

# FANTASY REVIEW

Vol. II, No. 9

SIXPENCE

JUN.-JUL. '48

## 'NEW WORLDS' CRISIS

### *Readers to Share in New Publishing Project*

To save 'New Worlds' from the fate of 'Fantasy' following the close-down of Pendulum Publications, British science fiction readers will be invited to participate in a plan to establish a publishing company of their own.

The scheme, whose prime movers include the editors of both magazines, was broached at the first get-together of fantasy writers and readers for four years, held in London at Whitsun. Editor John Carnell revealed that **New Worlds** was held up indefinitely because the publishers had suspended operations. Yet the last (October '47) issue had been oversold by 3,000 copies and the fourth, which was ready for press, would have met an even greater demand.

The paper situation was such that no other publisher would be likely to take over the magazine. But a few who were concerned with its further advancement had agreed to join in launching a new company which, at the first opportunity, would use existing facilities for producing and distributing, and would also provide an opportunity for readers to give the enterprise further financial backing. These plans, and other ventures that would develop if they were successful, were being prepared in detail and would be announced later.

Mr. Carnell said that although every attempt at a regular British science fiction publication had failed sooner or later, the reaction to **Fantasy** and **New Worlds** had clearly demonstrated the scope for such a magazine if it were done by people who really knew the field.

Walter Gillings, editor **Fantasy Review**, who presided, said that after 18 years he had decided it was a waste of time trying to interest existing publishers in the potentialities of British fantasy-fiction, of which he was more convinced than ever. **Fantasy** had folded only because paper shortage made it an uncertain financial proposition; publishers had to make profits. But if other groups interested in propagating an idea could establish their own journals and make progress, why not fantasy fans? He had started **Fantasy Review** to keep isolated readers informed of developments partly in anticipation of the situation now confronting them.

Of the informal meetings of writers and readers which had been held in London since the war, he said it was felt

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these had accomplished more than pre-war organisations like the Science Fiction Association which held yearly conventions. But if the new generation of fans felt the need of a society to link them together, it was for them to form one. With their new approach to the medium, they would probably be more successful than if it were run by the older enthusiasts with their conservative ideas\*.

The meeting expressed itself in favour of a new organisation, but no definite proposals were forthcoming, though it was decided to hold a bigger convention next year at which a national association might be launched.

Mr. Carnell also reported progress on the Big Pond Fund, started by American fans with the object of enabling a British representative to attend the next World Science Fiction Convention to be held in New York. An auction of books and magazines raised a substantial sum for the Fund.

Thanks to "Whitcon" organiser J. O. Newman, auctioneer Ted Tubb and the speakers were expressed by former S.F.A.

\*The overwhelming majority of fans present were new to such gatherings; many were meeting fellow enthusiasts for the first time. Youngest attendee was 13-year-old Ronald Walter Gillings, taking an active interest in the proceedings, discussing the merits of "Skylark" Smith with his elders.

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Editor: Walter Gillings.

Associate Editors: John Carnell, J. Michael Rosenblum, D. R. Smith, Arthur F. Hillman, Fred C. Brown, Nigel Lindsay, Frank Edward Arnold, J. O. Newman, A. Vincent Clarke.

American Correspondents: David Kishi (New York), Forrest J. Ackerman (Hollywood), Sam Moskowitz (Newark, N.J.), Joseph B. Baker (Chicago).

secretary G. Ken Chapman, whose name was also mentioned in connection with the proposed new publishing company. It was suggested that this might be incorporated in time for **New Worlds** to resume publication in the autumn.

## BRITISH SCIENTISTS NOW READ 'WONDER'

In a talk on "Science Fiction and Astronautics," Arthur C. Clarke, Council member of the British Interplanetary Society, considered whether s-f had been a good or bad thing for the space-travel movement. He recalled that the Society was started in '33, by people who were interested in the philosophical aspects of the subject; the first secretary, Leslie J. Johnson, was an active s-f fan. To-day the membership comprised only 20 per cent. of such people.

"There are a small minority of members who will not look at science fiction, a large number who read it surreptitiously and don't talk about it, and many who read and discuss it openly and don't give a damn what the rest think. These s-f fans are to be found among both technical and non-technical members."

He had evidence that many professional scientists in this country as well as America were regular readers of science fiction. In fact, he had just started **Thrilling Wonder Stories** circulating in the Cavendish Laboratory, which had hitherto been sacrosanct to **Astounding**.

Verne and Wells had served to spread the early ideas of interplanetary travel, and the theories of Oberth and other pioneers of astronautics were given great play by popular magazines. It was practically a law that people were introduced to the science through science fiction, which had thus been of great service to the movement.

He had been more inclined to condemn the medium for some of its poorer specimens, but the fact remained that people had been persuaded to take even Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon seriously by the developments of the past few years.

"So, though we cannot dismiss s-f without a stain on its character, I think astronautics would never have reached the stage it now has if it hadn't been for science fiction, which has done much to break down the psychological barriers which still retard our progress. If it is to assist us further in the future, it will have to be more factual and deal with the sociological problems space-flight will bring, as in Ray Bradbury's latest story, 'And the Moon Be Still as Bright.'"

# Walter Gillings' FANTASIA



A. Bertram  
Chandler

Following "vociferous complaint" at jibes at science-fantasy and its fans in Arkham Sampler, August Derleth invited "one of most vocal of s-f adherents" to argue "The Case for Science Fiction" in early issue, plans to devote Winter '49 number entirely to s-f . . . Says Derleth in his Introduction to "Strange Ports of Call," collection of s-f masterpieces: "Overwhelming majority of s-f stories are written on an adolescent level . . . Far too much of s-f today suffers from coterie writing . . ." Fan letters in magazines he describes as "submoronic," even accuses **Astounding** Editor Campbell of "writing absurdities" . . . Stephen Grendon, reputed protege of Derleth, author of weird tales, now believed to be pseudonym of Derleth himself . . . Arthur C. Clarke's stories for suspended **Fantasy**, still unpublished, may appear instead in U.S. magazines . . .

**Unknown** annual, due for publication mid-July, titled "From Unknown Worlds," to have 128 pages with cover by Cartier; contents will be reprints . . . Coming up in **Startling Stories**: "What Mad Universe?" by Fredric Brown, Henry Kuttner's "The Time Axis." October **Thrilling Wonder** will feature "Moonfire," by Leigh Brackett, William F. Temple's "Miracle Town" . . . Lester del Rey told New Jersey fans why he no longer writes fantasy: "I find Western and sports stories more profitable" . . . Dr. David H. Keller, writing in **Fanscient**, bemoaned editors' rejection of many of his tales because they were "too beautiful." His detective Taine will reappear in **Fantasy Book** . . . "A Ship from Nowhere," by Master Mariner A. Bertram Chandler, in **American Argosy** . . .

New horror film, "The Beast with Five Fingers," with Peter Lorre, reminiscent of William Fryer Harvey's weird tale of dismembered hand . . . "Miranda," with Glynis Johns as seductive mermaid, ditto Wells' "The Sea Lady" . . . London Film Society revived silent classic "Metropolis" . . . Next Tarzan cinemadventure: "Tarzan and the Fountain of Youth" . . . "Atoms, Rockets and the Moon," booklet by Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles, has reference to s-f magazines . . . U.S. Rocket Society's R.L. ("Golden Moon") Farnsworth authors "Rockets—New Trail to Empire" (Rocket Associates: \$2) . . . "Into the Atomic Age" (Hutchinson: 9/6) is popular atomics textbook by B.I.S. member Chapman Pincher . . . Francis L. Ashton's second Atlantean novel, "Alas This Great City," forthcoming from Dakers; William F. Temple's "The Four-Sided Triangle" from John Long . . .

