hang over it from the beginning.

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As Others See Us

LITTLE SUPERMAN, WHAT NOW?

By William S. Baring-Gould*

The growing interest in science fiction has recently inspired several articles on the field and its "fandom" in American periodicals. To date, the most accurate picture has been given readers of "Harper's Magazine" by William S. Baring-Gould, who as promotion manager of "Time" has made a special study of reader-groups, and as a fantasy fan himself is a keen student of its development. This interest he may have inherited from his grandfather, the English clergyman-author, S. Baring-Gould, who wrote several books dealing with ghosts, werewolves and curious myths.

Gathered in the Slovak Sokol Hall on the outskirts of Newark, New Jersey, were 107 science fiction readers, editors, authors and artists. The occasion was their first post-war convention. The editors and authors had grouped themselves on one side of the hall. Around and behind them were the fans; youngish and verging towards middle age, many still in uniform, they might have been a seminar in economics at any State university.

Science fiction, in the words of these earnest young men and women, "stood at the cross-roads." Never in America had there been such general interest in scientific fantasies. Radar, atomic power, super-microscopes, rocket-planes, electronic calculators—these and dozens of other marvels-turned-realities had been forecast by science fiction writers months and even years before. Suddenly more and more Americans were turning to science fiction for a hint of what the future might have in store. But science fiction was caught at a disadvantage. Almost overnight its best, seemingly farthest-into-the-future plots had become the common stuff of the daily headlines. Science, it seemed, had finally caught up with science fiction. "Whither?" was the keynote of the convention.

In the public mind science fiction is

often confused with the story of supernatural horror. But it falls under the general heading of fantasy; it seeks to make you pause and wonder rather than make your blood run cold. The result is that most horror addicts cannot abide science fiction, while the great majority of science fiction fans care little for stories of mental or physical torture, transplanted brains, giant spiders, man-eating orchids, or for the more commonplace yarns of ghosts, vampires, werewolves and witches.

Science fiction deals with extrapolations of **known** science into the prehistoric past or the possible future. It claims writers like Vardis Fisher who look backward to reconstruct the life of the cave people, as well as authors like Aldous Huxley who look satirically forward to a Brave New World. Its practitioners are often men of science themselves: Isaac Asimov is a research chemist, David H. Keller a doctor, Robert Heinlein a plastics research engineer, Norman L. Knight a chemist. "John Taine" is Eric Temple Bell, professor of mathematics at the California Institute of Technology; and Olaf Stapledon, M.A., Ph.D., lectures at Liverpool University in literature, industrial history, psychology and philosophy.

Much of the older work in the field seems dull by present-day standards, and so many of the prophecies of pioneers like Verne have come true that their books hardly read as science fiction at all to-day. Nevertheless, the serious collector of science fiction will have some 64 volumes by Verne on his shelves—side by side with others by Wells, Shiel and Doyle. The truly modern science fiction stories which have been published in book form make a slim library indeed. But it is growing fast.

For the bulk of his reading, however, the science fiction fan must depend on the news-stand magazines. These science fiction pulps are bought by well over 250,000 Americans who spend something like \$100,000 a month for their favourite reading. But science fiction is not alone

*Condensed from **Harper's Magazine**, by permission of the publishers. Harper and Bros., 49 East 33rd Street, New York, U.S.A.

an American phenomenon. Translated into Spanish and Portuguese, much American and British fantasy finds its way to Latin American news-stands, and before the war science fiction magazines and books poured from the presses of Germany, France, Italy, Scandinavia and England.

Best of all the American science fiction magazines, in the opinion of most fans, is Street and Smith's **Astounding Science-Fiction**, whose editor, John W. Campbell Jr., writes science fiction under the pseudonym of Don A. Stuart as well as under his own name. More than half of the 40 stories in "The Best in Science Fiction" came from **Astounding's** pages, including all but one of the stories which appear under the heading "The Atom." **Astounding's** pre-Hiroshima interest in the atom was so great, in fact, that U.S. Military Intelligence investigated the magazine to discover "who, on the Manhattan Project, had been talking," but was finally persuaded that to suppress the magazine's discussions of atomic energy "would be more of a give-away than to leave them alone."

Most of the other pulps which make up the science fiction field publish an occasional "classic" (the fans' word for almost any story which meets their somewhat rigid requirements of what a good science fiction story should be) but in many of their stories science is a subsidiary of sex; titillation is their god and Edgar Rice Burroughs is his prophet. These are the magazines whose covers customarily carry a lurid painting of a blonde in a form-fitting space-suit valiantly battling a BEM (Bug-Eyed Monster). At best, these stories are little more than horse operas transferred to an interplanetary setting; the cowboys have been replaced by clear-eyed young lieutenants of the Galaxy Patrol, the Indians by the terrible, six-headed, many-limbed Glyph Men of Saturn or Uranus or Mercury.

But a place at the very bottom of the list, in the opinion of most fans, should be reserved for **Amazing Stories**, the one-time "Aristocrat of Science Fiction," now published by Ziff-Davis under the editorship of Raymond A. Palmer. Palmer's most successful bid for new readers has been "that mystery known by the name of the man who started it all, The Shaver Mystery."* He has

launched several departments to keep his readers "informed on the developments in the greatest 'hunt' by science fiction fans in history for what may be the most important of truths," and he welcomes contributions. The letter writers on the whole take themselves and **Amazing Stories** very seriously. Not quite all the letters are in the same strain, however. One calls the magazine's Shaver Mystery exploit "probably undesirable and even dangerous." To many an honest science fiction fan whose hobby has suffered so much, this will go down as the year's greatest understatement.

In no other field of literary endeavour is there such a rapport as exists among science fiction readers, editors, artists and authors. Fans form clubs to discuss their favourite "scientifiction" stories, keep up a voluminous correspondence among themselves, and write hundreds of letters to editors and authors every month. Many fans edit "fanzines" (as opposed to the professional magazines or "prozines") and they have set up their own Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA).

Like the prozines, the fanzines have their black side. H. C. Koenig, a veteran s-f reader and collector, puts it this way in an article in **Fantasy Commentator**: "The spawn of the science fiction magazines . . . Irresponsible amateur editors who abandoned their magazines without even an excuse or apology to their subscribers . . . editors who mutilated and distorted articles without advising writers who contributed them; editors who made no effort to safeguard their subscribers from misleading advertising." He also blasts the "childish arguments between fans . . . Reams of paper wasted on personal feuds and controversies . . . Delightfully frank descriptions of fellow-fans, such as: 'mental perverts, literary whores and would-be literary prostitutes.' All in the name of science fiction!"

In normal years, fans regularly sponsor conventions to discuss the future of science fiction. The first "world convention" (known as "Nycon" for New York Convention) took place in 1939 at Caravan Hall. About 200 fans showed up to listen to speeches and see fantastic movies shown. At one point the chairman had to halt the proceedings to throw out a group of six "Futurians," a left-wing outfit who work toward a "scientific socialist world state." Last

*See "The Shaver Mystery," by Nigel Lindsay, June-July issue.

