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66



JANUARY 1954

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# SPACE TIMES

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ALL MSS. & ENQUIRIES TO  
THE EDITOR AT  
47, ALLDIS ST., GT. MOOR,  
STOCKPORT, CHESHIRE.

ALL ART WORK TO THE  
ART DIRECTOR AT  
58, SHARRARD GROVE,  
INTAKE, SHEFFIELD 12.

RE PRESENTATIVE IN U.S.A.

DALE R. SMITH,  
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COVER ILLUSTRATION  
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SPACE - TIMES IS THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE NOR' - WEST SCIENCE - FANTASY CLUB,  
OF MANCHESTER, ENGLAND, AND IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY.  
SALE IS BY SUBSCRIPTION ONLY - SEE ENCLOSED FORM - 6/- PER YEAR.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED FOR THE N.S.F.C. BY CONSTANCE & STUART MACKENZIE AT THE  
SPACE TIMES PRESS, 40 CRANLEY GARDENS, LONDON. S.W.7.

## EDITORIAL

This is the second editorial we have written for this issue: the first being written, whilst the New Year was only a brat, upon the evils of drink. A subject at which period we felt ourselves to be an authority. Upon rereading it the next morning, however, we discovered that we had been apparently possessed by the spirit of a Martian Calot, for the screed was in a tongue and penmanship totally strange to us. Psi' investigators will please use the Tradesmen's entrance.....

Henceforth, SPACE TIMES will be available by subscription only, this because of monetary reasons. If you are a member of the exalted class of Fan-ed we shall be pleased to receive a copy of your fanzine and if we like it a subscription will be promptly despatched. Please reciprocate. In this issue is the first of a regular series of fanzine reviews by Mal Ashworth. The intent of this column will not be to cram brief comments of a dozen 'zines into as small a space as possible but to fully review one zine per month. If you would like your 'zine reviewed, in 'Zine in Passing, send it along to the editorial address or direct to Mal at 40 Makin Street, Tong Street, BRADFORD, Yorks.

There's quite an argument raging amongst Stateside fans upon the merit ( or demerit ) of letter columns in the professional magazines. Those who like the egoboost of seeing their name in print ( and who can honestly say, "I don't" ? ) are in favour and, I think, in the majority. There is a very vociferous group, however ( henceforth referred to as Sad Sacks ) who consider the others to be childish and malformed, also ignorant, uneducated clots. The deletion of letter columns from the pro' s-f mags arrived with the inception of Galaxy : quite a number of the new magazines followed this lead and today about half of the magazines are sans fannish comment. Personally we are in favour, in general, of letter columns. We are in favour of an entertaining letter column, such as 'The Ether Vibrates' in STARTLING. TEV allows arguments, not only on the stories featured in the magazine, but on just about every subject under the sun ( and you all know which three topics we convey ) Sometimes the stories in this magazine have failed to give us enjoyment, but the letter column never. We are also in favour of a letter column in which letters containing valid criticism of the magazine are featured, but we feel that this can only be of value when the magazine has a definite story policy. We would not be in favour of a column in such a magazine as "Fantasy & Science Fiction" for this magazine features so wide a variety of fiction that comments made can only be relevant to a story rather than to the magazine as a whole.

Magazines change their format, but leopards don't change their spots!!! The March issue of AMAZING (US Edition) contains a story entitled "Call Him Savage"; this epic story tells of an alien race which visits Terra. Said race has a great similarity to the Amerindian. They observe the USA from the remote sanctity of the stratosphere and decide that the American Indian of today is being suppressed. So they journey in their Spaceship (which is, of course, also a Time Machine ) back to the days when the White Man had not discovered the American continent, in order to ask some of the braves to come into their mavhine and journey back to 1954. They are needed to help the Alien Race drive the White Man back from the territory he has taken over..... Need we go any further ?

Eric Bentcliffe

Campbell looks at America - Well, a cat can look at a king.....

THE PHILCON AS I SAW IT  
by

Bert ( B.P. ) Campbell

So I missed my deadline. All right ; I've missed lots of things since I got back from the devil's own country and deadlines aren't the worst of them. Still, I now apologise and die. I lie at your feet, where so many of you have wanted me, and you can kick for all you are worth. I shan't scream. Like Harlan Ellison, I shall just lie there and bleed. Softie; that's me.

Anyway, after a lot of shillyshallying and raising of lolly I finally got myself onto a 'plane bound for New York. I'd been told it was a non-stop flight, so when the thing came down at Shannon I thought Walter Willis had been taking potshots at me just out of spite. Found later he did it to try to save me.

But we got away. Zoomed up and up like one of those spaceships the hacks write about, soaring out over the Atlantic, leaving behind a foamy strip that might have been Walt's lips but was really the Irish coast. New York was only a few hours away. In time. In mentality -- a million years.

The 'plane swept down in the middle of a heat wave. I walked across the tarmac in corduroys, Harris Tweed and a duffle coat. The Americans stared at me. But I'm used to that, of course.

Inside the swank Idelwild air terminus I was categorised as an alien and dragged off to a sternfaced immigration officer who looked at my beard, and then at my pocket, where a suspicious bulge might have been a bomb. "Why," he asked intently, "have you come to America, Mr. Campbell ?"

Out I pulled the suspicious bulge - a copy of AUTHENTIC.

"Science - fiction convention " I said. "Philadelphia. Guest of Honour. I edit this magazine."

He hadn't taken his eyes off it. I thought maybe he thought this was diversionist stuff, but he didn't. "Science fiction, eh? Used to read that when I was a kid. You know, Buck Rogers. Stuff like that."

"It's different now," I said, flicking the pages so that he could see there were no naked women lying around. "Good reading nowadays, you know."

"So?" he said, and questioned me on the genre. Lots of questions. Usual stuff. All the while he questioned me he was stamping my papers. Finally handed them all back to me and sent me through to the Customs, telling me he'd start reading science fiction again now. Not one query about politics or finance. Which was just as well. All I had was -- ah, but that was illegal so I'd better keep quiet about it. Enough to pay my cab fare into New York City anyway.

New York hit me between the eyes. I've been around, as they say, and gotten myself a little cynical about surprises and emotional fiddlesticks. But, by golly, did New York turn me upside down and shake the living daylights out of me! Spewed allover the sidewalk, ( he means pavement - eds ) too, and nobody cared, Nobody cares about anything in New York. They just go on living a kind of race with Death, the big query in their lives to see who gets there first. If you're in the way, feller, you get trampled on. And when you're lying down in the gutter, with your blood trickling down the drains, the New Yorkers will just step over you - so's not to soil their shoes. A madhouse. Worse than the Manchester crowd when they get together!

I hate to gloss over New York because that, if anything is, is gilding the lily - but let's go straight to Philadelphia. I took a long and lonely bus from NY down through New Jersey out along the Pennsylvania Turnpike and into Philly, the Quaker city of **Brotherly Love**. You know the way brothers love!

A cab took me expensively from the bus depot to the Bellevue Strafford Hotel. Must have named the place a long time ago, for its view is just like any other in an American city - buildings, neon, cops. I walked in and got myself a room; actually, Jesse Floyd, that big beaming man from Savannah, had fixed it for me long time before. One of the minor tragedies of the Philcon was that Jesse couldn't come. He was needed.

Up to my room escorted by what the Americans call a blackamore - a negro who serves for a living. Nice fellow. Nice teeth. Nice eyes. And - a rarity among the whites - polite. When he left me I rang down for room service in the slick American fashion and ordered a bottle of gin and a revolting concoction called 7-up. I wondered how the hell I was going to pay for it; but you know me - England forever!

Down in the foyer again, my arm was grasped by a melodious voice that struck beautiful chords in my mind. Dear old Forry Ackerman it was; smiling his usual smile, looking his usual plump, healthy Californian self. It was good to see him again. He and Wendayne, his wonderful wife, came up to my room for a chat. We were joined by Dave Kyle, and here I must digress and take you back to New York. Relieves the tedium of chronological exposition a bit. Budding authors please note.

Dave Kyle I stayed with in New York and I can tell you that he's a wonderful fellow - not like an American at all, in fact. Talented, too. He writes, paints, edits, designs, organises and does all these things extremely well. You may remember INTERPLANETARY ZOO in one of Greenberg's anthologies. Dave did that, paintings too. He does a lot of book jackets for Gnome Press, and illos all over the place. For hours on end, all through the baking nights, he and I sat and talked about England and America, with rattling dustbins feeding timpani into the hot, breathless neon night of New York's perpetual symphony. Wonderful talk punctuated with cigarette stubs dashed into a crowded tray, his long, mine short.

We talked of fans and fandom, and fen and fannes, and tried to find out what it was that made them sick. Discovered that over there,



as here, the sickness stems from a lack of unity. Group against group. Ideology against ideology. Seems fandom simply duplicates the immaturity and pettiness of the larger groups - nations. And at the back of it all, right down amongst the roots, is vanity and pride - things that can be good, but not when based on childishness.

Enough of this! Out, vile despot!

So they came to my room in Philly and we talked some more. There was news for Forry from the many friends he met in England, and news from Forry to them. We had a right royal little time all on our own little foursome. Then we remembered the others and went below to the bar. There I met - here, take it as a list: Bob Tucker, Bob Bloch, Bea Mahaffey, Pat Mahaffey ( beautiful as Beal ) Randy Garrett, Hans Rasch, Isaac Asimov, Fletcher Pratt, Phil Farmer, John Campbell, Lester del Rey, Evelyn Gold, Ted Sturgeon, Geo. Smith, Everett Evans, Sprague de Camp, Bill Hamling, Don Ford, Bill Venable, Doc Barrett, - this list is getting out of hand.

Uncle Tom Bobbley couldn't come.

So we wine and dined and had us a wonderful time far into the night. This was the day before the convention was to start. Blowed if I remember the details of that evening.

Next day the trumpets blew, the drums rolled, and Sprague de Camp read out the Rules. I thought I'd got into UNO or NATO or one of those damned things by mistake. Those Rules! Next time we have a Con in London we'll have rules too. Teach these Manchester people a thing or two. Rule One: No person from Manchester may vote on any topic. Rule Two: All persons from Manchester must kneel when in the presence of a Londoner. Rule Three: All persons from Manchester must shut their gobs and take London profanity on the chin. That'll be enough to go on with. We can think of more later. ( If that isn't a hint for the Supermancon, they must be deader than I thought )

Naturally, there was a delay before the convention opened. Nobody knows what caused it, or even if it had a cause. We in London know that these things just happen. All natural laws are suspended for the duration of a convention.

During the morning everyone had been registering, and receiving very nice little badges showing their names and addresses. It wasn't long before swaps began, and a little later nobody knew who was who unless they were known by sight. Jolly.