Ray Bradbury interviewed by **Writers' Markets & Methods**: "My stories are imaginative because that's my field. Sincerity is important . . . I never write down, and I'm not ashamed of anything I turn out . . . I don't use pseudonyms, but sometimes editors will insist on one" . . . N. Wesley Firth, "Prince of (British) Pulp Pedlars," sole author of **Strange Adventures, Futuristic Stories**, owner of 50 pen-names (see this column, last issue), got write-up in men's magazine **Stag** . . . Clark Ashton Smith, Californian sculptor of weird statuettes, fantasy writer and poet, now carving pipes representing Lovecraft characters . . . Sam Merwin, **Wonder** editor, and Leo Margulies, Thrilling Publications chief, co-authors of "The Flags Were Three" (Hurst & Blackett: 9/6), story of old New Orleans . . .

Richard Shaver's "racial memory" piece from **Amazing**, "I Remember Lemuria," published as \$3.00 book by Venture Press, Illinois, "particularly recommended to students of the occult" . . . Atlantis Research Centre's Egerton Sykes planning new Lost Continent scouting expedition . . . Explaining fall of green rain, **Time** belittled Charles Fort and "group of U.S. literary exhibitionists including . . . Tiffany Thayer (who) formed Fortean Society, dedicated to the frustration of science" . . . **New Yorker** on A. E. van Vogt's "World of Null-A" (reviewed **FR** last issue): "Interplanetary skullduggery in the year 2650 . . . fine for addicts of science fiction but hardly likely to convert the rest of the public to it" . . .

Author's agent Forrest J. Ackerman offering unpublished Weinbaum novel, "The Mad Brain" (see this column, Aug.-Sep. '47 issue) for sale to highest bidder. Says Weinbaum's widow: "It was hacked out for a newspaper syndicate. We planned on some day rewriting it" . . . L. Ron Hubbard's **Unknown** tale, "The Case of the Friendly Corpse," to appear in book form as "The Wizard and the Witch"

## THOMAS SHERIDAN tells THE STORY OF 'ASTOUNDING'

"To those who regard science fiction as 'screwball literature,' the scientific standing of **Astounding Stories** may come as a surprise. Although some magazines in this field do cater for juveniles, with cops-and-robbers stories transplanted to Mars . . . **Astounding** is for the strictly adult mind. Its stories are factually accurate because its contributors are outstanding scientists. Its readers include top men of science who find in science fiction . . . mental relaxation . . . One reason for the following **Astounding** has . . . is that it consistently discusses the social and political aspects of future scientific developments. For example, the implications of atomic energy were discussed in (it) with the utmost intelligence years before the atomic bomb was invented."

These comments, from an article on science fiction which appeared recently in **Magazine Digest**, are typical of the attitude of outside observers who have examined the field in the past two years. All have made much of **Astounding's** "intelligent" readership, the prophetic slant of its stories (with particular reference to pre-Hiroshima forecasts), the scientific qualifications of its authors—and of its 37-years-old editor, ex-student of nuclear physics, John W. Campbell Jr., hailed by **The New Yorker** as "The New Cassandra."

To the vast majority of science fictionists, all this public appreciation of their favourite magazine and its revered editorial circle—Heinlein, van Vogt, Ley, de Camp, Padgett and the rest—was only too well-deserved. For "The Magazine of Technicians' Bed-time Stories," as one not-so-enthusiastic fan had described it, was the only one worthy of religious reading; the rest were mere juvenilia. Thousands of its reputed 100,000 followers squealed with delight when literary critic Groff Conklin, having "discovered" the field, drew largely on **Astounding's** war-time issues to compile a fat collection of "The Best in Science Fiction" for which Editor Campbell wrote the Introduction. Their shrieks of gratification crescendoed when hard on its heels came the Random House volume, "Adventures in Time and Space," practically the whole of which was reprinted from

their monthly bible. And as other publishers enabled them to line their bookshelves with the resurrected works of van Vogt, Williamson, Geo. O. Smith and other **Astounding** idols, they whooped for joy; for of all the sought-after back issues which eluded them during the war, those of Mr. Campbell's magazine were the rarest and dearest. If anything ("Slan!" for instance) had appeared in **Astounding**, it must have been good.

Usually, it was. For as long as any but the oldest fans could remember, Street and Smith's **Astounding Stories**, later rechristened **Astounding Science-Fiction**, had enjoyed undisputed leadership of the field, if the accent on original ideas and literate presentation of them were any criterion. Its genuine technical interest, which Campbell encouraged by using non-fiction articles on electronics, rocketry and astronomy, had become more and more pronounced through the years, until its ordinary readers with a mere smattering of science had begun to frown over its pages, even to skip some of them. But while they persevered with its complexities they still revelled in its unusual treatment of old and new concepts, its plausibly fascinating style of storytelling, its attractive but dignified typography and illustrating. And its sensibly provocative letter pages, which reflected the earnest science-mindedness of its devotees years before it began to "sell like hot cakes at scientist-haunts like Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Oak (atom-town) Ridge, Tenn." Vide **Pathfinder** news review late in '46 when, out of deference to the sensibilities of sober technicians, **AS-F** began to play down the superlative in its title and become just plain **Science Fiction**.

Yet, when it first appeared as a rival to **Amazing** and **Wonder Stories** in Jan., '30, **Astounding's** policy was the very opposite of that which has made it pre-eminent in the field. Unlike its contemporaries, it was frankly a pulp magazine, resembling in everything but its science-fantasy theme the other story magazines, such as **Cowboy Stories** and **Clues**, published by its original sponsors, the Clayton Cor-

poration. Its full title was **Astounding Stories of Super-Science**; the accent was on adventure rather than science, with the stories full-blooded and vigorous in the genuine pulp style. The monster-grappling covers, done by Hans Waldemar Wessolowski ("Wesso" of **Amazing**), reflected the new robustious trend, to which veteran writers like Ray Cummings, Victor Rousseau, Murray Leinster and Harl Vincent responded. To be followed by Arthur J. Burks, Edmond Hamilton, Jack Williamson and others.

Cummings's actionful serials, "Bri-gands of the Moon" (March-June, '30) and "The Exile of Time" (April-July, '31), were none the less excellent stories of their kind, while Leinster's "Murder Madness" (May-Aug., '30) ranked high in popularity in spite of being hardly science fiction at all. Newcomer Charles Willard Diffin produced much material of a highly dramatic intensity which sometimes achieved fine effects, like "Brood of the Dark Moon" (Aug.-Nov., '31) and "Two Thousand Miles Below" (June, '32-Jan., '33). But, for the most part, there was little originality or sincerity to distinguish the stories from pure hackwork.

Stock-character series were, therefore, to be expected. Capt. S. P. Meek set the fashion with the exploits of his scientific detective Dr. Bird, who was invariably engaged in frustrating some Soviet plot against the U.S. Sewell Peaslee Wright followed with Commander Hanson, a retired space veteran who yarned of his interplanetary escapades. Finally, commencing with the Nov., '31, issue, came "Hawk Carse." Though one critic caustically rated him "a space cowboy with ray-guns," this memorable character's duel with the Oriental Ku Sui gave an impetus to Anthony Gilmore's tales of interplanetary warfare that was hardly exceeded by the current epics of E. E. Smith and Campbell in the more reputable **Amazing**. As to the real identity of Gilmore a fan controversy raged for years afterwards, and the mystery was never finally resolved; though the theory is that the pseudonym belonged jointly to Editor Harry Bates and his Associate Desmond Hall, who also wrote in the magazine as H. G. Winter.