Walter Gillings' FANTASIA

U.S. fans converged on Philadelphia for 5th World Science Fiction Convention, held three all-day sessions culminating in banquet. Speakers included editors John W. Campbell, L. Jerome Stanton, Sam Merwin, Donald A. Wollheim; authors George O. Smith, L. Sprague de Camp ("Adventures in the Occult"), Willy Ley and Thomas S. Gardner on space-travel. Many other celebrities present, among them Dr. Edward E. Smith, Theodore Sturgeon, David H. Keller. Next year's CANvention will be held in Toronto Latest American fan mag. is **Burroughs Bulletin**, devoted to creator of Tarzan, Barsoom and Pellucidar, run by worshippers at his shrine . . . Mummies of nine-foot giants said to have been discovered in caverns in Californian desert, once "part of lost kingdom of Mu." Search expedition planned by Amazing Explorations Inc. **Shaver Mystery Mag.**, please copy . . .

Dunsany fantasy, "If," presented on radio. Jarrolds preparing publication of "The Fourth Book of Jorkens Stories," also to appear from Arkham House . . . **Time** devoted cover and three pages to C. S. Lewis, Oxford don and best-selling writer, who told how "Out of the Silent Planet" trilogy was inspired by reading Charles Williams fantasies . . . Same issue carried illustrated review of J. O. Bailey's "Pilgrims Through Space & Time," leading off with gag-extract from "Flabbergasting Stories" . . . William F. Temple, writing again for U.S. mags., interviewed by local (Wembley) press on strength of forthcoming book . . . "Atomic Nightmare" skit in **Courier** by Peter Phillips, new British s-f writer expected to make debut in American field . . .

COMPLIMENTS WITH CARE

Another write-up for Editor Campbell's "The Atomic Story" in **Saturday Review of Literature**, with reference to **Astounding** as "pulp actually read by highly educated people for its occasional thoughtful stories in which impact of rapidly developing science is more or less intelligently examined" . . . Following Margaret St. Clair's article on fantasy field (see p. 1, last issue), **Writer's Digest** published letters from Campbell ("AS-F is a specialist's mag.") and William L. Hamling, who promised: "If anything new appears in the field, **Amazing** will start it" . . . Alexander M. Phillips completing "The Maniac Poltergeist," intended as companion volume to "The Mislaid Charm" . . . **Unknown** tales of A. E. van Vogt and wife E. Mayne Hull being lined up for book presentation . . . George O. Smith's **Astounding** stories, "Pattern for Conquest" and "Nomad" (under pseudonym Wesley Long), to see book publication . . .

September **Air Trails** and **Science Frontiers** article by R. S. Richardson, "New Paths to New Planets," illustrated with Chesley Bonestell paintings of Mars, Venus, Jupiter. One of the Sun, with Mercury in transit, on cover of October **Astounding** . . . Richardson and Bonestell also collaborating on up-and-coming **Air Trails** feature showing what life might be like in other stellar systems . . . Lewis Padgett's second whodunit, "The Day He Died," bringing him U.S. plaudits as "brilliant newcomer in crime field" . . . Horrific murder mystery, "The Scarf," by Robert Bloch, forthcoming from Dial Press, New York . . .

"SCHOOLBOYISH" LEY

Reviewing Willy Ley's "Rockets & Space Travel," U.S. **Army Ordnance** magazine said: "Certain peculiarity of style characteristic of Ley's writing tends to give slightly 'schoolboyish' cast to the text and the over-enthusiasm of the specialist is apparent" . . . "Race to the Planets," illustrated article by Ley predicting trip to Moon ten years hence, in **Mechanix Illustrated**, accompanied by "Britain's Challenge" as seen by Alfred Eris . . . Arthur C. Clarke's "Challenge of the Spaceship" again reprinted in **Toronto Star Weekly** . . . Atomic car of the future, as depicted by Collier's in "Dreams Unlimited" feature, is wheelless, literally floats along roadway . . . "The Natural History of Nonsense," by Bergen Evans (Joseph: 12/6), debunking pseudo-scientific superstition, refers to Fortean data on "bizarre downpours."

American **Argosy** presented s-f novelette, "The Madman," by Pat Frank, whose "Mr. Adam" was staged on Broadway . . . Current **Ten-Story Detective** has new "Taine of San Francisco" tale by Dr. David H. Keller . . . September **Dime Mystery** had piece by Ray Bradbury, "Wake for the Living," concerning mechanical coffin . . . "Rocket Ship Galileo" (Scribner's: \$2.00) is new s-f juvenile by—guess who!—Robert Heinlein . . .

Creator of the 'Slan'

THOMAS SHERIDAN

has a long-distance interview with
A. E. VAN VOGT



"Anyone can be a Successful Writer—if they Learn How!" So say the writer school ads., or something like that. And if science fiction writers weren't considered a race apart, they might find Alfred van Vogt willing—and modest enough—to endorse their claims. Though his readers, full of admiration for his long string of **Astounding** stories, especially the famous "Slan!" concept, would quarrel with anyone who suggested he wasn't a genius at science fiction. A natural-born superman, in fact.

Canadian-born, of Dutch parentage, van Vogt was never particularly clever—until he took to writing fantasy. At school he made the average grade, but wasn't very studious. He joined in games with the rest, but was happier when he could bury himself in a book of fairy stories. And though he did take a course at Ottawa University, he considers himself not too well educated—and, thus, living proof that it doesn't take more than the average amount of brains to be a writer.

He started his writing career 15 years ago when, at the age of 20, he sold his first piece to **True Story Magazine**. It dealt with the sordid side of life, with grim realities—at least as he imagined them. Though his own story up to then had been unromantic enough. Starting work at 16 as a clerk, then on a farm, then as a trapper—of muskrats and rabbits mostly. A spell in his father's law office, preparatory to entering the civil service at Ottawa. Then back to Winnipeg when the job ran out after a year; but he wasn't sorry—it interfered with his writing.

He went on turning out love stories and radio plays for several years after that. But in spite of winning first prize in a **True Confessions** contest and doing

a bit of trade paper journalism to break the monotony, he grew tired of the heartthrob formula. It worked on him, none the less. In 1936, at the local Writers' Club, he met Edna Mayne Hull, who was writing for the magazine sections of the Winnipeg newspapers, and who was destined—as Mrs. van Vogt—to leave her mark on every piece of science fiction he had yet to produce. The 'E' in his initials is an acknowledgment of the work she puts in on his MSS., and her own name has appeared on three stories in **Unknown Worlds** and eight in **Astounding**, including "The Winged Man" (May, June '44).

"CHUMS" BEGAN IT

It wasn't until '39 that van Vogt turned from the grim realities of true confessions to the fascinating extravagancies of science fiction, in which he has since indulged with conspicuous success. Though he had been a reader of the field since he graduated from fairy stories as a schoolboy in a Saskatchewan small-town.