When the Chairman had said his little piece, and the Rules had been propounded and adopted, there was a recess - what we call an interval. And here is a tip for all future British convention committees - learn from the Americans and don't give times for each separate event. One sweeping '2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.' is enough. And the letouts you get!

When we came out of recess, fed to the eyebrows so that it flowed over in little quickly-evaporating tears, there was an Introduction of the Guest of Honour. Then the Guest himself gave his Address. This was Willy Ley. Ordinarily this man thrills his audiences and readers with his acumen, his erudition and his humour. But this time he didn't. The address was something of a disappointment. All about energy and coal and oil and heat. And Philadelphia was steaming under a temperature of 101 in the shade! Circumstances were against Willy.

He is a very informal person with a very informal personality, and he abhors fuss and fiddlesticks. Being lauded as Guest of Honour must have put him off his stroke a bit. .. great, great pity.

Then there was a recess until eight in the evening.

More or less at that time Sam Moskowitz started up an auction. It paid off just as little as ours usually do. I'm wondering whether the whole thing is a farce and ought to be dropped. Too much planning has to be put into it to make it worth while if all that happens is that the audience comes along to laugh at the auctioneer. You can have fun and games without all the begging and pleading and praying that go to planning an auction.

Round about nine in the evening the convention was split into two halves. In the Burgundy Room, Bill Venable presided over a meeting of the NFFF, and up in the 18th-floor Rose Garden there was an "Informal Gathering of all Convention Members". In other words, an interval for getting together. That was the end of that days official programme. Blowed if I remember the details of that evening.

Bright and early Sunday morning little boy blue-faced me got up and told them all about science-fiction in England, introduced by that beautiful, misnamed charmer Rita Khrono. Then Tetsu Yano, the Japanese fan that Forry Ackerman brought over almost single-purposedly, made a nice little speech about science-fiction in Japan. It was amazing how he could talk so long about an almost non-existent thing, but he made it very interesting and led us to believe that things are looking up where the sun says its first good-morning.

When we foreigners had said our pieces, Irvin C. Heyne gave a little talk on the Future of Love, an amusing exposition sub-titled a 'non-scientific fiction'. Irvin had been doing some researches into just what was love. He'd come across some interesting things, so to speak, but I won't tell you about them or the Manchester crowd will accuse me of trying to get ST banned.

Then bold, brilliant and be-damned -to-you Philip Jose Farmer told us what he thought of the latest Kinsey Report. He liked it. Said it ought to be at the elbow of every science fiction writer. Phil's talk was serious and to the point. In fact it was damned good: the speech of the convention. Phil is a statistic in the first report; Kinsey came to him when he was at college. Phil says his answers would be different now! After that I read the Female report and I couldn't possibly fail to disagree with him less.

A needy recess took us by way of the bar to one o'clock, when Geo. Smith talked about the Seven Stages of the SF Writer. This was a very witty bit of nonsense about the trials and triumphs of every mother's little son who ever read science fiction and decided he could do better. How they come tumbling down!

After that the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society presented a play - "The Game from Outer Space". It was awful. Worse than what the Junior Fanatics did to us last year. By God, did we scramble out at the recess!

When we came back there was a panel composed of L. Sprague de Camp, Lester del Rey and Lloyd A. Esbach. They spoke individually on 'Science Fiction as a career'. Now I like all these three people.



I drank with them and laughed with them and - no, we went our own ways for that! But, seriously, I never expected to hear such a lot of pessimistic nonsense from three mature and intelligent men.

No, there was no sense in trying to write science fiction for a living. No, it was laughable to think of editing it for a living. No, if you tried to publish it for a living you'd be sunk. And yet all around us the writers and editors and publishers were drinking and eating themselves silly, wearing Fifth Avenue clothes and staying in hotel suites at something like £12 a day! And yet America sports some forty science fiction magazines, with more coming and nowhere near saturation, and paying up to four cents a word!

Science fiction as a career is no smoother than any other and a good deal rougher than some, but believe me there's an awful lot of people Stateside who are getting fat on it - literally. And of course there's room for more. Many more.

It was a relief to hear next something in a lighter vein. Bob Tucker moderated over a session called 'Fans who have become Pros'. With him were Harlan Ellison, E. Everett Evans, and somebody whose name I can't remember. This was great fun and revealed Harlan as a most intelligent and progressive young man. I don't like making predictions, but watch this fellow.

Next we had what the moderator, Ted Sturgeon, called the five best-known figures in science fiction. These were Bea Nahaffey (roars of 'Good Old Bea'), Evelyn Gold, Katherine MacLean, Judith Merril, and Evelyn Harrison. They talked about 'Women in Science Fiction' - or at least that was what they were supposed to talk about. Actually, after a few general remarks about that, they talked about themselves. Good stuff. Not entirely truthful, of course, but you expect that.

Another recess took us up to seven in the evening, when the big Banquet was due. Now I missed most of this, and most of those who didn't wished they had. The cost of the tickets was something like 35/- and that was a bit too much for my pot of gold, so I slipped out at the beginning of the recess and had a wonderful dinner with a group of four who also thought the price too high: they shall be nameless in consequence. When we returned, the feeding was over and the awards were being presented. Belatedly I was told that a free ticket had been issued to me and that there was a seat reserved for me down on the VIP table. So I got down there quickly, just for appearance's sake, and to my everlasting regret was too late to receive from Forry Lickerman, for passing to Ken Slater, the Award for the most active Fan personality of the Year.

This had been awarded by fan voting to Forry Lickerman, but Forry has had so many awards that he felt that this one should go overseas to the man who has worked harder than anyone else at fandom - old Ken. I would have liked to have taken it from Forry's hands and said a few words about the way British fandom would feel about this. However, some other time, maybe .....

When the banquet ended there was a costume party where everyone dressed up as something or other and strolled about amid flashing bulbs and newshawks. Some quite nice costumes: couple of cover girls -

and you know what covers I mean. Actually the coverage was rather small.

There was supposed to have been a dance after the prizes had been given out, but it seems somebody forgot to order music, and anyway there was nowhere to put the chairs. So everything just sort of fizzled out - which means that things livened up considerably as groups started roving all over the hotel in search of parties. They found them. So did I. Blowed if I remember the details of that evening.

This, I'm afraid, will have to end here because I still have to work for a living. But if the editors ( all hundred of them ) of ST are willing, you shall have another piece next issue.

Until then, all my hate -

*Bert*

\* \* \* \* \*

Naturally, your editors ( all 99 of them - Campbell had one too many - ) are more than willing to hear the rest of the story. We have it on good (?) authority that the saga only starts after the Philcon : there are rumours that Bert caught his beard while pushing a car over the Rockies : oh, lots of very strange things have filtered back to Britain. Note that, Bert: in case you had forgotten, there is a small country called Scotland tacked on to England. Actually, England is merely Scotland's vermiform appendage, as you well know: but sf has penetrated to the Far North. Give your fellow Scots credit!

It is therefore with great pleasure that we formally invite Bert to make with his typer again, in time for the next issue of ST. If we weren't too damned busy we'd write another poem to him..... but, living near him,..we always are inspired, so here goes.....

#### SIC TRANSIT GLORIA ROCKET RAZOR SET

'Tis done! Bert Campbell spreads the latest glooms,  
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquered page!  
How dead that recent Philcon now must seem!  
How dumb the speakers! Horror wide extends  
His desolate domain. Behold, fond fan!  
Read hear the tale of the Authentic man :  
He pans the con. Ah, whither now are fled  
Those dreams of greatness ? those unsolid hopes  
Of happiness ? those longings after fame ?  
When will there be a meeting of the fen  
( Including all the gay-spent festive nights )  
To move e'en Bert to transports of delights  
And prove that all our genius is not done ?

jsm

## NEW BRITISH PROMIG HITS THE STANDS

The Vargo Statten Science Fiction Magazine.  
Edited by Vargo Statten. Associate Editor Alistair Paterson.  
Monthly at 1/6d. Scion Ltd.

If you heard John Russell Fearn's speech at the last Mancon you know why he writes his stories the way he does. If you didn't, well, read one and you'll see what we mean. The word is crud.

JRF has been called "Multiman" because of the diversity of the pen-names which flow from his taperecorder and typewriter. This issue contains four, if not five stories by him out of a total of seven. The other two are by Ted Tubb, who has produced a serial, and a certain Armstrong Alexander. This latter gentleman is not unknown at the Globe Inn where the London Circle meets these days.

Features in the magazine are good. The editorial is the usual sort of thing, with the refreshing angle that they definitely will have an all-British no reprint mag. Which is a good thing.....

Fanfare and suchlike is a general yakking about fandom. And it is good. The magazine policy is stated to be that they will devote 90% to stories and the remaining 10% to fandom. This issue does not quite get there, having only 8% fandom. But that is quite a creditable feature and does beat any others presently circulating, in the British field.

A great deal has been written and an awful lot more said about the evils of crud. Perhaps we should remember that crud has a purpose - no, Sandy, use the issue bump for that. It's free.....

Seriously, how many of us stop to think that there are an awful lot of people in this country - few of them are fans - who read, enjoy and come up for more crud? Largely it is a matter of education/intelligence. There are many people who will never mentally rise much over 16 or so. To them crud gives all the thrills they want from s-f. There is not too much thinking to do. Give them Heinlein and they'd be lost. On the other hand, there are a number of crud readers who start on crud, progress from there to better s-f. I have yet to meet the man who when he was at school did not read what my mother angrily described as "blood and thunders". Magnet, Rover, Adventure, Wizard..... you all know them. Well, that's crud too, you know! When you left school you put those behind you - but I can remember during the war a barrack hut where something like half the men - and they weren't youths by any means - still read and enjoyed those mags. The same thing applies to s-f, which is after all only one branch on the literary tree. The VS mag has set out to cater for the "juvenile" market. It honestly admits that. Looking on it in that light I think the publishers and editors have made a good start, and wish them every success. If they only convert two people a month to serious s-f reading they will have done a good job: ST happens to know that at least one reader has been led into fandom already....after reading the VS mag he has subbed to ST. What do you know.....there's fen in them there crud readers.

jsm

WRITER'S WORKSHOP STORY OF THE MONTH.

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As a matter of policy, we shall always use a pen-name for the author of one of the Workshop stories. Tactful, that's us.... and here is the first ms. to be examined by the panel.....

BIRD OF NIGHT

by

"Ulric Martin"

A slight breeze sighed through semi-dark, deserted streets. Mighty buildings towering away into the blackness of the night sky were silent and lifeless. Not a single light shone from indistinguishable windows; not a door was open. In the very centre of the city there reared an even greater height of defined blackness where the Brotherhood Administration building towered starkly against the starry background of space, dominating the servile city beneath it.