The flourishing "Readers' Corner," which later became "Brass Tacks," showed general approval of the policy of concentrating on story-interest and taking the science for granted, which



**John Russell Fearn**, the Lancashire writer who, with his remarkable fund of story-ideas, assisted in the development of Street & Smith's **Astounding Stories**. After making his "first appearance in **Amazing**, he came to the forefront as a producer of "thought-variants" and was featured so prominently by Editor Tremaine that fans referred to him as "Cover-copper" Fearn. His fellow British writers, not so prolific as he, preferred to call him "The Blackpool Wonder."

Other names under which he has appeared in print: Thornton Ayre, Polton Cross, Geoffrey Armstrong, Ephraim Winiki . . . He also became a star contributor of **Thrilling Wonder**, still appears occasionally in **Startling Stories**.

undoubtedly came as a relief after **Amazing's** tedious tales which were often too largely composed of scientific chit-chat. But the new magazine did not do well enough to weather the economic depression, and after thirty-four issues, of which the last few were bi-monthly, the Clayton **Astounding** was suspended with the March, '33, number. A companion magazine, **Strange Tales**, featuring weird and horror stories, to which much the same coterie of writers contributed, also folded after seven bi-monthly issues.

Six months later, however, **Astounding** reappeared on the stands as a Street and Smith publication—amid wails from its wondering fans. For at

first it was an odd mixture of weird, science and "pure" fantasy, mostly puerile; the cover was poor, and the inside illustrations quite without atmosphere or artistry of the Wesso standard. But Leinster, Burks and Williamson were recognisable among the unfamiliar names on the contents page; and within two or three issues, with monthly publication, the standard vastly improved under the expert editorship of F. Orlin Tremaine. Having announced his intention "to develop a magazine worthy of the best literary traditions," he introduced a new trend of "heavy science" and bold conception without particular regard for plausibility, which with Nat Schachner's "Ancestral Voices" (Dec., '33), Donald Wandrei's "Colossus" (Jan., '34), and Thomas Calvert McClary's "Rebirth" (Feb.-Mar., '34), soon placed **Astounding** head and shoulders above its dwindling competitors and kept it expanding in circulation as in the scope of its "thought-variant" stories.

Following a series of undistinguished shorts which lagged over from the Clayton magazine, Williamson helped to set the pace with "The Legion of Space" (April-Sep., '34), first of the series concerning the popular Giles Habibula. Attracted by higher payment than the field had ever known before, other **Amazing** and **Wonder** stars joined the **Astounding** roster, and by the end of the year Smith's "Skylark of Valeron" and Campbell's "The Mightiest Machine" were being serialised simultaneously. To most s-f readers these two smash-hits represented the pinnacle of achievement in the medium; though there were few who realised the extent to which English writer John Russell Fearn was to dumbfound them with his audacious plots in a string of cover-stealing pieces including "The Brain of Light" (May, '34) and "The Blue Infinity" (Sep., '35).

The acquisition of Howard V. Brown as cover artist and of Elliott Dold as illustrator gave further strength to the magazine, whose regular contributors at this period included such stalwarts as Stanton A. Coblentz, Harl Vincent, Raymond Z. Gallun and Frank Belknap Long. Its second year of regeneration was notable for the interplanetary stories of the successful newcomer Stanley G. Weinbaum, and for the haunting far-future pieces of Don A. Stuart, otherwise Campbell, commencing with "Twilight" (Nov., '34). The

appearance of H. P. Lovecraft in '36, with his "At the Mountains of Madness" (Feb.-April) and "The Shadow Out of Time" (June), made a peculiar contrast with the heavy - science material of Schachner, Williamson and Fearn (who had reached his peak with "Mathematica"), and the intrusion of what some readers deemed weird fantasy did not go unchallenged in spite of the luxury of trimmed edges. There was stronger disapproval of the childishly-written pieces of one Warner van Lorne, rumoured later to be none other than Editor Tremaine himself; but the excellence of Stuart's "Frictional Losses" (July) combined with the now-famous series of articles on the Solar System, which Campbell did under his own name, to make amends for any backsliding.

The constant recruitment of new writers—J. Harvey Haggard, Clifton B. Kruse, Eando Binder, Ross Rocklynne, P. Schuyler Miller, Manly Wade Wellman, Neil R. Jones, C. L. Moore—and illustrators, like Marchioni, who were already experienced in the field, ensured **Astounding's** continued progress in spite of the resurgence of **Wonder Stories**, which had fallen by the wayside late in '35, while **Amazing** still plodded on under Dr. O'Connor ("Weights and Measures") Sloane. The year '37 ushered in "Science Discussions" and regular science articles; authors Eric Frank Russell, L. Sprague de Camp and Nelson S. Bond, Schachner, Fearn and Williamson continued well to the fore, undaunted by newcomers, two of them making a fresh bow themselves under pseudonyms—Schachner as Chan Corbett, Fearn as Thornton Ayre.

In October, Doc Smith returned with "Galactic Patrol," first (to all appearances) of the Lensmen series, which continued through the years to end recently with "Children of the Lens." In the midst of this, fandom was both surprised and delighted by the news (announced in **Scientifiction**) of Campbell's appointment as editor: and it soon became apparent that **Astounding** was entering on another phase of its development—evolution was the word he used—in the yet unskilled editorial hands of one who had been among the cleverest exponents of the medium since he first appeared in **Amazing** early in '30 with "When the Atoms Failed."

(To be concluded)

## Book Reviews

# The Humanity of Dr. Keller

**LIFE EVERLASTING and Other Tales of Science, Fantasy and Horror**, by David H. Keller, M.D., collected by Sam Moskowitz and Will Sykora. Avalon, Newark, New Jersey, \$3.50.

Reviewed by **Thomas Sheridan**

When Hugo Gernsback launched **Science Wonder Stories** in 1929, he issued a long memorandum explaining its editorial policy to would-be contributors, and offering advice to new writers based on his 25 years' experience of science fiction. There was one writer, already well established in the field, whose work he held out as a model when it came to writing about people as distinct from robots and Martians. "When you get through reading one of Dr. Keller's stories," said the man who had started the ball rolling with **Amazing Stories**, "you almost think you know the characters personally."

It was, of course, Mr. Gernsback who published Dr. Keller's first piece, "The Revolt of the Pedestrians" (**Amazing**, Feb., '28), which brought to the evolving medium that essentially human touch for which he soon made a lasting reputation. But Dr. Keller had been writing about people—real people, more often than fictitious characters—for 30 years before economic necessity impelled him to write stories for money instead of merely for his own gratification.\* Always he has tried to write "beautifully" rather than to suit editorial policies, which explains why so much of his work has appeared in amateur publications. Yet, until recent years, he was a favourite with editors as well as readers. Dr. T. O'Connor Sloane, **Amazing's** elderly successor to Gernsback, and Farnsworth Wright of **Weird Tales** both got to know him personally; and all, according to Mr. Moskowitz, thought so highly of his material that "no author ever evaded magazine policy as successfully . . . Many of his published stories had not the slightest tinge of fantasy, but the readers rarely complained."

Having spent many years as a psychiatrist among abnormal people, before he started to rub shoulders with fantasy's leading characters, it is

natural that Dr. Keller should have gravitated to this medium. In a fascinating psycho-analysis of the man and his motives which forms a critical introduction to this book, Mr. Moskowitz deduces that his early association with mental hospitals is responsible for the "underlying horror and morbidity in much of his writing." But this element of sheer terror seems to have come to the surface only in some of his shorter stories, such as the much-printed "The Thing in the Cellar," which again appears in this cross-section of his extensive contribution to the field. In none of the longer stories he has written in the course of 20 years "has horror predominated over human understanding and humour. It was not in him to maintain the gloomy face overlong or look at the sorry aspect of life forever."

