

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS OPO WE'LL BE BACK FROM
vacation, and
very likely will have had time to do an issue, at
least a one-pager. Maybe we'll even be at the
meeting! But from the vantage point of July 13,
that's all very nice, so here is the last of the
pre-vacation opus, and again, it is:

pat & dick jopoff's
- o p o -
August 13th, 1965

BOOK WEEK: THE DARK WORLD by Henry Kuttner, Ace, 1965, from Startling
Stories, 1946. Well, it's very cleverly done
this short novel (146 pages) with a quote from Martin Zimmer Bradley
rather than great Henry Kuttner was, which the presumably believes and
which will have been the case (Hello, MUM!). But Martin says no-
thing about THIS PARTICULAR Kuttner opus, and with good reason. The
book is one of those in which the hero suddenly and mysteriously finds
himself in a strange world, surrounded by menaces and temptations, not
knowing where the hell or even who the hell he really is, and has to
fight off villains and monsters all the time he is trying to figure
out what's coming off. I don't recall any monsters in "The Dark World"
but all the rest of it is there, and Edward Bond is thoroughly puzzled
throughout the book.
So is the reader. It is a very bad book.

THE PURPLE CLOUD by M. P. Shiel, 1930, Paperback Library edition, 1965
131 pages, of very small, dense type). Shiel is
of the famed early masters of science-fiction, and this and the much
earlier "Lord of the Sea" are his two best-known works. On "The
Purple Cloud", I thought I'd back "The Purple Cloud" just to see
what the man is like.
It is a strange book, quite Victorian in style,
but offering one excellent character and another who is truly
in, but still good. This is a wonderful disaster story, the world
character, Adam Telford, surviving when deadly gas clouds sweep the world
because he is at the north pole where the gas clouds do not reach. It is so
bold at the extreme that the gas crystallizes and precipitates before
reaching him. It also dissipates before he reaches warm climes again.
Telford's horror and growing madness as he wanders the world in which
he alone survives of all animals, are marvelously dramatized by
Shiel, and the inevitable finding of a female survivor is handled
in an unconventional manner such that it becomes acceptable. The book
is slow-paced and very wordy, and cannot be read with the ease of such
contemporary fiction, but it rewards the patient plodding.

THE POLAR TREASURE both early-30s Doc Savage novels by Kenneth
BRAND OF THE WEREWOLF (Leslie Dent) reprinted by Bantam
Books, 1965. These two novels of the case-
produced high-adventure thrillers of the 30s, and both down from those
previously reviled by Bantam, but at the same time good for some
(unintended) laughs. The "Werewolf" is a parody of the high-
adventure work. Doc Savage will surely turn up in "Polar Treasure" in
ALLEN EGO; he's the prototype of the continually adventure hero.
-11-