There was only the slightest movement in the city; an indefinable sigh in the air as the small metal sphere glided purposefully from one shadow to another; from darkness to darkness, glinting with a cold and evil gleam as it crossed a patch of artificial light. In all the City only the Robot Controllers were not behind automatically locked doors, only they moved in the tomb-like streets, searching endlessly, watchful every micro-second for any movement along the sombre, deserted highways.

A lone bat, far from its native woodlands, flew unerringly between the heights of the monolithic buildings. A small dark metal sphere sped into the same avenue, cells clicked instantaneously, it turned just slightly, and for a split fraction of a second only nature's night bird and man's occupied the city. Then the invisible beam struck across the gulf between them in that same instant and man's creation was alone again. The disrupted atoms of the bat whirled away down the electron vortex of time, dissipated in a far distant age and were forgotten. The malevolent sphere slid off silently again on its bloodless murder hunt.

But there had been a witness to the drama. In the deep shadow at the corner of a gigantic edifice crouched a man. His hair was long and straggly, covering his face as well as head and shoulders. His clothes were ragged shreds which, nevertheless, seemed to share equally with his taut brown skin the task of holding together projecting bones. The cold was a living thing that bit and gnawed and tore at his emaciated body but his eyes, glowing with the light of transcendal purpose, gave testimony that he could not feel mere physical discomfort. There was fever in his brain, the fever of a long-planned and long-awaited purpose, only now about to burst forth furiously upon its objective. He was exalted beyond cold and hunger, kept alive by the inner fire of a goal near at last after years of waiting, scheming, preparing. The years were forgotten now; the years of mental torture waiting for this day, the years of gathering scraps to make his own gun, of secret research and the triumph of his discovery, the escape from his Work City and the

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lonely flights before Robot Searchers, the trek across hundreds of miles to this Capital of the World and the hours of sheer horror, scuttling and creeping through the sinister streets of the city; all this was forgotten now, all fear and memory gone from his mind, leaving it possessed by a single, driving purpose. Round one more corner and he would be face to face with his age-long dream, the Brotherhood Building, centre of the paralysing tyranny that had half man's freedom-loving spirit beneath its merciless thumb for more generations than anyone now remembered. He need only raise the gun and man might once more learn to be free.

His gun. His steely, skeletal fingers closed even tighter, more crushingly around the slender handle. A sudden wave of love and confidence swept through his mind as his eyes caressed again the grateful lines of his weapon; the glittering shrine of infinite power; power to disrupt the very atoms of any object its invisible beam encountered; to displace them temporally, dissipate them in some far distant time. Even the ghoulish Robot Controllers had this power but his was more than this; more than just a weapon. It was almost a living entity, a god, in his reverent gaze. It had an infinite range which all others lacked. The straight unwavering beam shot almost instantaneously across any gulf of space, then expanded to enshroud the first object it contacted and disintegrate it utterly and finally. It was an immortal piece of exquisite sculpture. Nothing, not even the shattering Robot beams, could destroy it for all time. Because of his secret, danger-fraught discovery its atoms would not dissipate if caught in the malignant beam. It would disintegrate and be wafted away to some unknown, distant time, whether future or past no one knew, but its atoms would reassemble into the original noble form. And if he were still clutching his beloved creation when the beam struck he too would be re-synthesised by the same expanding process possessed by the destructive beam. The weapon would by far outlive its creator but it, like he, existed for only one purpose; every line, angle and curve in its slender magnificence had only one object -- the end of tyranny on Earth.

The cold reigned in the bare, deserted streets of the mighty, lifeless City. Stars shone brightly from the dark void through the clear biting air and the silence of man's gigantic metropolis paid tribute to the cosmic grandeur of the universe. The cold, aloof indifference of far-flung galaxies and immeasurable depths of space paled man's whole existence to less than a ripple on the surface of an ocean. But no grandeur or beauty was there for the tormented man whose restless eyes roved the sky above his head in feverish anxiety. It was too late now to fail. Win he must or all his life would be of no more meaning or importance than the lives of any of the other useless, human sheep. A diabolical driving fury leapt up in him then, burst at long last into full flame. With a horrible scream of hate and rage he leapt round the corner and raised his weapon. The magnificent palace reared fearfully above him. There was a slight click above his back and he whirled in terror. The glittering weapon fell from his uncontrolled, nerveless fingers as the Robot beam struck.

\* \* \* \* \*

Alec tripped over the tree root and lay quietly, listening where

he had fallen. Apart from the bird songs from the leafy foliage over his head, there was no other sound in the wood. Pete and Jerry must have chased Carl when he and Carl had parted. He started to get up, pleased at the realization that he had given the Space Patrol the slip when his eye caught the glint of silver among the rustling grass. He bent, picked up the object, and whistled in admiration: "Gee. That's terrific". It was undoubtedly a "space" gun but he had never seen one quite like that. It wasn't like his own "Space Pirate" but it wasn't like Jerry's "Space Fleet" gun either. He couldn't wait to show his find to the others and started to race off towards the edge of the wood only checking himself when he heard their voices, and realised that he hadn't yet been caught. He fropped behind a wide tree and peered towards the hillside from which the sound of their voices reached him. As they came into sight and stopped at the bottom of the hill he could see that Carl had been caught. They seemed to be deciding on the best way of finding Alec without getting shot from the protection of the wood, and after a minute or two Carl sat down and Pete stayed to guard him while Jerry moved forward to reconnoitre the wood. Alec laughed to himself as he watched Jerry advance directly along his line of fire. He'd disintegrate Jerry and then make him stay there while he dealt with Pete and rescued his lieutenant. Then would come his big moment when he exhibited his glittering new gun and listened to their gasps of admiration and envy.

Jerry crept forward stealthily with hardly a rustle to betray his whereabouts, unaware that Alec was watching him all the time. Alec levelled his new gun proudly and when Jerry got to within ten yards of him he could wait no longer. He jumped up, pulled the trigger and yelled "Zzzzzzz. You've had it, Jerry!". Jerry disappeared.

Alec blinked at the space where Jerry had been. "Hey, that's not fair, I got you" he called out as he started to run forward, expecting to be fired at himself. There was no sound from Jerry, though, any more than there was any sign of him. After a few minutes spent in fruitless search Alec looked at his find with a mixture of slight puzzlement and infinite respect on his face. "Gee, it must be a real space gun", he whispered to himself.

He set off cautiously towards the hillside, holding his weapon with painstaking fondness and care, and keeping his finger well away from the trigger. He decided that it would now be easy to rescue Carl, and, sneaking out of the wood away to the left of the spot where the space pirate and his captor were engrossed in a heated argument about the respective merits of Space Fleet Atomic Ray Disintegrators and Space Pirate Cosmiray Guns, he crept up silently to within a few yards of Pete's back and, as Carl saw him and let out a joyful exclamation of surprise, he jumped out from the partial camouflage of the ferns undergrowth and called, "Drop your gun, Pete, I've got you". Pete started to whirl round but thought better of it and did as he was told. Carl picked up Pete's gun and his own and said "Thanks, Captain. Where's Jerry?" "I shot him and he kinda disappeared" answered Alec rather slowly. He told them about his new weapon, letting them feast their eyes on its graceful lines and listening to their envious exclamations, while all the time, despite their impassioned pleas, keeping a tight hold on it himself.



The sun was by now a large red disk just above the horizon and the boys realised that it was time to start for home.

"Say, we ought to find Jerry first", said Pete. "Can't", retorted Alec indignantly. "I told you. He's disintegrated". "Nuts" said Pete, his scorn tinged with only slight doubt. "It couldn't really dissolve anybody". "Betcha" said Alec, with great feeling. "Okay, then, let's see you disappear something", said Pete. It was a challenge that could not be ignored. Bravely, though with a little fear in his mind, Alec slowly raised the gun and pointed it at Pete.

"No, not me," said Pete hastily. Alec grinned at his success but kept the gun pointed steadily at Pete. "Thought you said it wouldn't work", he gloated. "Disappear that, Alec" said Carl, pointing upwards, and thus saving Pete from the true depths of his ignominy. Alec followed Carl's pointing finger to where a hawk hovered high in the sky above them. "He can't hit that - it's too far away" said Pete, anxious to ingratiate himself again with Alec. "Is not", retorted Alec. "I can hit it".

He took careful aim and followed the bird with his gun as it began a low graceful swoop towards the crest of the hill above them. The sun, large and red, was just touching the top of the hill and Alec fired as the hawk was passing directly in front of the fiery orb. In that same instant the hawk saw its prey and dropped like a stone.

Alec missed.

END

The panel comments:

HERBERT JONES, Chairman of the Panel:

This is not a story, of course; just a little exercise with words, an attempt to build up atmosphere and character, and there's nothing wrong with that. After all, words are the writer's principal tool ( ideas first ) and it is right to be familiar with words and get a respect for them. In this case the words are a little bit self-conscious, and so perhaps is the writer - and also a bit condescending.

If these 2,000 words had been followed by another 65,000 words, uniting the two vaguely connected episodes and developing a plot, a scale of action - but that's going too far. ( It couldn't be made a short story because in another 1,000 words he must concertina plot, action, outcome, etc and the whole thing would be out of proportion)

But I feel that it's rather unfair to bring all this heavy criticism to a small harmless sketch, when one ought to say, "Not bad: have lots more goes".

ALISTAIR PATERSON, panel member, writes:

I can not rid my mind of the idea that only the author knows what particular significance he is chasing. His style tends to exaggerate the atmosphere which he has set out to create, with the result that he never becomes quite entirely convincing. Reduced to its lowest common denominator, this is the type of story that I would nor-

mally dismiss with a kindly word of encouragement to the author. I think it was Roy Campbell, the poet, who wrote: "The snaffle and the bit's all right, but where's the bloody horse?" That seems to me to epitomise this author's weakness - science fiction technicalities apart.

Well, there we are. Story No. 1 has been looked at by the cold eye of the professionals. Herbert Jones, a director of Sidgwick and Jackson, sees it from the angle of the hard cover publisher. Alistair Paterson read it from the point of view of the Associate Editor of the Vargo Statten Magazine. Their opinions were independent: and came to much the same thing..... Unfortunately time did not permit of our being able to get Mr. J.J. Curle's opinion this month: so to that extent you are done out of another vetting, "Ulric".

It is our hope that other fan writers will profit from the gentle criticisms given above. They aren't just panning the story - they tell the writer - and YOU - what's wrong, where the weaknesses are, how to improve the next one.....and we'd like all you bussing authors to read that story again, reread the criticism, and try to appreciate why the critics said what they did.....