Indeed, the fantasy readers of the '28-'35 period, for whom Dr. Keller contrived to write constantly as well as sincerely, found in his stories that refreshing humanity and simplicity of approach for which they were ever ready to commend him. They found ideas, too, which were often strikingly original, yet always easy to appreciate because they were so near to everyday affairs and involved ordinary people like the Smiths and the Joneses. Even his scientists seemed human rather than superhuman, and his detective, Taine of San Francisco, such a thoroughly engaging character that one began to wonder if he didn't solve his cases more by luck than genius.

"The Human Termites," perhaps, hardly ran true to form; but on the whole we enjoyed Keller because he amused us while the rest amazed us, or tried to. At the same time, he always gave us something to think about; consistently he warned us against the pursuit of science without thought of the consequences of imprudent application. For instance, supposing disease could be banished from the world: would it be as desirable as it seems, or would Nature compensate for it? Such is the theme of "Life Everlasting," the two-

\*See "Half a Century of Writing" (**Fantasy Review**, Dec., '47-Jan., '48.)

part **Amazing** story of 14 years back which comprises half of this bulky volume. It is not, to our mind, one of his best; the latter part is not as convincing or smooth as the first, and the biological basis is hazier than we might reasonably expect a physician to leave it. But it has human interest in plenty, especially in the situation of a planet deprived of babies which has always intrigued Dr. Keller—presumably because, as a country doctor in earlier days, he brought many of them into this imperfect world.

We found more credibility, and some better writing, among the short stories, of which eight are reprinted here from several magazines while two are presented for the first time. Though, again, with the exception of the delightfully macabre "The Dead Woman," which has earned its place with "The Thing in the Cellar" in British weird tale collections, we cannot content ourselves that these pieces represent Dr. Keller at his best, from our vivid recollections of his work. We still find difficulty in admiring "No More To-morrows" for anything more than its idea, the treatment of which strikes us as painfully laborious. "The Cerebral Library," too, after much careful preparation, descends into sheer bathos, thanks to comic detective Taine. Of the rest, one of the new stories, "Heredity," is perhaps the most successful in spite (or because?) of its shuddery theme.

If we were to take this selection as typical of Dr. Keller's output, we would,

in fact, be tempted to regard it as confirming the weaknesses we have long sensed in his work, rather than its intrinsic qualities of strength. For we have never been able to rid ourselves of the feeling that some of Dr. Keller's famous characters, especially his business tycoons, were too exaggerated to be life-like, and that his notoriously simple style of writing too often approached mere childishness. Yet still we feel more at home with his ordinary people than with some of the impossible puppets of more confident writers; and there is no denying the beauty which often transfuses his lucid prose. For which an interesting explanation now emerges, through Mr. Moskowitz.

He tells us of Dr. Keller's early struggles to express himself in English which later inspired the story, "The Lost Language" (**Amazing**, Jan., '34), and of the too-extensive vocabulary he was forced to acquire to satisfy his proud parent. "Thus . . . when he began to write, his compositions were distinguished by an exemplary economy of bi-syllable words and a use of short sentences. This resulted in a literary style which has never been duplicated by any other science fiction writer."

The book, published in a limited edition of 1,000 copies, is accompanied by a complete bibliography of Dr. Keller's work, which has appeared in no less than 39 publications. His contribution to fantasy-fiction is one of which he, no less than Mr. Moskowitz, may be justly proud.

## The Flame That Went Out

**THE BLACK FLAME**, by Stanley G. Weinbaum. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pa. \$3.00.

Reviewed by **John Beynon**

The primary phase of magazine science fiction was already past when, in '34, Stanley G. Weinbaum arrived. The first in the field, the men who enjoyed working out their ideas with enough scientific background to ensure a good story, were going into eclipse, largely because new ideas do not grow on every bush. Many of the writers infiltrating at that time were competent and experienced, and their journalistic sense was shocked by the failure of the older writers to exploit the field fully. Leaping into the medium with all the joy of settlers perceiving a site for a

new dustbowl, they ran amok. They seized upon science fiction—which until then had been proceeding, sometimes extravagantly and sometimes sentimentously, but still with a spring of deductive logic as its source—and exuberantly battered it into nonsensibility.

It was clear to the newcomers that it needed hotting up. Bigger is better, and faster is better. For proper thrill and excitement, therefore, wars must be intergalactic, with thousands of ships mounting hundreds of rays; speed must be reckoned in light-years per second, worlds be propelled from one system to another. And what about the sex angle? Hey, bring on the dancing girls!

In the ensuing orgy whole universes were vaporized, non-interacting super-



men slugged their way around space more like supermaniacs, impermeably space-suited heroes cavorted through the cosmos with curvaceous cuties inevitably clad in bathing suits—and all interest departed from the stories. The contemptuous cracks in other periodicals were well deserved as the form which had shown such promise was reduced to moronic levels—from which, in some instances, it has never recovered.

Yet in spite of the shoddy hack-junk, there have always been a few idea men and a few who could really write, and it has been those who have kept us hopefully panning in the sludge. And when someone with new ideas does occur, he is acclaimed—perhaps over-acclaimed. In *Fantasy Magazine's* analysis of the field in '35, Weinbaum was voted the most popular author (in spite of the accomplished journalists who were still holding their galactic jamboree); and, oddly enough, because he simply told stories, without pursuing this or that "slant." He didn't even write polished stories, but there was something in him that made us feel he was going to improve as he went on. Unfortunately, we were never to know.

Soon after his death a lot of nonsense was written about him. To say that he "would have written each letter of his name in flaming symbols on the stars themselves," as Raymond Palmer did, was not only silly but sickly; nor does success in one or two pulps place anyone on "the pinnacle of science fiction." This kind of thing produced an opposition which swung to the other extreme, claiming that his success was fortuitous and due solely to the inferiority of his competitors.

In his first story, "A Martian Odyssey," there was something that singled it out: we made a mental note of the new author, a thing which had scarcely been worth doing for some time. Just what that quality was has never been made clear. It was certainly not ease of writing or conjuring with words, nor was it even skilful construction. As near to it as we can get is that there was a feeling of sympathy, an enjoyment of his own invention and a gift of reticence. It was this last ability to suggest and imply while refusing elaborate explanations that was one of his most stimulating characteristics. He never again displayed it as well as in "A Martian Odyssey"; he

showed little of it in the 'Flame' stories.

The plan of both these stories is similar. In each a man is emotionally truncheoned by an uncannily beautiful creature who has contrived to preserve her teen-age notions of irresistibility intact for several centuries. In "Dawn of Flame," which first appeared in the Memorial Volume of Weinbaum's work, the victim is a husky boy from the hills, and the story begins better than it ends. An atmosphere is created and a promisingly interesting locale built up; there is careful consideration of details and an air of verisimilitude, but this tapers off into banality when emotion sets in. We feel certain that Weinbaum was capable of remoulding this story into much more convincing shape, and it is difficult to believe that he would not have preferred to do so at the prospect of its publication in book form.

The second story, which gives its title to this volume, was first published in a magazine (*Startling Stories*, Jan., '39), and just what happened to it between the time it left Weinbaum's typewriter and the time it appeared in print is anybody's guess. The theme involves a Twentieth Century engineer who is electrocuted into dormancy and awakes to find himself in a time-traveller-and-sultry-princess set-up. Every few pages he is on the point of extermination for some sultry or political reason; he monotonously escapes this fate for some whimsical or sultry unreason, or possibly because there are a number of pages still to go. And he ends up just as you knew he would.