"I read my first s-f stories in the British boy's paper **Chums**," he recalled wistfully. "As I remember them now, they were good; anyway, there was plenty of imagination and excitement. But I'd completely forgotten them by the time I bought my first copy of **Amazing** in '26 and got immersed in Serviss' 'Second Deluge.' For a long time I thought this was the first s-f I'd ever seen. Then, just recently, I remembered how **Chums** used to thrill me as a kid."

He followed **Amazing** religiously through its early years. But when, in '30, a Canadian ban on American magazines cut off the supply he wasn't overconcerned, as by then the general run of science fiction had lost its hold on

him. So, when the ban was lifted and the magazines returned to the news-stands, he glanced at them only occasionally—until in '38 he chanced on the August *Astounding* containing "Who Goes There?" one of the pieces Editor John W. Campbell had written under his Don A. Stuart cloak.

"I read half of it standing there at the news-stand before I bought the issue and finished it. That brought me back into the fold with a vengeance. I still regard that as the best story Campbell ever wrote, and the best horror tale in science fiction."

For the next six months his mind was full of science fiction plots, and finally he sent one to Editor Campbell asking if it would make a yarn for *Astounding*. Campbell thought it would, gave the newcomer some hints—"I was an absolute unknown as far as he was concerned"—and the result was "Vault of the Beast," which duly appeared in the August '40 issue.

His second acceptance, with which he actually made his bow in the magazine for which he wrote exclusively for eight years afterwards, was "Black Destroyer" (July '39). Both these tales got top marks in the issues featuring them; in between came two other pieces, then his masterpiece "Slan!" (Sept.-Dec. '40). Over this Campbell enthused, "Gentlemen, it's a lulu!" while presenting it as the first *Astounding* serial to merit the "nova" designation awarded stories of special originality. Boosted as "the most powerful superman story science fiction has produced," it got a reception so overwhelmingly enthusiastic as to place van Vogt right in the top flight of science-fantasy authors within 18 months of his debut.

IDEALISM OR PSEUDONYMS?

Apart from the encouragements Campbell gave him, van Vogt attributes his swift success in the field to the fact that he didn't take his advice over a story he rejected, though now he wishes he had.

"My second attempt, a piece called 'The City in the Sand,' he sent back because it was too much in the old tradition of s-f and lacked the character and atmosphere he wanted. Still, he suggested I wouldn't have any trouble placing the story in one of the other magazines. I thought that over—and tore it up. That may have helped in

keeping me up to scratch when I was trying to build a reputation; for I applied the same principle to all my work as I went along.

"Sometimes, when you're halfway through a story which seemed good when you started out, you suddenly find it's not what you hoped for. Scores of times I've stopped work there and then, and torn it up. But doing that has made all the difference between making a comfortable living at writing and suffering a sense of continuous financial pressure, and in this commercial age such literary idealism is pretty impracticable.

"It's a problem every writer has to solve for himself, the danger being that if you can sell second-rate work you may not try so hard. Looking back now, I think my own policy was mistaken. I should have sold those stories under a pseudonym."

But, having written "Slan!" in his spare time while employed by the Department of National Defence in Ottawa, van Vogt's popularity was such that, when he found he couldn't turn out more than two short stories in a year, he gave up his workaday job to devote his full time to science fiction. And, as from '42, his stories became almost a regular feature of *Astounding*—novelettes like "Recruiting Station" (Mar. '42), "The Great Engine" (July '43), "The Changeling" (Apr. '44); short stories such as "M33 in Andromeda" (Aug. '43), "Far Centaurus" (Jan. '44), and "Film Library" (July '46). And three serials: "The Weapon Makers" (Feb.-Apr. '43), "World of Null-A" (Aug.-Oct. '45), and "The Chronicler" (Oct., Nov. '46).

In all, since his first appearance, he has contributed more than 40 tales to *Astounding* and its companion *Unknown*, one of the last U.S. issues of which featured his novel, "The Book of Ptath," which is to reappear in book form shortly from Fantasy Press. "Slan!" and "The Weapon Makers" have already been reissued between hard covers, and "World of Null-A" is to see book publication next year. Several of his short stories have also been reprinted in s-f anthologies.

ANYTHING GOES

Most of van Vogt's work is intergalactic in setting; all of it has an imaginative scope that knows no bounds. In his stories, anything can

happen, and invariably it does. Yet in spite of fanciful beasts and giant trees, motor-cars that take to the air, and a thousand-and-one other marvels, he does not forget that he is dealing with human beings and all his characters live. And however alien the figments of his vivid imagination, he contrives to give his tales an atmospheric detail which makes them as realistic as they are strangely fascinating.

He believes the science fiction writer has the advantage over the writer of other types of fiction because he does not have to observe any editorial taboos. "Sex, religion, philosophy—anything goes so long as it's handled the right way. But, of course, the story's the thing to-day rather than the scientific or fantasy elements, though they have to be taken care of." His advice to writers up-and-coming is: "Don't be stingy with your ideas. Use them lavishly—there's plenty more where they came from."

He likes to start a story with a good title; he finds it easier that way. "Though good writing isn't easy at any

time. But, with me, science fiction is largely a labour of love. That's why I often work twelve hours a day. As long as I can remember I've wanted to be a writer, and I hope to go on writing as long as I live."

But how to stay alive in spite of the high cost of living is one of his two big problems. The second, appropriately, is a psychological one. "All my life I've existed mentally a year or two in the future, with the hope that some day I'd be able to take time off to have a little fun. So far that day has never caught up with me, or me with it. But just lately I've been able to adjust myself to living only about two weeks in the future, and one day I hope to get around to living in the present. Still, that won't stop me looking ahead far enough to keep up with my science fiction."

In '44 the van Vogts moved from Toronto to Los Angeles, where they have made a permanent home. In '46 they were the guests of honour at the Fourth World Science Fiction Convention.

Little Superman, What Now?—Continued from Page 4

year the first full-scale meeting of s-f fans since '41 was held in Los Angeles. Besides hearing author A. E. Van Vogt speak, visitors had the opportunity to meet and talk with such popular writers as Lewis Padgett, Ross Rocklynne, C. L. Moore, E. Mayne Hull, Cleve Cartmill and Lawrence O'Donnell.

Can science fiction hold its readers and add new ones to its already considerable body of fans? Most science fictionists believe that it can. Theoretical, laboratory science, on which the writer of true science fiction draws, is normally years ahead of applied science and engineering, they argue. The fact that it is not so to-day is a result of the war. But the gap will probably widen again unless another global war provides the impetus for a heavily accelerated engineering programme. And if it does, science fiction will bridge that gap for the reader who wants to know "What next—where do we go from here?"