It seems that fan are shy: we have NOT been deluged, after all, with a shower of manuscripts.....yet. Here is a fine chance to get your work expertly criticised....or praised. Remember, the copyright rests with the author of any workshop story ..... and don't forget the anthology project. Make it a good story and it may see book form.

now is the time for all good fans to get cracking on their typers to produce a good short story

#### ZINE IN PASSING - A review by Mal Ashworth.

It may just be possible to review this without quoting the classic Slater comment that it is 'frothy' but I'm not going to try. Since it doesn't try to be all things to all fans, that's fair enough and most of it is at least reasonably funny. The cartoons - ( one on the cover and one in "Toto" ) I liked. Bob Shaw's Soupeon report and Bob Tucker's account of Bert Campbell's visit to the States and Bert Campbell's denial of Bob Tucker's account of Bert Campbell's visit to the States are all chuckle-raisers at least, for almost any sense of humour. Here too is a rude shock, though - the Dianetics gripecrack is pushed even unto the very back page - providing a story theme for budding sf authors "The day when a W.W. publication appeared with a Dianetics crack" The serious part of the zine is devoted to the Transatlantic Fan Fund: who do YOU want to send to Frisco? (Let it be clear that, whoever goes, we shall have to have him back again, so it might as well be someone you like)

With Walt's idea of Fanzine material - "creative writing rather than

writing about writing " I heartily agree. I'm sorry, though, I didn't think that a three page article about dislikes in fandom, including such highly original and subtle examples as " Dave Cohen, because he associated with Vargo Statten" qualified for that category.

Still, I guess we all, Faneds particularly, have to compromise ideals with reality.

All round, a packed issue for anyone who likes "Hyphen" - and if you don't you won't read it anyway.

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Mal has mentioned above the Transatlantic Fund. Enclosed with this issue of Space Times is a voting form: the editors would be grateful if every reader would support this fine idea by completing the form and donating the incredibly large sum of half-a-crown to the Fund.

The magazine has no axe to grind: all but one of the nominees are subscribers to the Mag. We are therefore NOT repeat NOT going to voice any opinions. BUT if anyone wants to electioneer, we'd suggest that he drop a note to Eric Bentcliffe very soon; as long as the letters are in English and not TOO full of scurrilous and libellous remarks about the other candidates, we're prepared to go along. Voting ends on March 31st: that gives you two issues of ST to vent your opinions. After that, well, too bad.....

Incidentally, there's a small point that we'd like to clear up about the Philcon. Lots of people think that Bert Campbell went over there on a Transatlantic Fund set-up. Well, he didn't. Bert did it very largely at his own personal expense. Which point might be aired, please, to stop the nasty little cracks about " Why should HE go over for free?" After all, we hate Bert with a loving kindness second to none: but we do have some rules in the game.

eds

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Note to those who don't get this copy of ST: You have been reminded that your sub was due three weeks ago. We haven't had it. No lolly, no ST: we can't afford it, chums. And we're sorry, chaps and chappesses, but this is how it will have to be in future: no pay, no get. Paper alone cost about 3d. for every COPY we put out: postage is another 1½d. We are NOT making a profit out of ST: far from it. Brian Varley.

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FANTASY ARCHIVES, continued

centres of activity, which, until comparatively recent times, were limited in number.

You'll find this an entertaining story, well worth the trouble that may be required before you get hold of a copy.

Jack Doggett.

Just to remind you that most of the books reviewed in Fantasy Archives are available from the Public Libraries - why not try for them?

# FANTASY ARCHIVES

by  
Jack Doggett

THE AVENGING RAY, Seamark, Hodder and Stoughton, 1930.

The theme of this story is one which nowadays is taboo to serious s-f authors. E.E. Smith apologised for using it in "Grey Lensman" but Seamark, quite reasonably for 1930, uses it as a heading for Chapter IV - 'The Mad Scientist'.

The tale gets off to a very good start when Geoffrey Windermaine finds a yard-wide line of disintegration laid from horizon to horizon across a Devon moor. He has previously encountered a dead swan, and disappearing sheep, but none of these has half the effect of his meeting with Rosaine, who libes with the M.S. Yes, there is the usual love interest, not too cloying, which was always necessary at that time to sell any out-of-the-rut story to the British reading public. The author introduces a Scotland Yard man and a second pretty girl but Geoff manages, in spite of the latter complication, to prevent the M.S.'s destroying London.

Seamark, of course, is a skilful thriller writer but perhaps he should have had a technical opinion on this story because, in the middle of the climax, there is a loud clang, the cause of which will be obvious to those mutants who read nothing but science-fiction.

Another one to look for when you're browsing in the second-hand book shelves.

Incidentally, there is a 2/- "Yellow Jacket" Edition currently on sale, from the same publishers.

THE LOST GARDEN, Geo. C. Foster, Chapman & Hall, 1930.

An immortality (almost) story, this, in which Foster takes us back to Atlantis at a time when the tunnel to America is nearing completion. On-Ra, a high priest, has discovered a method of prolonging life for thousands of years, and when his tongue is loosened by wine he talks about it to Fulani, a politician. The suave Fulani pinches the potion, shares it with his girl friend Ruth and Milo, chief engineer of the tunnel. Helen, Milo's steady, has however that illogical argument "It ain't right" against taking it.

Milo's tunnel causes the inundation of Atlantis, and three men and a girl move into the future, since On-Ra was not too drunk to take his own dose. Often separated, they are present at most of the important historical events, even Helen - for she appears whenever Milo is in danger. Foster sees these events as they might really have been, not as the school history books report them. For instance, he offers a non-miraculous explanation of the escape of the Israelites across the Red Sea and reveals a dry humour when the Queen of Babylon addresses her husband as 'Nebby'.

It is not really surprising that the four should see most of history's milestones, since boredom would probably compel them to stay close to the

(continued on page 15)

## Science Fiction 25 Years Ago

T H E N   T H E R E   W A S   O N E

by  
Walter Gillings

Can you remember what science fiction was like in the days before the "good old days" ? One of the few who can is "Granpop" Gillings, who, following three years of inactivity, has recently returned to the field he did so much to develop in this country. His first encounter with American s-f was in 1928. Ten years later he was editing the first British s-f magazine, Tales of Wonder. Since the war he has launched and edited Fantasy, and Science-Fantasy, and bestowed a boon upon fandom generally by editing and publishing Science-Fantasy Review, a much lamented fanzine whose last issue appeared in the Spring of 1950.

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How much more fortunate are the science-fiction readers of today than those of a quarter-century ago !

In 1929, at the same Fleet-street bookstall where now I may purchase any one of eight British reprint editions of the American magazines, I used to stop and stare at the latest issue of the one and only Magazine of Scientifiction, Amazing Stories. This was no disintegrated reprint; it was the genuine article, imported intact, the only adulteration being the imprint of a rubber stamp with the British selling price which defaced the wondrous covers of artist Paul.

That price was the same as you pay today for the Anglo-American product. But 1/6d. in 1929 was to me, at seventeen, a most extravagant expenditure; and even the glossiest British monthly cost no more than a shilling. As for Amazing Quarterly, that great, fat, meaty collection of 144 large pages, it took the almost impossible sum of half-a-crown to come by. That was one-ninth of my weekly earnings as a City office boy; the equivalent of 50 of the cheap Turkish cigarettes which were another of my peculiar passions in those halcyon days.

But I did not stop and stare for long. If it was a case of choosing between s-f and fags, Amazing always proved the stronger addiction. I could, of course, have waited for each issue to turn up in the backstreet bookshops or on the market stalls which provided me with back numbers, as they did many another of the isolated readers of the '20's and '30's. In such places s-f was rated at one with the air story and the western mags which came over from New York by the ton, and were to be bought at 3d. a time ( the Quarterly was 6d.) \* But it was a hazardous, hit-or-miss business for zealous fans who, like me, had started to hoard these unique publications which so possessed our youthful minds. I walked

\* Walt was lucky - I had to pay Woolworth's in Carlisle 4d a copy!

miles, sometimes, seeking out some rare issue to keep my growing collection intact. And I have my hard-won copies still....

\* \* \*

Years later, after s-f fans had clubbed together to swap issues and opinions and run conventions and fan-mags, the more seasoned among them would shake their heads and sigh for what they called "the good old days". The commercialisation which had enlarged the field, with its changing fortunes, editors and editorial policies, had robbed s-f of its flavour. The "classic" tales of bygone days, written for the enjoyment of a select few, were far superior to the stream of "hack" material being turned out for a mass readership.

So the oldsters complained, whenever s-f tended to grow monotonous, in between the fillips it was given by the discovery of such as Weinbaum, Heinlein or Van Vogt. The cry is seldom, if ever, heard today; and no wonder. How could anyone complain, amid the spate of magazines and books -- yes, and s-f films and radio plays-- which cater for all possible tastes more amply than ever before?

My only grouch, which is that of many old devotees, is that today we are getting too much of a good thing. There is so much s-f, in books and magazines, that it takes time and money enough to keep track of it all, sufficiently to ensure you don't miss anything you shouldn't, without allowing time to read what you can afford to purchase from the pile. Whereas, years ago, you devoured all you could lay hands on, today you have to be selective and learn how to skim the cream.

The problem must be all the more acute for our American friends, with some 30 s-fmags to choose from, books and pocket books by the score, and s-f stories in almost every other magazine. Surely s-f has reached the peak when someone has the bright idea of publishing a Science Fiction Digest to present a selection of such stories and articles, gathered from all sources. The anthologies, of course, are doing much the same thing by putting the best of the s-f magazines contents between hard covers, year after year. But this, I gather, is a monthly skimming, which might well be done weekly if Hefield goes on expanding at the present rate

\* \* \*

Were the epic tales of those early years of s-f's development better than those of today? When 1929 dawned I had already absorbed from Amazing Merritt's marvellous "Moon Pool", produced ten years before and since reprinted for the benefit of successive generations of fans. I had thrilled to E.E. Smith's "Skylark of Space", first of the space operas, and pondered over Stanton A. Coblentz's "Sunken World", both of which have been resurrected by the book publishers. Of the shorter pieces I had revelled in, Stribling's "Green Splotches" ( which really sold me on s-f for life) was revived, in Donald Wollheim's Pocket Book of Science-Fiction eleven years ago, and Lovecraft's "Colour out of Space" has been exhumed by Mr. Derleth

At that time I still had to unearth those first-year issues



which had re-presented the Garrett P. Serviss classics, "A Columbus of Space", and "The Second Deluge", which date back more than 40 years. But I had wallowed in Wells and Verne, with whom I was none too familiar until publisher Hugo Gernsback filled out pioneer magazine with their novels and short stories; and I had sampled the work of his new discoveries, such as A. Hyatt Verrill, Miles J. Breuer, Bob Olsen, David H. Keller and Jack Williamson. Fletcher Pratt was another who is still with us: and Gernsback himself was well to the fore --- his prophetic tale of "Ralph 124C41+" first seen in 1911, is also on library shelves today, if not quite so digestible as it was.\*

The newest favourites, just 25 years ago, were Harl Vincent and Clare Winger Harris, and with them in the current Quarterly were four writers yet to make their reputations -- Aladra Aeptama, L. Taylor Hansen, S.P. Meek and Walter Kateley. Never heard of them? Perhaps not. The sensation in the monthly was a two-part serial, "The Sixth Glacier", by one Marius, long since forgotten. The February issue presented two short stories which have gone down to posterity: Wallace G. West's "The Last Man" and Alexander Phillip's "Death of the Moon". But the "good old days" were not yet. Magazine s-f had hardly got into its stride. Amazing was less than three years old and, apart from earlier successes reprinted from other magazines, had produced few tales good enough to stand the test of time. Of those that I recall with particular pleasure there is hardly one which has not been revived, in some form or another, for the delectation -- or detestation -- of the more discriminating readers of today. Of the rest it is doubtful if I, or anyone else, could read them again without a frown.