In the beginning there is Weinbaum—his setting, his ideas occurring. Later, the ideas drop out without logical influence on the story, and a hatful of corny stand-bys is thrown in. It is quite forgotten that the hero is an engineer and a condemned murderer, tedious slabs of sultry behaviour help to keep the wordage piling up; and if the suspense were to suspend anything it might be your interest, because you're now right back with the very formula in contrast to which Weinbaum first came as such a breath of fresh air.

If you already know Weinbaum's stories, parts of these may appeal to you. If you do not, you are likely to wonder why the book has been published, except as a handsome collector's item designed to enshrine the memory of one who might have been a great writer.

# Better Than The Best

A TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION,  
edited by Groff Conklin. Crown, New  
York. \$3.00.

Reviewed by John K. Aiken

This second collection of science fiction prepared by Mr. Conklin contains 518pp. and thirty stories, as against the 785pp. and forty stories of its predecessor. Of the thirty tales, twenty-five are drawn from a single magazine (it is surely unnecessary to specify which one), and nineteen have appeared in the last four years; in fact, all but five pieces of the whole collection were originally published during or since the war, and three appeared as recently as the July and August, '47, issues of Mr. Campbell's magazine.

From which it may be inferred that, unlike "The Best in Science Fiction,"\* which was criticised in some quarters for the amount of "corn" it gleaned, this "Treasury" is a very up-to-the-minute anthology indeed. It is also, taken all round and in spite of its smaller content, definitely better value than "The Best." It contains no material whose interest lies only in its antiquity, and relatively little which is so bad as to be unreadable save by the most conscientious critic. To balance this, there is as much really memorable work, while the ballast is sound, thought-provoking stuff of the kind which writers like Robert A. Heinlein, Clifford D. Simak and Jack Williamson can be relied upon to provide.

That the proportion of truly outstanding work, bad and good, is still not what it might be in a critical compilation from so rich a literature, is due not so much to Mr. Conklin's over-compensated recoil from the antique (for there have been plenty of good stories during the past eight years) as to his categorical selection policy. The inevitable result of this aim to include as wide as possible a variety of plots is the presence of several ephemera whose only point is their point; which are all very well between the covers of a magazine but out of place in an anthology.

Such, for example, are Edward Grendon's "The Figure," Martin Pearson's "The Embassy," William Tenn's "Child's Play," H. Beam Piper's "Time and Time Again," and A. E. van Vogt's "Juggernaut": the last, only Mr. Conklin's self-

imposed duty of casting a wide net could have caused him to choose from the great bulk of better work which van Vogt has to his credit. All these pieces have, if little else, an interesting or surprising culmination, though one which may still be over-fresh in the memory of the reader. In those cases where the culminating point is feeble and the handling equally inferior, as in Polton Cross's "Wings Across the Cosmos," rescuing them from oblivion is an act of cruelty to all concerned.

At the other end of the scale, pride of place must surely go to C. L. Moore's "No Woman Born," the best of all this writer's distinguished if limited output and little short of perfection in itself. Hard on its heels comes Lewis Padgett's "Mimsy Were the Borogroves," as upsetting a piece of dimensional cradle-snatching as could give any parent nightmares. Third is Malcolm Jameson's "Children of the Betsy-B," less satisfying technically but a notable piece of work in the humorous vein. For these three alone, the collection is worth possessing; and among the dozen or more other first-class stories it boasts are Simak's "Tools" (with a characteristically sympathetic treatment of a particularly alien life-form), Sprague de Camp's "Living Fossil," Williamson's "With Folded Hands," and Lawrence O'Donnell's "Vintage Season."

It is pleasant, too, to find two examples of the work of British author Arthur C. Clarke, both well-deserving of their place. Heinlein is represented by one of his *Satevepost* stories, "It's Great to be Back," intriguing in prospect but, in the event, disappointingly slight.

If it was Mr. Conklin's aim to show the trend of science fiction during the war years, he has succeeded very well. But it cannot be pretended that the collection contains only the cream of the period. An ideal anthology, we think, would aim less at variety and more at quality; would present the work of fewer but more experienced writers and represent them more fully. It would include such thoughtful writers as Isaac Asimov, Hal Clement, A. Bertram Chandler and Eric Frank Russell, and feature stories of greater length, less concentrated in the immediate past.

\*Reviewed Feb.-Mar., '47, issue.

None the less, Mr. Conklin is moving in approximately the right direction; and it is tempting, and surely legitimate in this of all fields, to extrapolate into the future from the first two volumes of this hoped-for series. Working from the data already summarised, one may prophesy that the *n*th collection to come from Crown Publishers will appear between paper

covers, have some such title as "The Greatest Classics of Science Fiction," and contain about three superb and extraordinarily diverse stories, all due to appear in **Astounding** several years in the anthology's own future. More power to Mr. Conklin: this would be well worth the three dollars. But extrapolation is not, the mathematicians tell us, infallible.

## Twelve For Your Friends

"... AND SOME WERE HUMAN," by Lester del Rey. Prime Press, Philadelphia, Pa. \$3.00.

Reviewed by Peter Phillips

Take any one of this collection of Lester del Rey's best pieces, put them in the pages of a general magazine instead of **Astounding** or **Unknown** (from which they came) and they would be properly acclaimed on their merits as stories. Riffle through your fantasy magazines and, being as honestly dispassionate as any fantasy fan can, pick out the tales of which you could say the same. Or, as Mr. del Rey himself puts it in his Foreword, that might be "intended for the entertainment of perfect strangers."

You'll agree that so many favourites, particularly in science fiction, rely to an unconscionable extent on their specialised appeal; on previous knowledge of the characters concerned, on presumed acceptance of certain scientific concepts, on an elliptical, allusive style. The writers, correctly, trust the trained reader to fill the gaps. But, unfortunately, many of them seem to take the style for the substance and forget or disregard the first tenets of good storytelling, so that the pieces emerge as mere expositions of unusual ideas.

Mr. del Rey has the ideas; but even with his admitted cent-spinners, he remains a craftsman with an eye for construction and the turn of a pretty phrase. And these twelve aren't his

cent-spinners; they are all gems, ranging from the gentle wackiness of "Hereafter, Inc.", in which a self-righteous clerk insists on finding Hell in Heaven, to his short novel, "Nerves," which has already reached the general public through "Adventures in Time and Space." This, a continuous narrative, covering two or three days, of a disaster in an atomic plant (published in **Astounding**, incidentally, long before Hiroshima), is a brilliant example of how to maintain dramatic tension without resorting to a series of artificially - contrived climaxes. We tried it on a non-fan who doesn't know a neutron from a nutcracker. Verdict: "Couldn't stop until I'd finished it."

There is also the famed tale of rival rocketeers, "The Stars Look Down," which reads strangely but realistically in these days of rigorously-controlled research which will result, if the current prophets are right, in Government space-ships and Government bases on Luna. But there are, praise be, no supermen and no double-dved villains anywhere in the book. The conflicts that occur are between intelligence and stupidity; between Man, his environment and his limitations. A more accurate title, perhaps, would be "And All Were Human"; because in a broad sense there is a warm humanity in all del Rey's fascinating characters: a Neanderthal man; a druid; an elfin coppersmith who finds his metier, after long absence from the paths of men, in repairing auto radiators; an asbestos lizard; a female robot with sex-appeal-plus; a dog; a copper-hungry Moon monkey.

They all add up to a selection of stories which give added pleasure in the feeling that the author enjoyed writing them—and writing them well. The volume is suitably illustrated by Sol Levin, and equally suitably dedicated to Mr. Campbell.

