

The

SCIENCE

FICTION

FAN





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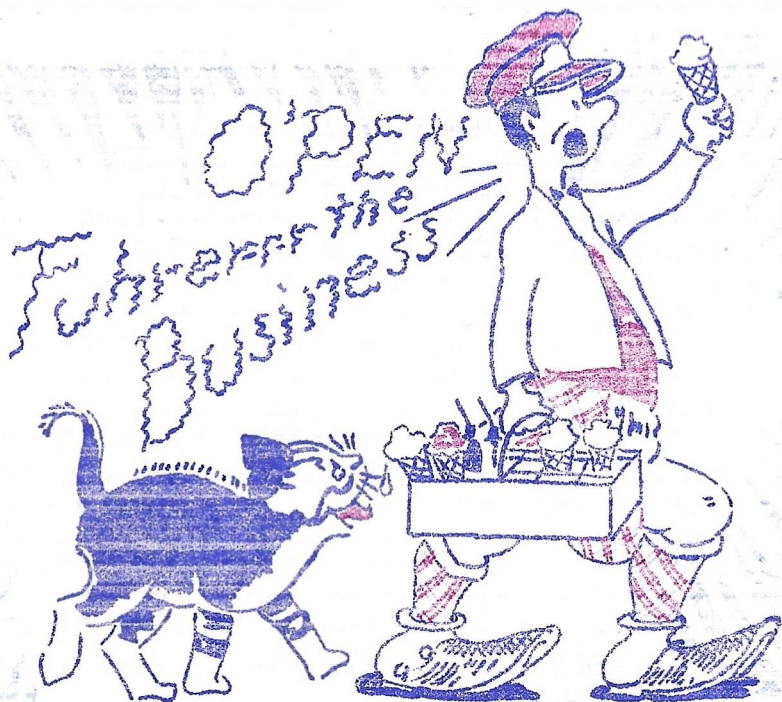
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NEWS OF ENGLAND
by G. Ken. Chapman

Since War began, a little over a year ago, England has been more or less completely cut off from the U.S.A. science-fiction world, and it may, therefore, be of interest to our American cousins to hear a little of the way in which the fantasy-field here has conducted its business, during this eventful period.

Mainly, I suppose, one should deal with the more concrete matter of professional publication, and a fair measure of encouragement is to be gained by the continued publishing of "Tales of Wonder", Britain's first pro-magazine of fantasy.

Wally Gillings is to be sincerely congratulated that the extremely hard and long hours of work he has put in are not to be in vain. He slaved to get this magazine onto the stands at all, as I know well, and it would indeed have

been a catastrophe to see all his industry fall for nought.

"Tales of Wonder" is a lusty child, however, and has bravely decided to carry on, in spite of obstacles, and although each issue is a nebulous proposition, which, I think, even Wally doesn't believe in until he sees it in print.

Four issues have hit the stands since that fated September 3rd, a year ago...Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 12. Nos. 9 and 10 were smaller than previous issues by 32 pages and contained mostly reprinted stories - they were not outstanding in any way, but No. 11 proved to be something in the way of a triumph for British fandom, featuring, as it did, a cover-painting by Harry Turner, Chairman of the Manchester SFA Branch a year or so ago and always an ardent fan. It was a cover which was uniformly well received by London's fandom, whose opinion was seemingly confirmed by the "Readers' Reactions" of issue No. 12.

Also in No. 11 were stories by Bill Temple and George C. Wallis, and an article by I.O. Evans - all SFA members.

Issue No. 12 reverted to the Roberts cover, but Turner is still present with his interiors, which improve with every fresh attempt, and must put friend Harry in quite a high place in the table of sft. artists. Eric Russell makes a really triumphant return to fantasy with a yarn called "I, Spy!", which even had a prudent Editor Gillings enthusing all over the place.

So "Tales of Wonder" continues its triumphant, if slightly precarious career and, although there is no further reason for hoping that publication will be continued, there also seems no cause to believe that it will go out of print. Tow still remains as nebulous as ever and still comes up with 'the next issue'.

"Fantasy", our second fantasy magazine, has not seen an issue since war began, and I believe the main reason for this is that its editor,

T. Stanhope Spring has been called up. The magazine was his pet baby, and George Newnes presumably figures he can best recapture his public on his return, rather than risk losing their readers altogether, through inferior editing.

USA magazines have not reached these shores at very regular intervals, but to partially take their places we have had eight USA publications reprinted here, in rather restricted fashion. Of the eight chosen titles, three were fantasy magazines - "Astounding Science-Fiction", "Unknown", and "Science Fiction" - so I suppose we must be thankful for small mercies and thank our lucky stars we have that proportion. It might easily have been far smaller - in fact, had war come even two years earlier, I doubt if any science-fiction magazines would have been included in such a quota. Sgt. has made strides on both sides of the Atlantic in those two years, make no mistake about that!