WALTER GILLINGS

\* Ralph 124C 41 + has had a remarkable career. The story was first published as a serial in Modern Electrics, published and edited by Hugo Gernsback. It started in the issue of April 1911 and ended with the issue of March 1912 - 12 instalments. It was first published in book form in 1925, in an edition of 5,000 copies. The book achieved such fame that it became an automatic "quote" in any history of s-f ( "much to my surprise", writes Uncle Hugo ) At the same time the book became a rarity and by 1950 the second-hand book market quoted as much as £15 a copy - if obtainable. In 1950 a new edition was published, with a foreword by the great Gernsback himself. Currently there is available in Britain a 1/6d. reprint by Cherry Tree Books' Fantasy Books section. As Walter Gillings says, it is a little indigestible today, but we feel that it still should be read by anyone who seriously studies s-f. Try asking for it at your local booksellers.....jsm

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The current BRE of IF ( Vol.1.No. 2 ) contains a novelette by Arthur C. Clarke, "Jupiter Five". It has a typically Clarkeian - and British - flavour, and it is a welcome change to read in an American pro-mag of the London School of Economics and Bloomsbury.....

CLUB AFFAIRS

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT FOR 1953

Firstly, the statistics - some people are fascinated by statistics.

During 1953, over a thousand magazines and books were borrowed. Together with the sale of magazines, and auctions, this produced a total revenue of £13. 16. 10. ( 1952 figure £10. 3. 3.)

On the debit side, £14, 7.1. was spent on magazines and 13/8d on postage. ( 1952 figures £10. 6. 6. and 14/4d respectively )

1954 therefore starts with a deficit of £1. 3. 11 but a considerable number of the better British Reprint Magazines are ordered and paid for: this must be offset against the deficit.

Secondly, the Librarian's report proper.

There was a definite trade recession during the latter half of the year, probably due, in part at least, to the scarcity of new material. New magazines are now rolling in rapidly, and it is hoped that trade will improve.

A word to country members -- you can borrow by post -- it only costs about 5d a magazine ( including postage ) and that's a lot cheaper than buying. A library list dated January 1954 is in course of preparation and contains some 360 items. When ready a copy will be sent to all members : frequent supplements will appear in ST.

Frank S. Simpson

Note to non-members of the NSFC - the use of the library is restricted to members of the club. Any subscriber who would like to use the library should write to Brian Varley, enclosing PO for 1/6, which is the balance between the ST sub and the membership dues of 7/6. He or she will then be placed on the membership roll and be eligible to use the library.

We know that some of our newer subscribers would find this library both useful and economical : why not use it, and save the extra money for Bheer ?

\* \* \* \* \*

EXAMINATION FOR THE ASSOCIATESHIP OF THE INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE  
FICTION

September, 1953, Examination.

PASS LIST:

Best, P., 26 Grange Drive, Blackley, Manchester 9.  
Burrows, R., 46 Edison Street, Hr. Broughton. M/cr.11  
Campbell, P., 60 Calgarth Road, Windermere, Westmorland  
Jeeves, T., 58 Sherrard Grove, Intake, Sheffield 12  
Williams, L.E. 25, Walmersley Road, Moston, Manchester

Club Affairs - Continued.

PRIZES: First Prize: two free days at the Supermancon, goes to P... Best, with a score of 83.9%  
Second Prize, one free day at the Supermancon, goes to A.E. Williams with 77.2%  
Third prize has not yet been fixed but will go to R. Burrows with 75.4%

EXAMINERS' COMMENTS:

Several questions were not completely answered by any one of the candidates, for example, no one knew or guessed that Francium would be fluid at blood heat, that Carbon is radioactive or that a complete sunspot cycle is 22 years, the polarity of the spots reversing after each 11-year half-cycle.

Most of the papers received ( it is regrettable that so few people had the courage or energy to complete the examination, as prizes of a higher monetary value might otherwise have been awarded ) were of a very high standard and it is felt that the competitors now have a few more odd and useless facts and figures at their disposal.

Worthy of note is the fact that all three prizewinners are employed by the same chemical company; are we to infer that this firm employs the cleverest fans or that it has a good reference library?

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YOUR views and suggestions for future competitions would be welcome: do you want competitions ? should they be easier, shorter or less technical? more emphasis on fiction than on science ? or what?

It would be appreciated if you sent your suggestions direct to me, Frank Simpson, at:  
21, Greenway, Alkington, Middleton, Lancashire.

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SUPERMANCON.

It seems, even at this early stage, that this year's Supermancon will be a record breaker in every way. The Committee's plans are well-advanced and Manchester is fairly sizzling with ideas. Ideas have come from other places too - even London!!!! NOW, this is where you come in. To begin with, far too many club members have forgotten the minor fact that they are expected to support the Supermancon: after all, Manchester howled for the annual convention, Manchester has got it, Manchester has to show the world what it can do: and it up to all club members to register NOW. The fee of 2/6d. is not exorbitant: but the sooner the money is in the better: more registration fees mean more guaranteed attendance: help the Committee to estimate numbers : help to swell the kitty for the essential expenditure. Brian is itching for your half-dollar: send it TODAY.

FURL THE STANDARDS --

F O R G O O D

By Ted Carnell

There was a particularly significant phrase in Vincent Clarke's Christmas message ( which incidentally went to friend and foe alike ) which should give everyone who received a copy food for thought in 1954. And a little action t o.

Vinç said, among other things, "It is at this season, when even the standards of London and Manchester are furlled....." There can hardly be a fan in the country who does not know the meaning behind the phrase, written in humour though it was, because it is becoming increasingly evident to anyone who buys, borrows or begs a copy of any British fanmag that there is a widening rift between the various fan groups in the country, and specifically between London and Manchester. The thought is even more deplorable because it comes at a time when fandom in the British Isles should be a united whole.

The fault does not liw with any one person or group -- in fact, the vast majority of group fans will deny that there is much amiss between ourselves except a few misunderstandings. Which is quite true. That's all the trouble is -- misunderstandings and personal opinions. But, during the eighteen months these personal opinions have been mooted in numerous fanzines solely with the desire to create interest and opinion in particular ideas. Through constant cross-reference and answer the original points have become distorted and what started out as fun had backfired into ill-feeling.

Let's face it -- the 'general chuntering' ( to use a pet phrase of Ken Slater's ) that goes backwards and forwards in the fan presses is often highly personal, but never intended to be more than a humorous crack at an opposite number in another group. In fact, the most popular material by fan writers is always the humour -- how else would Walter Winchell Willis survive ?

Differing opinions, whether on fiction, authors, art, fanning, or how to turn a duplicator handle, are healthy outward signs of robust fandom, necessary to the tempering of over-enthusiasm, and the old adage, "One man's meat..." is just as true in fandom as it is in any other sphere.

The biggest bone of contention, which started in such a small way nearly two years ago, and now seems to be smouldering merrily, is the annual Convention. Everyone has their own opinion on where they would like it held, what sort of a programme they would like put on, and who they would like to see attending. I'm not holding any brief for either London or Manchester on this subject -- I don't go to Conventions to listen to the set programme, but to meet the people attending, but I admit a set programme is necessary so that one can be sure of finding the people one wants to speak to at any one moment -- it is also of some use to anyone who turns up who hasn't attended a Convention before and doesn't know anyone to speak to except the auctioneer.

The Manchester group have their own ideas on how a Convention should be run and what sort of a programme should be put on, and this year they are going to have to work like hell to make good all their criticisms of the last two London Conventions. Which is just as it should be -- the 1954 Convention will be all the better for the determination to make it the best yet.

What isn't helping the preparations, however, is the continual harping back on London's efforts ( which incidentally was enjoyed by a far higher percentage than the columnists would have you believe ). The feature writers in the fan press should now be bending all their efforts to publicising the forthcoming Convention, profiting by the "mistakes" of previous conventions, and improving upon ideas already used. Even the small Medcon produced some fine ideas which could be used at Manchester, as everyone who attended it agrees. And a pooling of ideas from all the fan groups in this country would ensure an outstanding Convention wherever it should be held.

The Annual Convention, however, is not the only bone of contention, although it is the foremost at the moment. There are differing opinions on how fan clubs should be organised -- and the fact that London is only a social group without secretary, dues, or organisation, often causes controversy outside the Metropolis. There is nothing to stop London fans organising themselves into a Club should they want -- in fact, Viné has been advocating just this move for quite a while for all those who would prefer to sit and chunter or browse in an establishment where hops and malt cannot stain the prized relics. The fact remains that London has found that it does far better remaining a social group, where visitors only remotely connected with the fantasy field can fit unobtrusively into an evening's discussion without being made objects of awe, wonder or derision.

Be that as it may, it's the way London fandom goes, and appears to be the way they prefer their activities to be directed. It's a personal expression and a personal opinion. It doesn't have to cause a war.

The sum total of these brief remarks is that it is not necessary to decry another group's method or reasoning for any one thing they do or say -- let's take Stuart Mackenzie's remarks in the last issue of ST seriously: "Let us not hesitate to preach our own gospel....Those of us who are science fiction fans have managed very successfully to overcome the artificial barriers which are state boundaries. SF is world-wide...."

Surely it isn't necessary to rely upon a brief religious period to call a halt to personal animosity -- let's furl the standards for good and get down to a united fandom.

\*\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*\*

PERSONAL NOTE : We are happy to tell you that Eric Jones is now out of hospital, and, being forever a good fan, he is spending his convalescence hard at work on Continuum, the new West Country Group magazine. In case you've forgotten, or missed the advert in our Christmas issue, may we remind you that subscription rates are 9d an ish from Eric at 44 Barbridge Road, Atle, Cheltenham, Glos.