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## Slan With A Typewriter

**OUT OF THE UNKNOWN**, by A. E. van Vogt & E. Mayne Hull. Fantasy Publishing Co., Los Angeles. \$2.50.

Reviewed by **John Carnell**

Would it be sacrilegious to suggest that the name of van Vogt may tend to become monotonous among the increasing number of titles coming from the fantasy presses of America? Then we will merely state that the legion of his admirers, and of the beloved **Unknown Worlds**, will heartily welcome this first volume from the publishers of **Fantasy Book**, which he shares with his wife—and rather overshadows her work with his own three stories. But as she has laboured to some extent on virtually every story he has published, it would seem that an equal share of the honours should rightly be hers; especially since one may have too much of a good thing, even of van Vogt, and her own three pieces serve as breathing spaces in between the thought-provoking, chilling tales of her husband.

Those who have been fortunate enough to read all the issues of **Unknown** will doubtless remember "The Ultimate Wish" (Feb. '43) and "The Wishes We Make" (June '43). These are very fair examples of the well-worked stories we came to expect of this magazine, with obvious signs of the thought and care expended on their complications. But her third piece, "The Patient" (Oct. '43), which tells of a condemned man's six wishes, each one ending in death by hanging, is to our mind by far the best. One wishes, now, that **Unknown** would revive to carry on its fine traditions and bring us more tales like this.

The three van Vogt stories have more of the weird element, and serve to show the many facets which his writing has presented through the years. Sufficient for those who have read them to mention the titles: "The Sea Thing" (Jan. '40), "The Ghost" (Aug. '42), and "The Witch" (Feb. '43). They should have no difficulty in recollecting them. But after reading them again, we have

### books for mid-summer moods

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Seven classic stories 16/6

#### OUT OF THE UNKNOWN

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#### TRIPLETARY

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#### THE BLACK FLAME

By Stanley G. Weinbaum: 16/6

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reached the conclusion that neither editors nor readers, much less his reviewers, can really appreciate van Vogt's writings. All our comments are but vapourings from those who live in the world of to-day and are trying vainly to understand something which belongs at least a little way in the future.

One instinctively feels that his stories are good, that the man can write; but there seems to us a nebulous something about his work—an other-worldliness, as if his mind were more advanced than ours and although he is writing down to our intellect he still

cannot quite make contact. Even with these present tales, one has the same impression as one gets from any of his science fiction stories; we don't really understand them as he intended they should be understood. The learned among us may cry down this statement, but after long consultation with all types of readers we have yet to find one who can lucidly explain what van Vogt is all about. We can only describe him as the "slan" of fantasy writers.

The book is well illustrated, and has a dust-jacket by our front page friend Roy Hunt.

## Introduction to a Genius?

**THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF M. P. SHIEL**, selected by John Gaws-worth, Gollancz, 10/6.

Reviewed by Peter Phillips

A Turkish bath can be refreshing, in moderation; in excess, it enervates. So, for me, with the orchidaceous proximity of Shiel's prose. A few pages at a time are enough; then I need an interval for recovery, digestion and consultation of the S.O.E.D. before plunging again into the leaping torrent of his convolute imagery. For example, this passage from "Phorphor":

"Close she hugged it (a canary) troulng, laughing, trilling, light-wheeling to the hint of a dance, a maiden-canephorus tripudiary in the Comus of the Dionysia . . . She was dressed only in a thin llama Greek robe of amber brown and through the shaken folds her limbs glanced, bluish to aspiration's eye, as limbs of new-sprung Aphrodite mirrored fluctuant among brown seaweed in the Paphian shallows . . ." After a while, you find yourself mouthing the euphony aloud. It is this aural appeal, indeed, that provides the chief difference between Shiel and his similarly word-entranced fellow-Irishman, Joyce; for there is little of Joyce that delights ear equally with eye.

Except in America, recognition of Shiel's luxuriant genius appears to have been largely confined to the cognoscenti for many years. Even now, a year after his death at the age of 81, a definitive evaluation of his work for the general reading public—only now "discovering" him—has not been attempted; and it would be a presumption for one unacquainted with his longer works to anticipate such an

evaluation on the basis of the twelve stories in this collection. But, in pleading this ignorance, I cannot refrain from an opinion: that Shiel's is not an enduring genius.

"He tells of a wilder wonderland than Poe dreamed of," said the late Arthur Machen. But it is a less human wonderland. There is a story in this collection, "Vaila," which in theme and treatment invites direct comparison with Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher." The brooding horror of Poe's tale lies in a delicate perversion of normal human values, and it is unforgettable; but "Vaila" assaults the imagination with such a dinning battery of words that it defeats its own purpose and stultifies where it is intended to horrify, leaving the reader bemused rather than uneasy. Where there is nothing human, inhumanity loses its point; where naught is normal, abnormality loses its savour. But perhaps, to those who know Shiel, I am only succeeding in exposing my own lack of sensibilities.

Shiel's earliest character, the occultist-detective Prince Zaleski, appears in the first three stories; and these, to my cloddish mind, were the most enjoyable. But still I could not refrain from comparing the cold, infinitely erudite Zaleski with Poe's warm, human Dupin; and Shiel's intriguing but artificially-premised logic with Poe's factual analyses in "The Mystery of Marie Roget."

Summation: Shiel was great, not to be ignored—and this book provides probably the best introduction to him—but not to be elevated among the immortals . . . yet. Let Time prove me a liar.

## As Good As New

**THE TORCH**, by Jack Bechdolt. Prime Press, Philadelphia, Pa. \$2.50.

Reviewed by **John Carnell**

The current reprinting of magazine stories which, with the names of their authors, are within the memory of most fantasy fans, may leave some of us wary of this unfamiliar novel from the files of the American **Argosy**. But although it appeared in 1920, before the days of the science fiction magazine proper, there is nothing archaic either in theme or the telling of this tale of New York in 3010 A.D., after a major catastrophe has swept away all but the remnants of civilisation.

With the exception that it has in it that "love interest" which was essential to the stories of those days—the hero torn between two loves, the beautiful blonde heroine and the rival brunette with evil designs, who were still with us in the '30's and are not always absent even now—it might easily have been written in the past few years. The theme was not entirely new, of course, in '20: witness George Allan England's "Darkness and Dawn" trilogy, dating back to 1912 and an earlier Munsey magazine, **Cavalier**. Yet several more recent variations on it, such as Thomas Calvert McClary's "Rebirth," seem to us less deserving of "classic" status than Mr. Bechdolt's piece, which had become lost amid the mass of material of this kind **Argosy** printed and is well worthy of its resurrection.

Let us, however, warn those publishers who may wish to unearth other material from these files that they will have to search very diligently to find stuff to equal this.

The struggle between the ruling class of ruined New York, known as the Tower people, and the Folk who are little more than slaves living in what was once the Manhattan subway, is drawn with uncommon realism. According to legend, the torch of liberty which once was held upraised by the ancient statue of the Great Woman in the harbour will burn again, when the Folk regain their freedom; and the story of the young captain Fortune's conversion to the Brotherhood of the Torch, to lead the battle against the tyrants in a world where bows and arrows are more plentiful than guns, is full of intense action and conviction.

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## NIGEL LINDSAY & KENNETH SLATER

giving reviews of current issues and news of stories to come

# AMONG THE MAGAZINES

Latest frustration for the British fantasy fan is the new dollar-conserving Board of Trade restriction on the importation of foreign publications which makes it impossible to renew subscriptions to the American magazines when they run out—unless you can find a friendly U.S. fan who will place a direct subscription in your name. You can no longer subscribe through an agent here, but there is nothing to prevent issues coming into the country as long as they are paid for in America; and although you cannot send money, an American contact will probably welcome any British publications you send him in return.