Meantime, there are fresh variants to be found on old themes such as life on other planets, undiscovered worlds, space-travel, the Fourth Dimension, ex-

periments in time, and the depiction of the prehistoric past and the civilisations of the future. There are still almost untouched fields; the Rhine experiments on extra-sensory perception and similar investigations are stimulating many science fiction writers (like Padgett, for one) to try their hand at new adventures of the mind.

Perhaps even more important, the current crisis in science fiction will almost certainly lead to better-written, better-characterised, more convincing yarns. Fans, editors and authors are becoming increasingly aware that science fiction, to live, must have an element of stability which will attract readers long after the gadgets in the stories have become realities. To most fans the new invention or the fantastic element is still the thing that attracts them to science fiction rather than to detective or adventure or western fiction. But science fiction writers are trying hard to obey the injunction of H.G. Wells in his preface to a collection of his "Seven Famous Novels"—to "keep everything human and real, once the magic trick is done."

Book Reviews

The Saga of Science Fiction

PILGRIMS THROUGH SPACE AND TIME: Trends and Patterns in Scientific and Utopian Fiction. By J. O. Bailey. Argus, New York, \$5.00.

Reviewed by **Walter Gillings**

We have been waiting to welcome this book almost as long as it has been in preparation. It is the first attempt ever made to survey the whole field of science-fantasy, to trace its development from the beginning, to analyse its motivations and assess its intrinsic values. It, too, has a history. It started as a University thesis on the Wellsian romances, written 20 years ago; by '34 it had become a complete study of English science fiction from 1817 to 1914. Lured on by Mr. Ben Abramson, the publisher, Dr. Bailey pursued his appraisal of the field, which by then had vastly enlarged and produced (thanks to Mr. Gernsback) some peculiar off-shoots. Now at last it appears, taking due regard of more recent trends; though it would seem the author has given up the struggle to keep pace with the full flower of the medium during the last decade.

For the science fiction reader who cares naught of the derivation or classification of the story he is enjoying, whether it be a piece of magazine space-opera or a profound volume of Stapledon, this book may have no more than a passing interest. But for the earnest student of the medium it is an invaluable work of reference from which even the most erudite may learn how much he has still to discover of this fascinating field, which too many of us come to think of as though it were bounded by the rigid pages of our favourite pulp. Indeed, browsing through it, we began to feel twinges of regret at how little we had explored in 20 years.

Dr. Bailey, manifestly, has not only a longer acquaintance with its broader paths but has been able to spend a great amount of time reading and digesting the books we have yet to get around to. But his reading of magazine science fiction is either much less extensive or, as we suspect, he has not persevered with his studies in this department. For he dismisses a quarter of a century's evolution of the medium in this form a little too cursorily for our

liking, seeming to have lost interest at a time when it was, on its own admission, in a rut.

His objections to the "cops and robbers, gangland fights and interplanetary piracy" which have become a monotonous feature of the popular pulps, and which many of us equally deplore, indicate that he has overlooked the better aspects of recent trends which are deserving of note even if they have been encouraged with an eye to mass-appeal. Many stories which are quite honourable among their kind have appeared in **Astounding Science-Fiction** since the days of such "fairy tales of astronomy" as Fearn's "Blue Infinity," which he instances as marking "the climax of the wonderful" in this branch of fantasy literature. To settle on a George O. Smith piece as typical of current magazine material, with its "casual commonplaces," is hardly doing justice to the healthy influence of such writers as Heinlein, Padgett and Hubbard (not to mention Mr. Campbell himself) on the medium's latter-day development. Yet the index, comprehensive as it is, includes none of the names that make news in science fiction to-day.

However, he does not ignore (as we might have expected him to do, in view of his attitude) the strange phenomenon of fandom; in fact, such devotees as Langley Searles and Ackerman, as well as the late lamented Lovcraft and Dr. Breuer, have assisted him in bringing the record as up to date as it is. But in leaving to us the task of assessing the thousands of stories published in the magazines, he has missed the opportunity to discover for himself some of the more subtle changes which have occurred, and are still occurring, in the evolution of fantasy.

In spite of its limitations (which may not appear half so conspicuous to those who have been less preoccupied with prevailing tendencies than have we), Dr. Bailey's work still merits the description of monumental, running as it does to 341 pp., including a biblio-

graphy and index comprising some 300 pieces of science-fantasy.

The rest of the book is in two parts. The first part traces the growth of the medium through the centuries, beginning with the early romances of Wilkins, Cyrano, and other imaginary voyagers into the yet dimly understood heavens, and with Holberg's venture into Earth's interior which anticipated Burroughs by nearly 300 years. It explains the advent of the Utopia, deals with the influence of the Gothic novel which led to the blending of science and the supernatural in "Frankenstein" and other 19th century pieces, and so proceeds to the age of Poe and Verne and the new phase of mechanical marvels-to-be. Thence, continuing the interplanetary motif, to Locke's "Moon Hoax" and Hale's "Brick Moon," which seems to have been the precursor of all stories about artificial satellites. And so through the satires and Utopias of the Machine Age, with Butler, Belamy and Hudson, to the future war stories of Griffith and the eclipse of Verne by Wells.

Here Dr. Bailey pays due homage to the vast contribution of the Master, whose boldness of imagination, true appreciation of the social significance of advancing science, and creation of character in his stories, he contrasts with the schoolboy facetiousness and superb optimism of Verne. Though he does not neglect the Vernian influence on juvenile literature, as reflected in the "Frank Reade" tales of Lu Senarens, which must have made as many science fiction fans among our fathers as the "Nonames" of **The Wizard** do to-day.

Finally he traces the development of the cosmic romance and the introduction of psychological and metaphysical problems into science-fantasy, so bringing us to the era of the specialised magazines (not forgetting **Scoops!**), the rise of "Buck Rogers" and "Superman"—and, incidentally, of fandom. But in approaching modern science fiction he prefers to deal with the novels of Burroughs, Lewis, Capek, Huxley, Wright, Taine and others with whom the general reader may be familiar, and with the new master Stapledon, to whose works he devotes many pages.

The lesser-known works of Balmer and Yllie, England, Cummings and Kline are given their share of attention; and among the many story-outlines with which he illustrates the use

of various themes we come across such magazine "classics" (he does not call them that!) as Verrill's "Beyond the Pole," Coblentz's "After 12,000 Years," Stribling's "Green Splotches," Smith's "Skylark of Space," and Murray Leinster's old **Argosy** stories. But in the end Dr. Bailey lumps the stories of the magazines, specifically, along with those of the detective and love story pulps, dismissing them as "romances of escape," and challenging us with the assumption that "the most zealous science fiction fans entertain few illusions that escapist literature of this kind has noteworthy esthetic value."

He does, though, concede to it "the esthetic value of the myth," and in this respect pays tribute to Lovecraft as one of the most powerful and sensitive writers of our generation in this field. His stories, he says, are "splendid examples of scientific fiction turned to the uses of the tale of terror." Which would seem to settle the question whether the modern master of the macabre contributed anything to science fiction, as carefully segregated by its anti-spook champions, or just wrote "weird stuff."