## BOOK REVIEW

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MAN ON THE MOON - Ley, von Braun, and Whipple.

Sidgwick & Jackson, 25/-

Those who have read "Conquest of Space" and also seen the Collier's symposium which gave birth to the book, will remember that the latter did not cover all the ground - or space - that the magazine symposium discussed.

Now, to round off, is the second development of this fine discussion of Space travel. Edited by Cornelius Ryan, who edited the earlier work, "Man on the Moon" was jointly written by Ley, von Braun and Whipple. Chesney Bonestell, Klep and Freeman did the art-work. Names such as these are a guarantee of good reading - and so it proves.

Presumably for the benefit of the uninitiated - a wise thing, this, with general public interest growing daily - there is what appears to be a short rehash of the previous book, and then von Braun sets out his scheme for the exploration of the Moon.

When Wernher von Braun was working on rocket development in pre-1939 Germany he was controlled by a small budget. Even during the war, working on the V1 and V2, there was, I believe, a limit to the lolly. Perhaps the land of apparent plenty has conditioned his thinking, for today his grandiloquent scheme calls for an enormous expenditure, 3 space ships, and a team of 50 to land on the moon. Environmental adaptation to bigger and better mousetraps?

Arthur Clarke, at any rate, does not agree with von B. While recommending the book, he points out - "Daily Telegraph", November 18th 1953 - his personal belief that the first landing will be made by one ship, with a crew far below the 50 envisaged by von B. The ordinary reader is in a spot: Wernher von Braun is one of the great rocket engineers, if not the greatest; Arthur Clarke, President of the BIS, ought to know what he is talking about, for the BIS has done more than any other single organisation in the world to further space travel. Then, too, there is the by-now old hat controversy between the Americans and ourselves about the design of the Satellite Station.

Be all this as it may, the average reader certainly does not know enough about rockets and spatial mechanics to be able to argue too much with either side: the book is both educative and interesting - a rare combination.

Purely as a matter of speculation, I have loaned the book to several people who know nothing about space ships, sf, and all that. The general reaction has been identical and runs something like this, "Well, of course, I listen to the BBC serial, and I saw the moon on the tele, but I never really thought it was anything much. Now I'm not so sure - maybe you have got something there after all." Converts. What the movement needs.

Oh yes, I know what's coming: the people were, 1) a shorthand typist, 2) a chartered accountant, 3) a coats clerk, 4) a cashier at the bank, 5) my mother-in-law 6) a schoolteacher, male, -geography, and 7) a flute-player in an orchestra. Fair distribution?



Book review - continued.

There is a solid chunk of meat in this excellent production, and I feel that the acceptance or not of the particular cheme must remain a matter for the individual reader. von Braun's exposition is very plausible - and even if he is NOT correct in his assumptions and postulations, it doesn't matter too much, as long as he can convince the ordinary, non-scientific reader that space travel is a realisable thing. For unless we manage to do that, we shall never have spave travel anyway. As a concept of what may happen, I can find no fault with the book.

\* Highly recommended, if you have 25/- to spare. If not, then I'd suggest you demand that your local library get a copy for you.

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#### SPRAGUE de CAMP's NEW ANTHOLOGY

Edited by H.J. Campbell. Panther Books. 1/6d.

The title of the anthology is perhaps a shade misleading, but we believe this to be the first time these six stories have been anthologised (ugh, what a word) in Britain. Certainly the first time in paperback.

The stories are "Calories", "The colourful character", "Juice", "Proposal", "The Saxon Pretender" and "The Space Clause". They have all, of course, been published in US promags, some also in the BRE's. The most recent reprint is, I think, "Proposal" so perhaps we shall see the rest of the anthology at a later date? I'd like some information on this, if anyone does know.

Humour in science-fiction- how often do we hear the plea? Well, for 1/6d one gets quite a bucketful in this anthology. Not all straight slapstick by any means - de Camp is too good for that. There is a whimsy, a sort of self-mockery that is more than just a faint background. It is good writing.

This reviewer is not over fond of anthologies. To begin with, he has usually read all the stories anyway. Secondly, these anthologies cost a lot of lolly which is hard to spare at this time. At 1/6d, I can buy without a qualm, so I say to Panther Books - turn out some more..... this one is a good effort.

\* Recommended reading - even the introduction ( by Bert)

Stuart Mackenzie.

Other recommended books:

Shadow on the Hearth- Judith Merril - Sidgwick & Jackson. 9/6d.

This is a book you will reread: and enjoy more with each reading. It will be reviewed at length next issue.

The Demolished Man - Alfred Bester- Sidgwick's at 9/6d. Book version of the Galaxy serial, which was voted the year's most outstanding novel at the Philcon. A good dustcover by Gerard Quinn.

L O N D O N    L E T T E R  
from Brian Varley

This month we are starting off with the tail end of an epic drama. Having printed the thing we still had to take care of the posting of the Xmas issue of S/T.

Picture the sight. At two o'clock one Monday morning in the hallowed precincts of Cranley Gardens a door opens and out stagger two figures, carrying large parcels. The taller of the two takes hold of all the parcels and ambles off down the street.

The scene now changes to a street corner some five minutes later. The parcels are now lying on the floor. Enter a bulky-looking gentleman in the Metropolitan police uniform.

Unfortunately he doesn't come out with the expected "What's agoin' on 'ere of?" Silently he surveys the parcels. Audibly he deduces that they are destined for the post.

A parley ensues for some thirty seconds and then the policeman picks up half of the bundles and the two figures walk along to the post-office.

The moral of this story is that while Ken Slater has the Army working for him, we have the inimitable glory of the London copper working for us.

The Saturday before Christmas I travelled North to spend the holiday amongst the people who really appreciate my talents.

On the train I happened to pick up the Nov/Dec issue of Lilliput. Now this is a magazine I rarely buy, but one which I am not averse to reading, should the opportunity present itself (preferably a literal presentation). Thumbing through the pages I was astounded to see the name of one of Science-Fictions more colourful authors, the latter-day Doc Smith, A.E. Van Vogt. "This," I says to myself, "this is worthy of investigation." Perusing the story I discovered that it only covered two sides, the bulk of which was occupied by art-work. Still it's one more step in the right direction. The name of the story was, by the way, "Defence".

Whilst on the subject of literature in the S/F line I noticed a new Gld Book on sale in town which for the price of two shillings offers you the new Wilson (Bob) Tucker novel "The Loud Long Silence" I haven't as yet read it so I can't say whether it has been edited overmuch, but one thing impressed me very much and that was the cover; no art - just plain blue and silver, but it stood out like a beacon (not Willises Bea-con !!) amongst the garish covers of the British corn and the BRE's.

How many of you, I wonder, heard the interview of Dr. Wilkins of the British Astronomical Association after the sports news at 6-15 on Christmas day? If you did hear it you will have to bear with me for it should be of interest to those of our readers whose faculties were impaired by an excess of festival zeal. Dr. Wilkins, it appears, has been making a special study of the lunar landscape and the first point raised was the discovery of a "bridge", some twenty miles long, between two peaks in the Lunar Appenines.

This usage of the word bridge is exactly the one that any of us would use, and does not have any special scientific meaning. When the interviewer asked whether in the doctors opinion the bridge was artificial, he replied that the phenomenon appeared to be natural, but qualified this, by saying that as an artificial creation it was a marvellous piece of engineering, but as a natural effect it was a miracle.

Other peculiarities discussed were the "domes" which were very much like overgrown bowler hats, ranging from two to twenty miles in diameter. Then there were the "pit-shafts", which are a relatively recent discovery. These are, as the name suggests, vertically descending shafts, with reasonably smooth sides. The finale was in the form of a few points on the so-called "rays" which radiate from the southern polar regions and in some instances reach for, a matter of two hundred miles. There has not yet been a satisfactory explanation of these rays, according to Dr. Wilkins. Has anyone a suggestion as to the origin of these phenomenon?

Now to be utterly serious for a while I would like to tender sympathy on behalf of myself and the N.S.F.C. to Eric Jones who is now in hospital for a spinal operation. Eric, who owing to pressure of study had to stop printing S/T, just couldn't stay an inactive fan. A few weeks after passing the job on to Stuart he took on the less onerous task of editing the new West-Country fanzine, "Continuum". A so far unspecified character has now taken over this job, so if you have subbed, don't fret, it will now be issued in the early spring. Here's to you Eric, may you soon be back in circulation.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention of our Northern readers to the dates of the next N.S.F.C. meetings; the January meetings are on the 17th and 31st and the first February meeting on the 14th. If you havn't been along for a while, how about dropping in on the mob sometime ????

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WE EXTEND THE USUAL HEARTY WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW SUBS :

Karl Dollner, 8, Second Avenue, Hove, Sussex  
Mr. J.A. Wiseman, 4 Edgehill Road, Edgebury, Chislehurst, Kent  
Cyril A. Harper, 94 George Street West, Breakfields, Birmingham 18  
Eric Cox, 163 Enfield Road, Hunt End, Crabb's Cross, Redditch  
Mr. H. E. Bullock, "Hellsgarde", 1 Walton Street, Sutton-in-Ashfield  
578532 Snr/Tech. C. Jackson, No.1 Sgt's Mess, RAF St. Athan, Barry.  
D.J. Norton, 73 Guildford Street, Grimsby, Lincs.  
L.E. Bartle, 16 Milford Road, Walton, Near Stafford.  
Alfred Francis, 2/51, Elkington Street, Birmingham 6. Warwickshire.  
Brian W. Avis, 4 Lancaster Avenue, Blackpool, Lancs.  
Jan Jansen, Port II Straat, Wommelgen, Belgium.  
Sidney Gale, 19 Beech Street, Elland, Yorkshire.

Brian Varley, Hon. Treasurer. NSFC

GEOFF LEWIS TELLS STUART MACKENZIE THAT HIS LIGHT TO LIGHTEN  
IS SOMEWHAT TOO DIM TO BE ANY USE.....

I don' agree with the conclusion drawn by Stuart Mackenzie in the Christmas issue piece - "Light to Lighten". Briefly, here is my reply to it.

Children will play together unconscious of colour or creed.

Universal brotherhood, peace and goodwill, that is Heaven. Heaven is within us - within each individual and among and around us individually and collectively.

A satellite station commanded by UNO would indeed dominate and compel. But - Domination is wrong of itself. Compulsion could NOT bring peace and goodwill. If my neighbour told me that I'd have to be good and tractable because he had the upper hand, and could / would destroy me if I weren't, he might make me apparently amenable, but I'd hate him, and watch for a chance to turn the tables.

If UNO dominated the world from a satellite, they could not prevent another, or many other satellited being built except by force, which is war, or by enslaving, which is worse. Freedom is the myth around which all wars have been fought and engineered. Yet freedom is with the individual. Insofar as he gives, so he receives.