Now, in case you haven't seen these British Reprint Editions I'll give you some idea of their pretensions.

They have been criticised, moaned at and generally slanged by a British fandom used to the luxury of the whole USA magazine field but, taken as a whole, I think this criticism is unfair.

The magazines have faults, admittedly, but, well...there's a war on here, whether we wanted it or not! Moreover, paper is scarce and money perhaps scarcer.

Then, here is a representative issue or two:-
ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION, November, 1939.

Contents: Gray Lensman (Pt. 2), Power Plant, Micfit, Spacewreck and Habit. Two interior illustrations and original cover.

UNKNOWN, March 1940. Contents:- On the Knees of the Gods (Cont), The Black Farm, Filtered Power, The Living Ghost, Gateway, and Derm Fool. Two interior illustrations and original cover.

Of course, not all the stories are illustrated, as you can see, nor are there any readers' letters but the cost is only 6d. (approx. 10¢), which I do not call bad in any way. Anyhow, with these magazines, fans here can have read Gray Lensman, Discord in Scarlet, Neutral Vessel, The Smallest God, Cold, The Emancipated Repetition, etc., as well as the Unknown novels and numerous other novelettes and shorts, many perhaps better than the listed yarns.

Sure, we've missed "The Sea Thing", "Requiem", "Vanderdecken", "Sculptors of Life", "If This Goes On --", and a long list of others, but half a loaf is considerably better than no bread....

Before passing up pro-fantasy magazines I must mention "Weird Story Magazine", which is an entirely new effort and no relation to "Weird Tales". The first issue of this - a terrific disappointment - is dated August 1940. It contains six stories, all of which are awful. The illustrations can only be described as rough and the magazine unworthy of one's 1s.- (20¢) - a waste of good paper.

To revert to fan magazines, I can only say that the war has had an ill effect on all. Ted Carnell went from his dignified "New Worlds" to the snappy postcard "Postal Review" and he, perhaps, more than anyone has tried to keep the flay flying. Others still publish, though in most cases in a somewhat moderated format, and all British.

British fan-mag editors who have seen publications at all since war began are to be congratulated, considering the difficulties they are up against.

As to fan activity, this too is severely curtailed. The loss of the famous 'Flat' was a bitter blow to Londoners who have, as far as I know, been the only group meeting regularly. When Bill Temple and Art Clarke moved out a year ago, the London group settled down in the less comfortable surroundings of "The Red Bull", a

neighbouring 'booser'. Their meetings have been held up until a month ago, when London's severe air-raiding made travelling such an ordeal, that a postponement was found to be necessary. Those meets we have had - about once every fortnight - have been grand and we have had as many as twenty-six fans present.

Lately, however, we have been losing numbers until we reached the 'low' of about ten, and at this juncture we lost Bill Temple to the Army. Now Ted Carnell has gotten his 'call-up' too, so London will be rather strangely inactive for the duration now, I am afraid.

Eric Williams, Art Clarke, Maurice Hanson and others are away from town on Government or Army duty, whilst John Beynon is only home occasionally and Frank Arnold's 'Home Guard' duty keeps him fairly much out of the picture.

All in all, London is pretty dead now, with only Gillings, Craig and myself regularly active at all. The rest of Britain is much the same, I guess, although Bert Lewis, Mike Rosenblum and Osmond Robb, at least, keep some form of interest going. Many others, through correspondence and what magazines they can get hold of, manage to hold firmly onto their fantasy-interest and, although I am afraid I must paint a pretty cheerless picture of the present, I give my word that it will not be my fault, nor the fault of nearly all of us, if British fandom does not rise again when this catastrophe is just a bad memory to take its rightful place near the top of the fantasy tree.

Carry on, America...we'll be with you again, soon.



REMEMBER

REMEMBER

REMEMBER

THE BIG EVENT #4!

Gigantic
Colossal
Stupendous

HIGH CLASS PERFORMERS
THE BEST ACTS OF FANDOM

What!