In the second half of his book, Dr. Bailey runs all his science fiction through a sieve and examines its common elements from a nicely objective viewpoint. He considers its various literary treatments, its stock devices and characters, its conventions and content-patterns. The alien beings, their cities and sciences, the trips through space and time, the menaces and catastrophes, the worlds within (excepting Mr. Shaver's), are all sorted and analysed; the imaginary inventions and discoveries which have so often proved prophetic are likewise arrayed for our further inspection in their separate compartments. This is a masterly feat of categorisation.

The social philosophies and prophecies of the Utopistic writers are similarly assembled; and when Dr. Bailey, in his final chapter, quotes from an **Astounding** editorial of '45 and makes the admission that the stories in this magazine are "of some importance as vehicles for conveying ideas (about the situation now confronting us) to a wide audience," we are inclined to forgive his omissions and applaud the immense work and thought he has put into this unique tome, which he might very well have dedicated to every science fiction fan.

The Resurrection of Merritt

THE FOX WOMAN, by A. Merritt, and **THE BLUE PAGODA**, by Hannes Bok.
New Collector's Group, New York. \$3.00.

Reviewed by Frank Edward Arnold

Though this new Merritt novel appears four years after his death, he began writing it as long ago as 1923. Dissatisfied with various aspects of the narrative, he abandoned it for completion later. But his busy life as a journalist gave him little time for creative work, and at his death a manuscript of only the first four chapters was left, along with notes for the remainder. From this difficult start Hannes Bok has made a bold and, on the whole, successful attempt to finish the story.

Abraham Merritt was one of the most popular among the great fantasy authors of 20-30 years ago. Born in Pennsylvania, he was originally intended for the law, but newspapers claimed him and he remained with them for most of his life. Travel was his passion, and with it archaeology, folklore, astronomy, botany (one corner of his garden at home was devoted to exotic drug-producing plants), anthropology, magic and witchcraft—all subjects to stimulate a vivid imagination. He loved the ruined temples of Central and South America, where he wandered often and listened keenly to tales recounted by the Indians. Lost civilisations and little-known peoples, haunted by evanescent monsters, coloured his thought and inevitably became the material of his stories.

Most of his eight published novels are very much in the vein of Rider Haggard, with a touch of the early, prose-poetic, time-machine creating Wells.* Lone explorers discover an unknown and fantastic civilisation in some remote corner of the earth, invariably ruled by a beautiful woman of supernatural origin (the Snake Mother, Norhala of "The Metal Monster," or in this case the Fox Woman), who conjures up unheard-of powers to oppose the schemes of the villain. Simple romantic adventures, relying on

fantastic concepts and narrative strength for their effect, they are marred by a somewhat over-florid style and an excess of picturesque epithet, matched only by the extravagant praises lavished on them by his ecstatic readers.

Yet, in his own vein, Merritt was a sound and able writer.

Few of his admirers can have shown so much devotion as Hannes Bok, of whom it is said that once, as a boy, he copied out the whole of "The Metal Monster" in longhand, this being the only way he could then possess a copy. He has since acquired a complete collection of Merritt's published works, and has now fulfilled a long-standing ambition to illustrate one of them; an appropriate ambition, for Mr. Bok must be one of the finest fantasy artists since the days of Sidney Sime, and he is as right for Merritt as Sime was for Dunsany. Being also a proven author, he was perhaps the only man capable of finishing "The Fox Woman" as Merritt might have intended.

The story tells of one Jean Meredith, wife of an elderly explorer, who when the story opens is being pursued by bandits in a remote province of China. The bandits have murdered her husband Martin at the instigation of his brother Charles, who is greedy for his fortune. Sobbing for vengeance, Jean finds sanctuary in the Temple of the Foxes, ruled by her husband's wise old friend Yu Chien, priest of the fox cult, and the mysterious Fox Woman, who takes spiritual possession of Jean—and also of her daughter, in giving birth to whom Jean dies. The daughter grows up part Occidental, part Oriental fox woman, to achieve the vengeance desired by her mother.

Merritt's own narrative concludes shortly after the birth of the child. In the second part, entitled "The Blue

* These, in order of their original appearance in the American *Argosy*, are "The Moon Pool" (1918), "The Metal Monster" (20), "The Face in the Abyss" (23), "The Ship of Ishtar" (24), "Seven Footprints to Satan" (27), "Dwellers in the Mirage" (32), "Burn, Witch, Burn!" (32), and "Creep, Shadow, Creep!" (34).

With the exception of "The Metal Monster," all have appeared in book form, the last three also being published in England. All, too, have since been reprinted in various magazines, and more recently in the "Murder Mystery Monthly" pocket-book series of the Avon Book Co., New York.

Pagoda," Bok takes up the thread at a point eighteen years later as the girl comes from China to America to see the wicked uncle. He has done his creditable best to write in the Merritt fashion, though his own style is brisker, more "modern" and less graceful than Merritt's; and he has packed the story with fantastic invention and hectic incident in a manner that should satisfy every follower of the Merritt tradition.

This first production of the New Collector's Group is a large, slim volume with a black binding, gilt cover-lettering and six full-page Bok illustrations. Its general appearance is something like that of an old-time magazine, an illusion that is oddly heightened by the double-column printing. The edition is limited to 1,000 numbered copies, which immediately on release acquired considerable collector-value.

The Fate of the First Men

THE FLAMES: A Fantasy, by Alf Stapledon. Secker & Warburg, London, 6/-.

Reviewed by **John Beynon**

The approximate 30,000 word length of Dr. Stapledon's new story scarcely warrants his publishers' description of it as a novel unless they are using the word in an older sense. As one would expect, there is novelty in it, but it is a novelty more of detail than of form or content.

The conception of vital and sentient flames as symbols of spirit is about as old as sun worship. The attempt to

compromise between spirituality and practical cunning is even older; nor is there a great deal of originality in the reflection that man's obtuseness and pettiness has him headed for his own destruction. Even the ingenuities of conception by which the sentient flames originating in the Sun may be resuscitated in the high temperatures attainable through atomic fission, and thus, if men are willing, spread the benison of their spirituality so that a state of psycho-scientific symbiosis will develop, can scarcely disguise that the story is a simple restatement of the view that homo still shows little prospect of becoming sapiens.

"The story," say the publishers, "may be taken as symbolising some of the contemporary human problems." It may—and perpetual ones, too. It also indicates a line of contemporary pessimism. It does not see man taking voluntarily any way out of his present impasse. But though it does not share the dejection of spirit which darkened Wells' final observations on our self-destructive career, there seems little difference of expectation between the two authors concerning the fate of this civilisation.