In 1947 America thought to force peace by domination, indicating the atom bomb as backing for their demands that other nations should submit to peace, or else.....

It didn't work. The object of their domination merely stalled, until they could reply by producing their own atom bombs, and continued defiance to domination.

Then comes the H-bomb and the reply.

Satellites would bring a similar reply.

No, we can never expect to have peace, much less goodwill, (in fact, the terms are, in this context, synonymous ) by attempting to force people into quietude. A change of heart is necessary, and that can come about only by understanding each the other - the secret of universal love and brotherhood lies therein.

I hold no brief for Communism or any other "ism". All such national ideology breeds discontent and dissatisfaction : but when I was in Russia I found that the ordinary people were, like all ordinary people, simple and likeable, needing to be understood and liked for their own sakes, yet fiercely against compulsion by any other nation. Thus, they submit, albeit somewhat unwillingly, to severe compulsion at home in the hope of attaining sufficient national strength to resist compulsion from abroad.

It is so easy to believe that we are right and everyone else is wrong. In war, both sides preach that they are fighting for right - and both sides believe it ! Hate is fostered by ignorance - with understanding comes love and tolerance.

Thus only is Stuart in the right - that he knows S/F fans' breaching of international barriers is resolving differences by the occasioning of some slight understanding, through common interest.

I cannot afford the time to go into details or enlarge further on this subject, but I think I have mentioned the salient points : they need thinking over and correlating. I have just tried, however imper-

fectly, to express the kernel of the ideas that run through my mind. Individual thought can soon classify and clarify the foregoing general assertions.

Individual fought individual : tribe fought tribe : province ruled province : class quarrelled with class : nation warred with nation, continent against continent, race against race. Thus, we go on to world against world, universe against universe.

Where can it end while one section seeks to dominate another and where understanding fails.

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The foregoing is extracted from a letter to the Editor : it is not therefore an article written as such. However there are many points raised by Geoff Lewis which are worthy of thought. Geoff requested that Stuart Mackenzie reply : fair do's, Stuart's reply is below.

- - - - -

"Universal brotherhood, peace and goodwill, that is Heaven" says Geoff. Then he goes on to say "Heaven is within us...." leaving us to say for ourselves the inevitable "therefore".

Now this is bad logic. One must NOT mistake symptom for cause. As I see it, "brotherhood, peace and goodwill" are only some of the attributes of Heaven. Surely there are other things in Heaven besides these. And surely at least in theory ( even mine in the piece we're discussing ) other places where we'll find those things.

Thus, when Geoff goes on to say "Heaven is within us" he is making the error of using the word Heaven in two distinct senses, but implying that there is only one sense. The first statement - that u. b. p. & g. are heaven uses heaven in a metaphorical connotation. But the second statement is an implication of a factual heaven. Let's be clear on this : I thought that I had made it clear that I had no illusions about the spiritual side of man's thinking.

Geoff argues that domination is of itself wrong. No! Go back to the New Testament. Christ dominated his disciples, dominated the mobs who gathered to hear him preach, obviously dominates your thinking, dominates umpteen million people today. Once again we have a confusion of cause and effect. Domination AS SUCH is not bad. The evil lies in the effects of improper domination.

I am afraid that much as I agree with a lot that Geoff has said, and while I appreciate the rancour of the "dominated", (largely caused by inefficient domination - there are more subtle methods - s-f is full of them ) I must still hold that in the present state of humankind it is vital that compulsion be exercised to curb man's zest for global insanity. I quite agree that in principle it may well be wrong to compel anyone to do anything and that love should be the dominant ( oh dear, that word again ) force in all things. BUT - that is the goal to which we strive - we have to get there first. And to get there we must first cope with the prerequisites, the first of which is simply "no war".

The longer the period of peace between nations - fussing but not fighting, if you like - so the freer the intercourse between peoples

will be - and so the goodwill, which is NOT synonymous with peace, would spread. Without goodwill there can be no true understanding. But without intercourse between peoples there can be no goodwill, at least of the war-stopping kind, for such goodwill is a direct derivative of the good understanding of one people for another. There I think we are in agreement.

I do not think that your statement that freedom is the myth around which all wars have been engineered is altogether correct. It will bear it is true a certain surface validity when examined, but then you have to be awfully clever about what freedom means. If you give freedom the widest possible meaning, even then you'll find that the statement will not hold water for very long. Many wars were fought for the sheer lust of power - oh, yes, the defenders wanted freedom, but who started the scrap? Or are we to really take into account negative freedom (= slavery)? By far the greater number of wars have been fought for no such fancy ideas as freedom, the right to get tight on a Saturday night, or whatever, but for plain economic grab-bag reasons. I do not recall that Mussolini advocated Freedom as the reason for his going to war with Haile Selassie's Abyssinnia - or that freedom for Poland was the battlecry of the Storm Troopers who took over Danzig.

I grant you that we in Britain have been to some extent jingoed into a couple of global insanities by the cry of Freedom - for somebody else, at that! But really that doesn't mean so much. After all, it is not too long ago, as History goes, that another Elizabeth was on the throne of England. And the same History records that while she cried heartily that England be free from fear of the Spaniards she was (left hand, right hand stuff) busy plotting to get control of Scotland. She deprived Mary not only of her freedom, which I suppose was endurable, but of her head. It killed poor Mary, you know. She never got over the shock. No, Geoff, none of us is perfect: all the more reason for having an implacable gaffer who will make us behave as the adults we proclaim ourselves to be.

I do agree, however, that Freedom is a myth. Not one person alive today is free, for freedom means complete independence of any and all peoples, things and institutions. Just how dependent we all are upon one another! If the farmer goes on strike I, the city dweller, go hungry. And if I, the city dweller, strike, the farmer gets no oil, no electricity, no machinery, can no longer operate: and even if he could there would be no market for his surplus production: without that market he cannot purchase..... all one big ratrace.

That is the key to my whole concept.

As I see it, Interplanetary travel is on the way. First returns from the ST survey put it pretty close, in the opinion of the readers of this and other fan magazines. I think I can safely say that you will accept this postulate?

Now, having made that point, let's forget it for the moment and have a quick look round at world affairs. Or some of them.

America. Threatened with a trade recession, which is a polite drawing-room word meaning slump. Why? Because there is peace in Korea.

Crazy? Not really.



In an industrialised civilisation with a progressive technology, one thing is certain. There will be an inevitable increase in production, unless, as Britain has done, you slow down that productivity by the laziness of the worker. ( That is why Britain's production today is not appreciably greater than pre-war, but not less, although today we do a 40-hour week with some twenty-odd hours of actual work in many cases ) In America, however, the worker collaborates with the machine that is industry - and up goes production. So far, fine. Then enter the villain - the limiting factor. The market can take only so much and no more: then it becomes saturated and no more can be sold. Productivity is still increasing, though. To prevent a slump governmental action is necessary in these complicated economic times. So the government buys the surplus. It is stockpiled, channelled into mysterious pools where it can quietly lie to be forgotten. Be forgotten? Not likely! Here is the perversity of mankind. The taxpayer, whose taxes pay for this stockpiling, wants to know why. No government which depends upon a freely choosing electorate for votes has yet dared to tell the truth and explain just why. If they did it might save us all a lot of worry. So the government has to have a reason.....

There is a let-out. Have a war. That will absorb all your surplus industrial energy. And a few possibly surplus people too - but that is by the way. Sure, it costs more, but, like the bread and circuses of Ancient Rome, it keeps the people quiet.

Now I am NOT suggesting that America deliberately sought a war in Korea. Such a suggestion is both ridiculous and vicious. None the less, any economist will tell you that the said war arrived at a most opportune moment for the economic short-term future of the U.S.

What if no war happens along? Why, then it is that pe sons of the genus McCarthey serve their purpose. No war? Ah, but "Cry havoc: War, War, and rumours of war!". Scare the metaphorical pants off the stern of John Citizen. Have a genuine home-made bogeyman. Once it was Nazism, today it is Communism, tomorrow - scientifiction perhaps?

Well, you set up the bogey. Then you have to fight him/it. So you have what is called a Defence Programme - rearmament to you, chum. Which means higher taxes. Which pay for munitions. Which help to keep full employment. Which permits of the collection of sufficient taxes to pay for the munitions. Which help to keep.....well, all in all, than which nothing could be whicher. You go around in an ever-diminishing spiral, finally disappearing.....

Now let's move the spotlight to Sydney NSW. Why? Because it is there that Rab Butler has gone to discuss the Empire reaction to the threatened world slump. Let us not pretend - if there is a slump in the US it will be followed by a slump here. Not necessarily, you may say, and I'd be inclined to agree. BUT none the less it will happen, and I shall tell you why.

If Britain is to live she must manufacture and export the product of an imported raw material. To purchase all the raw material she needs to keep her factories going she has to have dollar-lolly, because sterling is not at present convertible. Now to get the dollar-lolly she has to sell exports in the US. If there is a slump in the US the market for British goods will fall, so will the dollar earnings, so will the amount of raw material we can buy....and down will come Baby,

cradle and all. Factories will go on to short time, or even close down altogether. That means that more strain will be thrown on public funds to meet National Insurance payments, which in turn will raise taxes.....and back we go again on the same old spiral. Only this time flying backwards instead of forwards. Not that it makes much difference in the end.

Now let's have a look at Russia, if we can find a hole in the curtain. Actaually there are a few statistical holes we can use to get some definite though vague idea of the trend of events there. There again we find that good old standby, the Defence Programme. Or whatever they call it. The rest I personally know by heart now, and I imagine you do too.....

All right then, so everybody absorbs excess industrial production by stockpiling and preparing for war. And that keeps full employment so that everyone ought to be at least happy, if not delirious with joy. Or paralytic with fear.

Now imagine, if you can, a jetty going out into the Atlantic Ocean, with a railway line on it, and a tipping device, like a pit slag-heap, at the end. And suppose you were to let the governments buy all the surpluses, stick it in railcars, run it out to the end of the jetty and dump it in the sea. It would take an awful long time to fill up the Atlantic, wouldn't it? And although you'd be maintaining full employment at home, nobody would be hurt.

Having got that idea put across - I hope - now I'd ask you to think of the Atlantic as being a drop of water in an ocean as big as the Pacific and Atlantic put together and doubled. And still taking an incalculable time to fill up.

Now if we dump everything in this ocean of ours we will never get any benefit from the possible use of the things we have dumped. They will eventually fall to the bottom of the sea, rust away or rot away, and be of no use to anyone. Supposing then I were to tell you that there IS such a "dump", right here on your doorstep, but a dump with literally an infinite capacity to absorb everything you put in to it. And at the same time a dump which might just use those things to better your lot in life. Well, I believe that this dump I know of is going to be the salvation of mankind, because once people start to use it, they will be so busy devising new things to put into the dump that maximum productivity will lag behind orders for ever. Given such a perfect economic set-up who in tarnation wants to go to war and spoil it all? Certainly not the people? And they really rule in the end.