Though, unfortunately, there will be no **New Worlds** to represent the last remnants of original British science fiction, which will be virtually extinct with the suspension of the Pendulum publication. The less said about this, perhaps, the better; though we must sympathise with Editor Carnell after all his efforts to make progress with the magazine in spite of delays and difficulties which were outside his province. And hope that one day the title, which has been through many vicissitudes, may take on yet a further lease of life.

Better news comes from the Atlas people who, in response to agitations by voracious readers, are going to enlarge the British edition of **Astounding Science Fiction** as from the August issue. This development could hardly come at a more appropriate time. Editor Campbell has been hinting at plans for changing and improving the magazine, whose June issue (in the U.S. edition) commences a new Eric Frank Russell serial, "Dreadful Sanctuary," combining a novel psychological idea with fast-moving action of the sort at which he excels. The first new women science fictionist for years, name of Judith Merril, also makes her debut with a surprise-ending piece titled "... That Only a Mother."

May issue concluded very satisfactorily Jack Williamson's novel of parapsychology, "... And Searching Mind." By all accounts, we're not the only Williamson fans who have added another laurel to his crown for this.

A. E. van Vogt's "The Rull" revived the setting of his "Co-operate or Else" and "Second Solution," of earlier years, and presented some interesting notions on the evolution of alien life-forms. L. Ron Hubbard's "The Obsolete Weapon" got an amusing slant on the anachronisms of time-travel, and Murray Leinster kept us thoroughly intrigued by "The Strange Case of John Kingman."

**Thrilling Wonder** for August has a selection of stories as varied as the most jaded reader could wish for. Feature novel is "Mr. Zytztz Goes to Mars," by Noel Loomis, whom you may remember for his "Iron Men" and "City of Glass" in recent **Startlings**. Mr. What's-his-name is a Martian plant-man who wants to become a space pilot—and does, after much funny business. Another piece with a light touch is Wesley Long's "Climate—Incorporated"; William Tenn provides more serious space-opera in "The Ionian Cycle," and Theodore Sturgeon has an ingenious idea which he presents with his usual writing skill in "Memory." Ray Bradbury, Murray Leinster and Margaret St. Clair contribute the shorter pieces which make up an excellent issue.

Nice to see our veteran British writer, William F. Temple, back again in the June issue with "Way of Escape," which opens with the London embankment and an attempted suicide; a gloomy tale withal. Ray Bradbury's "And the Moon Be Still as Bright" is one of the finest pieces of s-f we've read for many a day—a cert. for some future anthology. George O. Smith was well to the fore again with his novel-length, "The Trans-Galactic Twins," and William Tenn's "Consulate" had a delightful Fortean flavour—or don't you think we're fished for?

Henry Kuttner's "The Mask of Circe," in May **Startling Stories**, will probably start fans arguing further the merits of Merritt as against Kuttner; but although it has something of the atmosphere of "The Ship of Ishtar," the resemblance is no more than superficial and the explanations are typically Kuttnerish. Nor were Finlay's illustrations up to his usual standard, we thought. Frank B. Long's "The House

of *Rising Winds*" was nice work for those who like his style (we do); and we found Ray Cummings more than bearable in "The Simple Life," which had none of the idiocy of the "Tubby" stories and no dimensionalism. But George O. Smith's "Journey" was definitely not one of his best.

In spite of the promise that there would be no more mention of the Shaver Mystery in *Amazing*, Editor Palmer presented those "proofs" after all, in the May issue—but we're still not convinced. Soon, however, we're to have evidence that ships from outer space are visiting Earth to-day. Leading story in this issue, "Armageddon," by Craig Browning, was clearly Shaverian in concept, depicting the human race as stooges to higher civilisations and dragging in theories of survival, reincarnation, transmigration, the "Lord of the World," Flying Saucers and all. But the best of the bunch was "Forgotten Hades," by Lee Francis, which we would classify as a weird tale.

June issue features a Shaver-Geier collaboration, "Ice City of the Gorgon," in which two intrepid flyers discover an Arctic civilisation, defeat the monster from another dimension and liberate the beautiful princess. "The Pied Piper of Space," by S. M. Tenneshaw, has the deserving hero winning the admiral's daughter against a background of space warfare. Alexander Blade's "The Valley of Madness" is not a bad story if you overlook the science; "Lunar Monkey Business," by Warren Kastel, one of those funny, pointless things, and "The Ocean Den of Mercury," by Miles Shelton, a perfectly preposterous piece of the sort that makes us wonder to what depths fantasy can sink. No references to things to come, but for a sequel to Shaver's "Gods of Venus" titled "Titan's Daughter." The end, obviously, is not yet . . .

"The Devil's Spoon," in June **Famous Fantastic Mysteries**, is a fantasy by Theodora Du Bois, written in '30, which makes good reading—and which, we find, isn't in the "Checklist" (tck, tck!) "The Shadow and the Flash," from Jack London's "Moon Face & Other Stories," and Leslie A. Crutch's first piece, "Eemanu Grows Up," complete the issue. John Taine fans will welcome "The Purple Sapphire," coming up in the next. And those who have never struck "The Second Deluge," Garrett P. Serviss classic which was re-

printed twice in old **Amazing Stories** days, having first appeared as a serial in **Cavalier** way back in 1911, will be able to revel in it if they can get hold of July **Fantastic Novels**.

**Planet Stories** for Summer '48 offers four novelettes and five short stories, with "Z-Day on Centauri," by Henry T. Simmons, hogging the limelight. But the item to look for is "Pillar of Fire" by the ubiquitous Ray Bradbury; it's a story of the last dead man in the world . . . Damon Knight's "The Third Little Green Man" is amusing, and there are other pieces by J. Harvey Haggard, J. W. Pelkie, Gardner E. Fox and the de Courcy duo.

July **Weird Tales** brings Edmond Hamilton's "Twilight of the Gods," in which the inhabitants of Valhalla live on in a world which rubs shoulders with ours but has a slower time-rate; very good indeed. "Croatan," by Malcolm M. Ferguson, is a menace-from-outer-space with an 'H' category; Allison V. Harding's "Isle of Women," more adventure than weird. E. Everett Evans comes up with "The Undead Die," an unusual vampire tale, and others by Harold Lawlor, Stephen Grendon and Manly Wade Wellman make this one of the best issues for some time.

The second (Spring) number of **The Arkham Sampler** is of principal interest to Lovecraft lovers. In addition to the continuation of his "Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" there is an interesting memoir of the man by Rheinhart Kleiner dealing with his life in New York and his "bizarre" marriage, a group of his letters from the forthcoming Arkham House volume, and other notes concerning his work. Fritz Leiber Jr. contributes a piece on "Fantasy on the March," and a selection of "West Country Legends" is extracted from the works of Robert Hunt. There are also two short stories: "A Damsel with a Dulcimer," by Malcolm Ferguson, and "The Wind in the Lilacs," by Stephen Grendon. "The Loved Dead," by C. M. Eddy, and "A Kink in Space-Time," by H. Russell Wakefield, are slated for the Summer issue, with more Lovecraft letters.

Fantasts with a flair for the occult, the Fortean and, especially, Shaverians should find the new U.S. magazine **Fate** worth their attention, if they can get hold of it. The first issue (Spring '48) announces: "It is a magazine de-

(Please turn to Page 19)



Geoffrey Giles writes

## ABOUT BOOKS

Perhaps you've already spotted the jacket of "Death of a World," by J. Jefferson Farjeon (Collins: 8/6), and discovered that although labelled a "mystery" it is a tale of an attempt to preserve a sample of humanity from the wreckage of World War III, starting off with interplanetary explorers stumbling on the dead planet Earth—and the diary which tells the story. If not, look for a bluish globe floating in a green television screen . . .