Their main dissimilarity lies in scale of view. The spirituality with which Wells was concerned was limited and almost measurable. It is implicit in his works that he considered man, with no very great modifications, to be evolution's last word; failure, therefore, must mean utter defeat—the end. For Dr. Stapledon, however, spirit—life in evolution—is more important than such temporary manifestations of it as mankind. Were it not for that, he too might be oppressed to the same unhappy sense of futility at the prospect of the unregenerate homo astutus blundering closer to the end of his tether.

NEW BOOKS

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The **Forbidden Garden**—Taine: 16/6

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E. J. CARNELL

**17 Burwash Road, Plumstead
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Wanted: More 'Wackies'

THE MISLAID CHARM, by Alexander M. Phillips. Prime Press, Philadelphia, Pa. \$1.75.

Reviewed by **John Carnell**

To the fantasy addict, this reprint from the pleasantly memorable pages of **Unknown Worlds** stands out as an oasis in the midst of a growing desert of weird and science fiction stories. Too little has as yet been seen of the wacky type of fantasy which Editor Campbell and his authors developed during the '39-43 period, and we welcome this step in the right direction on the part of the new Prime Press. There are many even better novels of this sort we should like to see in book form. Outside of a few anthologised stories, the only others we know of, which were published during the war and are now unobtainable, are the de Camp "O'Shea" trilogy and his "Lest Darkness Fall."

"The Mislaidd Charm" appeared in **Unknown** early in '41, and was illustrated by Cartier. For the book a new

artist, Herschel Levit, has produced twelve commendable chapter headings, although they are not comparable with Cartier's peerless work.

Let us assure those who do not know it already that Mr. Phillips has invented an hilarious series of misfortunes for his hero to overcome, in this story of a "little" man who falls foul of the tribal charm of a bunch of gnomes from the Pennsylvanian mines. The charm is "borrowed" by one of the imps who goes to town and plays merry hell with the hard drinks, to the mortification of Henry Pickett and the rest of the human community who, naturally, cannot see the culprit. Complications set in when the rest of the gnome community attempt to retrieve their charm, which is now in the possession of hero Henry and a seductive blonde.

Meanwhile, too, the charm has become endowed with a semi-sentient life of its own, and is experimenting with disastrous effects upon both man and beast. In one breathless chapter, Phillips manages to outdo Thorne Smith at his best, with an hotel scene which will bring tears to your eyes. Altogether, it's a good story, and a good book to have on the shelf for an idle moment

ARKHAM HOUSE BOOKS

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Who Knocks? Edited by August Derleth, 15/6.

This Mortal Coil, by Lady Cynthia Asquith, 16/6.



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Satirical Salad

THE LADY FROM VENUS, by Garnett Radcliffe. Macdonald, London. 8/6.

Reviewed by **John Beynon**

According to the publishers' blurb, this book marks a new departure for the author; and if any others are thinking of departing from the groovy trails of thrillerdom, one could not wish them better than that their way should take them among such bubblesome freshets as Mr. Radcliffe has found.

We'd better get this straight. Those for whom fantasy means the papier-maché Gothic of Lovecraft, the incarnadined streams of Howard, or the bogie-wogie of Quinn, stop right here. But should your taste run to a kind of salad in which numerous interplanetary ingredients, both new and familiar, are taken straight from the garden, dashed with friendly satire, dressed (undressed?) with Thorne Smith, and served up in an Anita Loos bowl, then you should read "The Lady from Venus," even going to the length of buying it to enable the author to produce more.

It is not intended to imply that the story is derivative, but to suggest the flavour you will find in it. Mr. Radcliffe has all the gadgets so firmly in his hands that he can use and flourish them without any of that heavy justification of marvels with which we are wearily familiar. He lets them flash and sparkle as the setting and not as the objects of his very enjoyable story.

"The Lady from Venus arrived on Earth wearing nothing more than a smile," says the blurb—but don't let that put you off; I doubt whether there is a phase as facetiously trite as that in the whole of the book itself. The satire (a much misused and therefore discouraging word, but here properly employed) never loses its lightness and perception; there is a deft sketching touch in many of the implications, nor is the undercurrent suggestion of obverse personality in the general tangle of the Lady's adventures upon the barbarous planet Urth without its subtleties.

After getting a great deal of fun out of reading it, one is glad to feel that Mr. Radcliffe probably got a lot of fun out of writing it—and to hope that he will enjoy his next as much.

New and Forthcoming Books from

the prime press

*Box 2019, Middle City Station,
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THE MISLAID CHARM—Alexander M. Phillips. A captivating fantasy, with twelve illustrations by Herschel Levit. \$1.75 (10/6).

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EQUALITY or A HISTORY OF LITHCONIA. A new edition of what we believe to be the first American Utopian novel. Limited edition of a rare book. \$2.50 (13/6).

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And a Collection of the short stories of Theodore Sturgeon, the title of which will be announced later. \$3.00 (16/6).

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The Feminine Touch

AWAY FROM THE HERE AND NOW:
Stories in Pseudo-Science. By Clare Winger Harris. Dorrance, Philadelphia, \$2.50.

Reviewed by **Thomas Sheridan**

Coming up again quite unexpectedly after all this time, the name of Clare Winger Harris sets us to reminiscing. She was the first woman writer to appear in **Amazing Stories**, which she did just 20 years ago by winning the third prize in Gernsback's first cover contest. By inviting authors to write a story around a perfectly meaningless piece of imagery by artist Paul, he discovered several useful contributors, not least among them the lady scientistfictionist who, we are somewhat shocked to find, is now a grandmother.

Yet we still recall her prize-winning piece, "The Fate of the Poseidonia," which this book reprints with her other stories of those halcyon days, consolidating what we believe is her entire contribution to the field. As well as the nine tales which appeared under her name in **Amazing and Science Wonder Quarterly** between '27 and '30 there is

"A Runaway World" which she had published earlier in **Weird Tales**, and another piece which seems to have eluded us until now.

Of them all, we have the most vivid recollections of "The Miracle of the Lily," whose breadth of vision was quite remarkable at the time, and of "The Menace from Mars," which in spite of its title was highly original in its approach to the already well-worked invasion theme. In fact, most of Mrs. Harris' stories had a freshness of touch and a very definite human interest which still endure to-day even if the writing has dated.

Although titles like "The Diabolical Drug" and "The Evolutionary Monstrosity" may suggest that these tales are too far away from the here and now for the reader of a more mature brand of science fiction (which, by the way, has come to abhor the term "pseudo-science"), they have worn well enough to satisfy the average reader's demands, and as examples of what some of us used to enthuse over in the years before **Astounding** was thought of, they are of peculiar interest to all followers of the medium.

Do You Write Fantasy Fiction?

The writing of fantasy for the popular magazines is a job the ordinary writing schools cannot teach. It is a highly specialised field, and however good your tutor may be, however successful you have been in other fields, you cannot expect to sell your fantasy stories unless you learn the secret of writing them for specific markets and really understand their requirements.

Though the British market is practically non-existent, there is increasing scope for the new writer among the American magazines, whose rates of payment are high. If you feel you might benefit by the advice and assistance of one who is actively engaged in the fantasy field, who has edited two science fiction magazines and has coached many new writers into print, I should be glad to offer you my services.