Where is this dump? Well, the path leads via a satellite station, Mars, Venus, to the outer planets, to the rim of the Galaxy, and beyond. Space travel will take so much, cost so much, before it ever begins to pay off, that it could ensure peace for ever on this earth

See what I mean, Geoff? Enforce peace until that force is no longer necessary because you have removed the root of war.

Yours for bigger and better satellite stations,  
Stuart Mackenzie.

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Articles and letters in this magazine reflect the opinions of the writers, not of the magazine, which plays safe and has no opinions

WELCOME RE-APPEARANCE.....

SCIENCE-FANTASY ON THE BOOK-STALLS ONCE MORE.

After almost a year of hope,  
speculation, despair and rumour  
Science-Fantasy (Nova 1/6d.)  
has made a pleasing come-back.

For the sake of those who want to know just what they are paying eighteen pence for I will just expound on some of the details of make up etc..

Digest size, 128 pages, only three of which are devoted to features, that being John Wyndhams guest editorial. The print is slightly smaller than in previous issues but is easily readable. The cover is by Gerard Quinn and the interior illos are by Quinn, Hutchings, Clothier and Hunter.

The lead novelette, "Seek Earthmen No More" by F.G.Rayer is about the nearest the mag gets to Space Opera. This left me with the impression that it had started off as a novel but owing to a lack of space had to be condensed into a novelette. If you like stories that end with a gimmick then this is the one for you. Personally my favourite is "Beggars All" by J.T.M'Intosh which concerns the landing of a Patrol ship on a planet of lost colonials. These people have developed into a race of beggars. How? Therein lies a story. By the way, I've read this somewhere before, Fantasy and Science Fiction methinks.

Another ace in the Carnell pack is "Stranger from Space" by Gene Lees which although not strictly science-fiction is a beautiful and emotional piece of writing. I wonder if Miss Lees (or is it Mrs.) has a sea-going husband?

"Death Sentence" by John Christopher is the other one in this issue that I have read before, once again I can't locate it. We cannot however accuse Ted of using reprints, I can quite well credit that had Science-Fantasy been put out on schedule it would have been simultaneous publication on both sides of the Atlantic.

Of the three remaining shorts two I wasn't keen on, not because they are poor yarns by any means but simply because I like happy endings. The Tubb story is, at least I imagine, intended to send a cold shiver up the spines of fathers who play with their youngsters. I'm not yet a father so it didn't scare me Mr. Tubb. "The Trojan Way" by Francis Richardson also made me feel annoyed with the author, anyone who makes a break for it, then suffers a serious sct-back but manages to evade the arms of the tyrant law, well they deserve a happy ending.

The last yarn is J.F.Burkes "Detective Story", this shows the impossibility of criminal detection in a time when the solar system contains aliens with an unstable metabolism. Stir into this the hazards of pulse projectors, artificial twins and a dozen more undetectable devices and where is your poor detective?

D A L E ' S     D I A R Y

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Dale R. Smith

HAPPY NEW YEAR !

And 1954 is going to be a year of major importan for the Science Fiction field. We will see more and more stories in general publications on a truly adult level. The strictly sf magazines will increase in quantity but also in quality - generally. Fan organisations will grow and prosper - SPACE TIMES will assume and maintain definite leadership of the International Scene. And I may even find a copy of ORBIT SCIENCE FICTION.

Other than news concerning horrible crimes, imminent global atomic war, and increasing slaughter on the highways, the front pages of newspapers are usually quite unrefreshing. However, I was recently delighted to see a bit on a rehashed theory about the gradual warm-up of the northern hemisphere. In the course of this article it was stated that there are actually adherents to the theory that world temperature is being increased by the body heat of greater populations, and the day is coming, about 2033 A.D., when the entire earth will reach a uniform 98.6 degrees F. Now, I am willing to listen to any argument, but I am sure that such a stupid conclusion can rally nothing to its defense. Population is certainly increasing at a merry rate and, at certain times, certain individuals seem capable of generating more than their 98.6. But I would be more inclined to look towards internal combustion and jet engines as a more positive factor for temperature increase. Increased industrial activity, and the smoking mimeographs of S-T and other fan magazines, certainly should not be discounted. The more I consider these angles, the more it becomes apparent that, if anything increases the Earth's temperature, the mass of humanity would be a negligible factor. At any rate Minncapolis doesn't seem to be worried - we had a reading of minus 14 F ( Minus 25 C ) just recently. Bundling is the answer at those min s readings.

"The Midgets of Monoton", by Stanton A. Coblentz, is the feature novel in the second issue of the Fantasy Publishing Company's SPACEWAY. The contents page had this to say about the story: "To the three Earth people this underground world of the Monotonites could only be a terrible nightmare....". Well, terrible nightmare will do for a start in any criticism, but I certainly would not stop there. My primary reason for the complete reading was to satisfy my curiosity on the following point: can a senile plot be maintained at full strength for 61 pages? It can. Such drivel. I do not intend to completely assign SPACEWAY to obscurity because of the one and only story I have read from the two issues, but.....

DARK DOMINION, a new science-fiction novel by David Duncan, was just about to go to press at Ballantine's when Collier's entered the scene, and apparently with more money. Publication by Collier's will be early next summer, and Houghton Mifflin will provide a hard-cover edition. \*\*\* ( This corrects Animal, Vegetable or Alien notice in

DALE'S DIARY - continued.

this issue, stating that this would be a Ballantine publication)

The Chamberlain Press, Box 7713, Philadelphia, Pa., is a new publishing firm that will specialise in science fiction and fantasy book titles. Their first book, "Born of Man and Woman", a collection of short stories - 17 of them - by Richard Matheson, is scheduled for March 25, 1954.

Other books scheduled: SIX GREAT SHORT NOVELS OF SCIENCE FICTION, edited by Groff Conklin, Dell, Jan. 26th : SENTINELS OF SPACE : THE ULTIMATE INVADER AND OTHER STORIES, by Eric Frank Russell, Ace Double Novels, Feb. 5th : SEARCH THE SKY, by Frederic Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth, Ballantine, Feb. 15th.

STARTLING STORIES goes quarterly with the Jan. '54 issue.

The CBS TV Network is preparing a dramatic series of "half-hour" "live" telecasts dealing with adult science fiction. These shows are to be based on Ray Bradbury's stories. \* THRILLING WONDER STORIES goes quarterly with the current Winter issue. Two hundred books were presented last year to the White House Library by the American Bookseller's Association. Titles were selected from books published by American publishers in the years 1949 through 1952. George Orwell's 1984, and ROCKETS, JETS, GUIDED MISSILES AND SPACE TRAVEL, by Let, were included. Anyone have access to the library in Buckingham Palace?

The 10th revised edition of PRIVATE BOOK COLLECTORS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA ( R.R. Bowker, 1953) is to be congratulated for recognising Science Fiction. The S-F listing refers one to "Fiction, Fantasy", but then we can't have everything. And under this heading are listed five dealer-collectors and twenty-eight collectors. Under "Travel, Space" one collector is listed - me. Wonder if that will get me in "Who's Who" ?

I am prustrated and rapidly developing numerous and excruciating phobias and all of this is due to my inability to locate a copy of the first issues of ORBIT SCIENCE FICTION. I read reports, I hear rumours, and I imagine that people are talking about this new magazine behind my back. But I do not see it on the newsstands. I look and I look but it doesn't appear. It's a myth and I frill thang goh du blig eik h8\*z kaq p



ANIMAL, VEGETABLE OR ALIEN

by Eric Bentcliffe

I should like to forecast that 'Malice in Wonderland', Evan Hunter's novelle in the Jan., '54 issue of IF, will cause more controversy and argument amongst fandom than any other yarn since the Spillane epic in FANTASTIC...it provides some wonderful material for the old SF vs SEX controversy...read it - you will like it, and you can always say afterwards that "the sex element was an essential part of the story". The first issue of the Varga Statten Science Fiction Magazine is now on sale throughout the U.K. The cover reminds us of the opening shots of a Pathe News Reel...the fan department FANFARE AND SUCHLIKE is quite well-handled, and informative...I am still trying to pluck up courage to read the stories - the names of the authors have me scared at the moment. British fanzine publishers had a heyday around the festive season...the Liverpool group brought out a 108-page issue of SPACE DIVERSIONS...Pete Campbell had 54 pages in his each-issue-gets-bigger ANDROMEDA and of course ST - the only monthly - weighed in with its 60 pages. Anyone not have enough to read over Christmas? Latest title to pass the Bentcliffe portal from Ballantine is Gerald Kersh's THE SECRET MASTERS - this is a yarn we can heartily recommend. Ballantine have some very nice items scheduled and we would like to list some of them here: MORE THAN HUMAN, by Theodore Sturgeon, is the extended version of his recent GALAXY novella BABY IS THREE; OUT OF THE DEEPS is the US title of John Beynon's KRAKEN WAKES; EXPEDITION TO EARTH, a collection of Arthur Clarke's stories; STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES No. 2, fourteen brand-new stories; DARK DOMINION - this is an original novel by an author new to me, David Duncan. The blurb says, "A story of a tremendous race for supremacy above the earth and the assault on the last great frontier - the conquest of space"...so now you know. RIDERS OF THE STARS, by Curt Siodmak, is the story of the film of the same name no showing in the US. A British SF film entitled DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS is now being canned at one of the London studios - I wonder whether this has any connection with James Corbett's story DEVIL MAN FROM MARS? Maybe it's the latter's mate come to take him home? In the midst of the SF depression in America IF has decided to go monthly from the March issue. DYNAMIC is the latest SF magazine to fold...no tears shed at this address. SF - on - records department: Decca will shortly release in America the entire MARTIAN CHRONICLES in a series of albums bearing the title "Norman Corwin presents Ray Bradbury..." - we suggest that record-SF fans make enquiries as to the availability of this series in Britain. PSYCHOTIC is a fanzine edited by Richard E. Geis ( 2631 N. Mississippi, Portland, Oregon ) It contains excellent columns by such people as Veron McCain and some very unusual artwork... this is the best-produced 'ditto'ed' zine we have yet seen. Star billing on British TV was recently given to the planet JUPITER - this was a direct transmission from the telescope to the screen and very well done. In a supporting role we saw that many-faced character the MOON. Watch out on TV for George Orwell's "1984" .. it is due in mid-February. The MUSICAL EXPRESS carried an article on Jazz on the Moon in its Xmas number - though the subject was rather heavily handled the article made amusing reading. END