A rather less ambitious treatment of the atomic power theme is to be found in Eden Phillpotts' new novel, "Fall of the House of Heron" (Hutchinson: 9/6), which ends, like a Karloff film, with the destruction of the scientist's laboratory. So, too, we suspect, does "The Gale of the World," by Laurence Kirk (Cassell: 8/6), which we have not yet been able to unearth but which has to do with the struggle between a humane scientist and a ruthless physicist who develops the other's work "to terrible and fatal ends."

Another one we're still searching for is "Purple Twilight," by Pelham Groom (Laurie: 8/6), which is reputed to give a vivid picture of interplanetary travel and to possess "a wide and thought-provoking theme." More easily secured, in spite of its confusing title (at least to those who know Mr. Derleth's anthologies), was "Sleep No More," a collection of twelve supernatural stories by L.T.C. Rolt (Constable: 8/6), which are of a distinctly rare quality.

William Sansom's assembly of prose-poems, "Something Terrible, Something Lovely" (Hogarth: 8/6), has been very highly praised by the literary weeklies; and he has also collected Edgar Allan Poe's best terror tales, with some of his lesser-known stories, under the title of "The Tell-Tale Heart" (Lehmann: 8/6).

Among new cheap editions are Dennis Wheatley's "They Found Atlantis" (Hutchinson: 6/-) and Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World" (Chatto: 1/6). Edgar Allan Poe's "A Descent into the Maelstrom" is also available, with other stories, in the 1/6 pocket-book series of Nicholson and Watson.

### ON THE OTHER SIDE

An off-trail science-fantasy novel which has attracted attention in America is "The Key to the Great Gate," by



Eric Frank Russell, leading British disciple of Charles Fort, whose dictum, "I think we're property," inspired the Liverpool fantasy writer to produce his disturbing "Sinister Barrier," which started off **Unknown** in '39. Editor John W. Campbell called the novel "epoch-making," the best piece of fantasy written for ten years, which would be referred to for another decade to come. Russell's fans were inclined to agree, and helped to justify the prediction. In '43, the story saw book presentation in England. This month, it is due to appear in America from Fantasy Press.

Hinko Gottlieb (Simon & Schuster: \$2.75). This concerns a scientist who, imprisoned by the Nazis, walks out of his cell by perfecting the art of contracting or expanding space at will. Another book that has been well received by fantasy lovers with a sense of humour is "Windwagon Smith & Other Yarns," by Wilbur Schramm (Harcourt: \$3.00), in which a horse plays baseball, a tractor flies, and the human characters are altogether delightful. In both cases, the illustrations have been as highly praised as the books themselves.

Now available from Arkham House is L. P. Hartley's "The Travelling Grave and Other Stories," which have been selected from two of his English collections, "Night Fears" and "The Killing Bottle," as well as including some unpublished work. In addition to August

Derleth's latest anthology, "Strange Ports of Call: 20 Masterpieces of Science Fiction," Arkham will shortly be distributing a collection of Arthur Machen's novels and shorter pieces assembled by Philip Van Doren Stern under the title, "Tales of Horror & the Supernatural." Later this year Mr. Derleth plans to publish the famous Seabury Quinn story, "Roads," from **Weird Tales**. Another collection of his own stories from this magazine is also scheduled for Autumn publication under the title, "Not Long for This World."

#### SHASTA'S SCHEDULE

The run of reprint-volumes of **Astounding** and **Unknown** material threatens to increase in proportion to the number of new publishers who are now producing in earnest. The collection of Don A. Stuart stories from **Astounding** entitled 'Who Goes There?' which is now forthcoming from Shasta

Publications with a dust-jacket by Bok, is to be followed next year by his 'Cloak of Aesir' from **Unknown**. L. Ron Hubbard's "Slaves of Sleep," extracted from the same source, is promised for September; and in December will come a collection of L. Sprague de Camp's "wacky" tales featuring "The Wheels of If."

Also scheduled for '49 are two volumes by Robert A. Heinlein, the first presenting his "Methuselah's Children" from **Astounding**; the second combining "If This Goes On" and its sequel, "Coventry." Murray Leinster's thought-variant of earlier **Astounding** days, "Sidewise in Time," will title the first collection of his stories which, with an unpublished novel of M. P. Shiel's, "The Splendid Devil," and a Memorial Bibliography of this author edited by A. Reynolds Morse, will keep the publishers of the "Checklist" busy during the next twelve months. And such as us for quite a while afterwards.

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**AMONG THE MAGAZINES**—Continued from page 16

voted to the defence of reason . . . dedicated to the scientific method, to calm analysis of the known and the unknown . . . You might call **Fate** a 'cosmic reporter.'

You might call **Fort** that, too. Not that he is mentioned in this issue; though Richard Shaver and Raymond Palmer are, and more than one of **Amazing's** writers contribute to the mag., which seems to us to savour of the Ziff-Davis product, typographically and otherwise. But the imprint is that of the Clark Publishing Co., Chicago; the editor, Robert N. Webster. It's a quarterly, pocket-size.

The cover and 44 of the 128 pages have to do with various aspects of "The

Mystery of the Flying Disks," one article being an eye-witness account of them by the airman who started the nine days' wonder—which **Fate** refuses to dismiss as spots before the eyes. Also up our street are articles on "Messages from Mars" by Vincent H. Gaddis, and on people who hear voices, by G. H. Irwin; while Harold M. Sherman writes on "Mark Twain and Halley's Comet," and R. P. Graham on "Science and the Soul." You recognise the names . . . ? The case of Kasper Hauser, ancient cults, the Great Pyramid and "giants in those days" are other subjects, mixed with spooks and automatic writing, presented in popular style with plenty of pictures.

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**YOU WILL** find the Directory of Anglo-Fandom invaluable for making contacts. Published by the British Fantasy Library, comprising names and addresses of over 300 fans (members and non-members) in the British Isles, the new issue is now ready. Copies, 1/- post free, obtainable from the Librarian: Ron Holmes, 67 Lineside Road, Belle Vale, Caticre, Liverpool.

**OPERATION FANTASY** is in urgent need of **Tales of Wonder**, pre-war **Fantasy**, **AS-F** and **Unknown B.R.E.'s '49-'43**. If you have any to offer write to K. F. Slater, Riverside, South Brink, Wisbech, Cambs.

**LIFE EVERLASTING and Other Tales of Science, Fantasy and Horror**, by David H. Keller, M.D., collected by Sam Moskowitz and Will Sykora, with a critical and biographical Introduction by Sam Moskowitz; 394 pp.; now available at \$3.50 from The Avalon Co., P.O. Box 8052, Clinton Hill Station, Newark, N.J., U.S.A.

**MR. A. BERTRAM CHANDLER** wishes to inform his correspondents that his address is now 29 Cambridge Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, and to express his regret that he has been unable to reply to recent letters owing to pressure of personal business.

**EXCHANGE** Taine's "The Time Stream" (Hadley), with jacket, plus **Fantasy Reader** Nos. 4 and 5, for mint copy "Strange to Tell" (Messner), "Travellers in Time" or "Man into Beast" (Doubleday)—Box 117, **Fantasy Review**.

**WANTED URGENTLY:** Indexes to **Astounding**, **Weird**, etc., published by U.S. fans. Can offer similar items in exchange; send wants.—Box 116, **Fantasy Review**.

**SPHINX CHILD**, by Stanley Mullen; 35c. from New Collector's, 421 Claremont Parkway, New York City, 57, U.S.A.

**PHILOSOPHER of Fantasy:** Dr. Olaf Stapledon interviewed in **Scientificion** for June '37; 1/6 (35c.) per copy, post free, from **Fantasy Review** (Service Dept.), 115 Wanstead Park Road, Ilford, Essex.

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