These include the appraisal of your story-ideas and plot-outlines, the constructive criticism of your manuscripts and help with their revision where necessary, the submission of your material to the most appropriate markets, and all other assistance of which you may be in need in your efforts to become a regular contributor to this field. I do not promise you immediate success, but if you have the capacity to write the material fantasy editors want I can, perhaps, enable you the quicker to achieve results.

I shall be pleased to give your inquiry my personal attention.

WALTER GILLINGS

Authors' and Publishers' Representative

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Among the Magazines

with NIGEL LINDSAY

'FANTASY BOOK' APPEARS

When we'd dried our eyes after piping them over the suspension of **Fantasy**, we opened them to find **Fantasy Book** coming from the Land of No Paper Rationing to fill the gap. This new, 25c. mag., with large-size format (not pocket-size, as originally intended), is the product of the new Fantasy Publishing Co., Los Angeles, who are making a special concession to readers who want to hoard their copies. The bulk of each issue is being printed on ordinary pulp for general distribution, and for the benefit of collectors 1,000 copies will be on better-class book paper. Subscription for 12 issues is \$3.00, but frequency of publication is uncertain as yet.

No. 1 contains the first part of a two-issue serial by British writer Festus Pragnell, "The Machine God Laughs"; "People of the Crater," a novelette of a lost race in Antarctica by Andrew North; "The Walls of Acid," an inter-planetary piece by Henry Hasse; "Flight Through Tomorrow," by Stanton A. Coblentz, and other contributions from Robert Bloch, Bryce Walton and Weaver Wright. Promised for the future are "Ship of Darkness," by A. E. van Vogt, "Star of the Undead," by Paul Lavond, and stories by Pragnell and Maurice G. Hugi which appeared in **Tales of Wonder's** first issue just ten years ago.

The fourth **Avon Fantasy Reader** features the first van Vogt story to appear outside the Street & Smith magazines which have published all his work to date. Title: "Defence." The rest of

the issue consists of eight reprints, leading off with P. Schuyler Miller's "The Arrhenius Horror," from a '31 **Amazing**. Nelson Bond, Ray Bradbury, William Hope Hodgson, Clark Ashton Smith and Lord Dunsany are also represented.

Good news this month for **Astounding** readers who've been patiently awaiting another Doc. Smith epic. His four-part "Children of the Lens," last of the "Lensman" series (of which the others, according to him, were but introductions to this one), starts serialisation in the November issue, with a Rogers cover to illustrate it.

The new-style cover by Alejandro on the September number lived up to Editor Campbell's blurbs—I'd like some more like that. A nice selection of tales in this issue, including Geo. O. Smith's novelette, "Meddler's Moon," and Eric Frank Russell's "Hobbyist." Among the shorts, P. Schuyler Miller's fantasy of "The Thing on Outer Shoal" made a nice break.

It's no news to **Thrilling Wonder** veterans that Leslie Charteris, creator of "The Saint," is one of us. Now he's started writing fantasy as well as reading it. The story goes that he did "The Darker Drink" for one of **Standard's** detective pulps, but they bagged it for the October **Wonder** instead. Feature novel of this issue is "Donovan Had a Dream," by James MacCreigh, in which Venus is ruled by a matriarchy of Hags—until the Earthmen upset the applecart. There's an amusing piece by Robert Heinlein, "Jerry is a Man";

THE BRITISH FANTASY LIBRARY has pleasure in announcing a new service to its members. This will be known as the **Liaison Department**, and will operate to:

- Facilitate non-profit trading between members;
- Aid exchanges of magazines and books;
- Answer special queries on fantasy and science fiction;
- Help British fans contact others in the U.S.A. and other parts of the world.

Details are available from Capt. K. F. Slater, Riverside, South Brink, Wisbech, Cambs. The Library and Chain Magazine Departments will continue to operate as before. Non-members wishing to join the Library should write to Mr. R. Holmes, 67 Lineside Road, Belle Vale, Liverpool, 15, for information about all three Departments.

Francis Flagg comes back through the medium of Weaver Wright, and Henry Kuttner and Manly Wade Wellman are among the also-rans.

Next issue, George O. Smith will be back with "Quarantine," story of a metallic plague with a new slant, and Kuttner and Wellman will oblige again: Kuttner with an unusual novel about a world in which past and future exist at the same time, and Wellman with "The Timeless Tomorrow," which has to do with Old Man Nostradamus.

November **Startling** features "The Man in the Iron Cap," by Murray Leinster, and a reprint of Jack Williamson's "Through the Purple Cloud." Current (Oct.) **Famous Fantastic** presents the old Charles Vivian fantasy, "City of Wonder," which you'll probably have on your bookshelf, and a new Leinster short, "The Day of the Deepies." Not to mention a 22-page readers' department containing no less than 86 letters, many of which are from people with back issues to get rid of. Now's your chance, collectors!

Chief attraction of November **Fantastic Adventures** is Berkeley Livingston's "The Lamp of Vengeance." And I mustn't overlook the October

Amazing, in which Editor Palmer seizes on the Flying Saucers (or spots before the eyes) as supporting evidence of Mr. Shaver's contention that space-ships do pass this way occasionally. This issue includes "Trail of the Astro-gar," by Henry Hasse, "The Third Bolt" by Frances M. Deegan, and short stories by Don Wilcox and Rog Phillips. Wilcox will have a novel, "The Giants of Mogo," in the November number.

Finally, a word about **Weird Tales**, which is approaching its silver anniversary. With the September issue it increased its price to 20c., but contents are unchanged. November issue has another whimsical Matt Fox cover illustrating Robert Bloch's "The Cheaters," about a pair of specs that makes you see things as they really are. Other novelettes are "The Inn by Doomsday Falls," a haunted house story by Allison V. Harding, and "The Last Adam and Eve," by Bert David Ross, an original piece concerning the hour which the future will recognise as Earth's last. There are also shorts by Stephen Grendon, Mary Elizabeth Counselman, Carl Jacobi, Seabury Quinn, and our seafaring friend George (Chandler) Whitley.

ARKHAM TO ISSUE MAGAZINE

A quarterly magazine to feature weird and science-fantasy stories and non-fiction material of interest to the collector will be launched next year by Arkham House, Sauk City. It will be called **The Arkham Sampler** and be edited by August Derleth.

Limited to 1,000 copies, the new magazine will cost \$1.00 a copy or \$3.00 a year to subscribers. It will contain as much material as an average Arkham book and is being issued because the increasing cost of book production prevents presentation in book form of all the material collected by Derleth and his partners.

The announcement of the magazine emphasises that, although it will feature fiction, it is primarily designed to present "curious, out-of-the-way material in the field of the fantastic," much of which is not cast in fiction form. The fiction will comprise reprints of stories which have become unobtainable, pieces never published in

America before, and occasional new stories. The **Sampler** will also carry fantasy book reviews by well-known authors and critics, and make a feature of readers' letters.

First (Winter '48) issue, out next January, will present the first of four instalments of H. P. Lovecraft's novel, "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath," hitherto printed only in the rare omnibus volume, "Beyond the Wall of Sleep"; other pieces by H. Russell Wakefield, Stephen Grendon and Clark Ashton Smith, a history and chronology of the mythical "Necronomicon" on which Lovecraft based much of his work, and the Introduction by August Derleth to his forthcoming science fiction anthology, "Strange Ports of Call."

The **Sampler** will have a permanent cover design by Ronald Clyne. Among other contributors to future issues will be Fritz Leiber Jnr., Algernon Blackwood, Edward Wagenknecht and Robert Bloch.

Geoffrey Giles writes

ABOUT BOOKS

The sudden flood of British fantasy books which came earlier in the year would seem to have been dammed. But a few volumes, mainly of interest to the weird tale reader, continue to trickle through, though all of them are pretty ancient stuff.

As well as a new edition of M. R. James' "Collected Ghost Stories," Arnold have published, at 7/6, "Unholy Relics and Other Uncanny Tales," by M. P. Dare, and "Not Exactly Ghosts," by Sir Andrew Caldecott, which are both very much in the James manner. "Twilight Stories," by Rhoda Broughton (Home & Van Thal, 6/-), also presents ghost stories of Victorian vintage. And if your taste is for the really antique, "Chinese Ghost and Love Stories," by P'u Sing Ling (Dobson, 12/6), is a selection of traditional pieces by a Chinese exponent of the medium first published as long ago as 1740.

"The Best Stories of M. P. Shiel" have been re-assembled by Gollancz, and more "Tales of the Supernatural" are available in a Pan Book. The third in the series of Charles Williams reprints by Faber, "Many Dimensions," is to be had at 7/6; the new edition of Karel Capek's "K Krakatit" promised some time ago is now forthcoming from Allen & Unwin at 8/6. Methuen have followed the "The Golden Rooms" with the third in Vardis Fisher's series of novels about man's emergence from the brute, "Intimations of Eve" (9/6). And that, I think, is about the extent of the trickle, which hasn't kept us very busy.

TIME-TALE ANTHOLOGY

On the other hand, we're having to work overtime keeping track of everything that is coming, either now or in the near future, from the other side of Pond. Latest big tome to land in our lap is "Travellers in Time," a collection of time stories edited by Philip Van Doren Stern, noted for his "Moonlight Traveller" anthology of some years back. The new \$3.50 volume, published by Doubleday, comprises items by Wells, Max Beerbohm, Somerset Maugham, James Thurber and others who have handled the theme of "a distortion of the normal sequence of time" apart from the magazine writers we

usually associate with time-travelogues. You'll be familiar with some of them, if not all.

Another anthology which will prove irresistible to the weird tale fraternity is "The Sleeping and the Dead: 30 Uncanny Tales," which has been patiently awaited for almost two years. Edited by August Derleth and his partner Stephen Grendon, it contains pieces by old favourites like Machen, Wakefield and Blackwood as well as such as Bradbury, Bloch, Schuyler Miller, Boucher and Kuttner, among the more modern school. And, of course, there's Lovecraft, represented by "The Dreams in the Witchhouse."

You'll be able to get this through Arkham House, from whom are also forthcoming the first collection of stories by the popular **Unknown** writer, Fritz Leiber Jr., "Night's Black Agents," and another selection of new and reprinted tales by the English writer L. P. Hartley under the title, "The Travelling Grave and Other Stories." And those who revel in William Hope Hodgson won't want to miss the first complete collection of his tales of "Carnacki, the Ghost-Finder," appearing under the imprint of Mycroft and Moran.

THREE TAINE NOVELS

Any day now we're expecting the third production of the Fantasy Press, the new John Taine novel, "The Forbidden Garden." Due to follow it next month is A. E. van Vogt's **Unknown** classic, "The Book of Ptath," which we're looking forward to re-reading in its lengthened version. Lloyd Arthur Eshbach, whose long experience in the fantasy field has been turned to good account in his production of these slick collector's items, informs us that he has added to his schedule an extended version of Eric Frank Russell's "Sinister Barrier," which ushered in **Unknown** in '39 and saw book presentation here during the war. But that won't come until next year.

Following a new, illustrated edition of Dr. Edward E. Smith's "The Skylark of Space," the Hadley Book Co. will be reprinting two memorable Taine novels from **Amazing Quarterly**, "White Lily" and "Seeds of Life." And the Fantasy

Publishing Co., of Los Angeles, having launched **Fantasy Book**, is starting out with an ambitious programme of reprints which should appeal to those who want to get rid of some of those old magazines they've hoarded for years and can't bring themselves to rip out the stories they must keep to read again.

Though they will probably never have seen Austin Hall's interstellar story, "The People of the Comet," which, published in **Weird Tales** way back in '23, will appear in book form at \$2.00. Then, two of Stanton A. Coblentz's old **Amazing** classics, "The Sunken World" and "After 12,000 Years," will be made available at \$3.00 each; and another volume in preparation will reprint Ed. Earl Repp's "The Radium Pool" from **Science Wonder Stories**.

After "Venus Equilateral," the selection of George O. Smith **Astounding** stories now due from the Prime Press, will come "Equality, or A History of Lithconia," believed to be the first of all American Utopias. It originally appeared in a Philadelphia journal in 1803, and was published as a book for the first time in 1837. Alfred C. Prime writes to tell us that an 1863 edition has also come to light, so that it will be somewhat less than a century since it was last made available; but it's none the less a rarity which will interest all students of the Utopia. Price, by the way, will be \$2.50, not \$2.00 as recently advertised.

TO HONOUR KELLER

Yet another new publishing enterprise by and for fantasy fans is the Avalon organisation of Sam Moskowitz and William S. Sykora, who are commencing operations by issuing an anthology of stories by that firm favourite David H. Keller. This has been prepared by Mr. Moskowitz, who has written an introduction incorporating a biography and analysis of the work of the veteran medico-author whose half-century of writing the volume will commemorate.

In addition to the famous novel, "Life Everlasting," it will present several other novelettes and short stories from **Amazing, Wonder and Weird Tales**, with two new pieces, one of which is said to have been rejected by considerate editors as too gruesome even for the most hardened fan. The book will be limited to 1,000 copies, of which 300 will be available with an autographed picture of Dr. Keller. The price to subscribers is \$3.00, but may be increased on publication.

The National Fantasy Fan Federation is also planning to issue the first American edition of Dr. Keller's "Sign of the Burning Hart," a collection of four connected stories which was published in France in '38, when only 100 copies were printed. This time it will have an edition of 500 autographed copies, priced at \$2.00 each. These stories are reputed to be among Keller's best work; neither science fiction nor weird tales, but something quite unique.

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