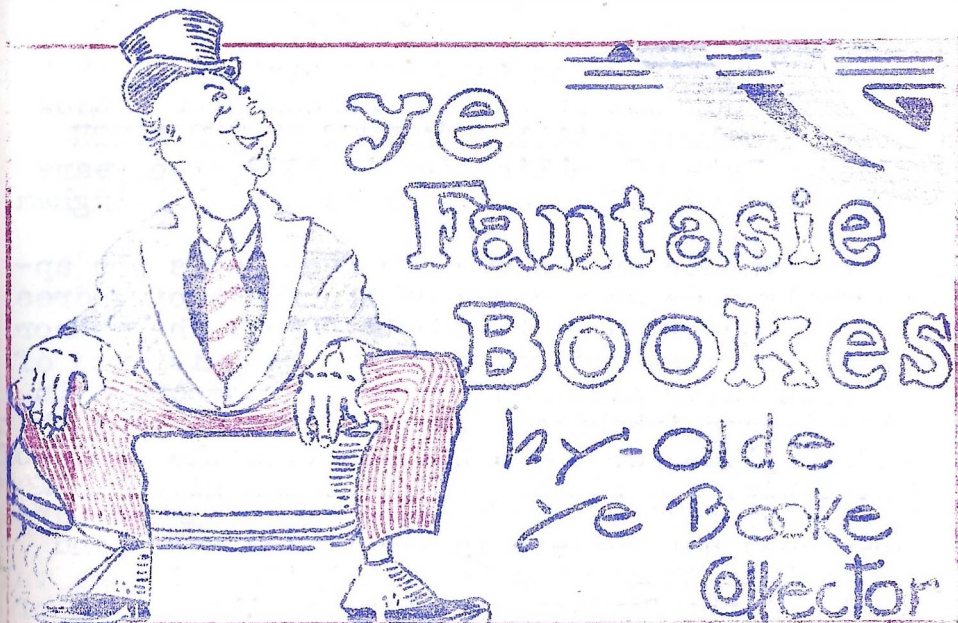
***** THE DENVENTION *****

Where

***** DENVER, COLORADO *****

When?

***** JULY 3, 4, 5, 1941 *****



YE FANTASIE BOOKES
by Ye Olde Booke Collector

Several years ago the name of S.A. Andree occupied the attention of the world press for another brief instant. The last time it had so occupied the press was in 1897 when his audacious expedition to reach the North Pole by balloon got under way. Leaving from Spitsbergen in July of that year, he and two companions sailed off towards the north in a well equipped balloon. Andree had had experience previously in ballooning over Arctic regions and felt confident enough to hope for success. Andree was never heard from again. That is until a few years ago when quite by accident polar explorers came across the remains of his balloon, three skeletons, papers and his equipment lying on the ice miles from anywhere. A diary was found telling of his last days which I believe was published in book form.

The reason for going into this history is that I recently dug out of the dim recesses of a book store a volume entitled "ANDREE AT THE NORTH POLE". Date of publication is 1899, two years after he had left; publisher is G.W. Dillingham of New York.

The author of the work is Leon Lewis who apparently made some study of the ideas of Andree and the question of the North Pole. The author claims that Andree believed in the existence of a North Polar continent, warm and temperate in climate and inhabited. Much of the reasons that Andree gives for these beliefs (via the words of Mr. Lewis) are similar to reasoning given in Marshall Gardner's works on the hollow Earth. Andree does not believe in the hollow earth and polar hole theory but he does believe in the validity of the Gardner reasoning on the origin of the Eskimos and the various observations on flora and fauna around the Arctic regions. (Though please note Gardner's work was written after this volume) .. those interested in consulting it will be interested in knowing that Ralph Milne Farley does not own the sole existent copy of it but that at least two editions can be consulted in the New York Public Library). The fictional account and Andree's discoveries ran serially in the New York World in 1898.

From the very start of his flight Andree runs into proofs of his theory. Proof in the person of a Verneque flying machine looking like a boat with great screw-like propellers rising from its deck. The pilot turns out to be the villain of the piece, a prince of the land at the North Pole, called Polaria. Much of the conversation in the book is educational dealing with the origin and nature of the polar land. Running through it is a little romance with princes

and princesses, etc.

The book is illustrated with photo plates of Andree and his companions, and also with drawings illustrating the story.

FAN

ONE MAGAZINE THAT DOES NOT HAVE A "FULL AND COMPLETE REPORT OF THE CHICAGO CONVENTION" IN IT.

MAKE SURE YOU GET

T H E D A M N T H I N G ' .

Editor Yorke, in a flood of ego, says: "It's the only magazine that has a grudge AGAINST EVERYBODY, and not just against SOMEBODY. Science fiction fandumb has always seemd idiotical to me, so I'm putting out the satire of all fan magazines. Join the suckers and send 10¢ to Box 6475, Metro Sta., Los Angeles. Read it to make sure that YOU ARE NOT VIOLENTLY ATTACKED".

If you play the slot machines, SAVE A DIME FROM THE MARBLE GAME AND GET the damn thing. IT'S THE BIGGEST GAMBLE YOU EVER TOOK!

I KNEW STAN WEINBAUM
By Ralph Milne Farley

In the December 1939 issue of The Science Fiction Fan, Autolycus writes an appraisal of Stanley G. Weinbaum, in which he concludes that "The New Adam" is an expression of Weinbaum's personal philosophy, and that he was "obsessed with negation and futility, with a belief that the sum total of all knowledge is zero". This dictum should be salted with Autolycus' admission: "I never knew Weinbaum and have never talked with anyone who knew him".

I did know Stan - and intimately. Together we belonged to the "Fictioneers of Milwaukee". We collaborated on "Smothered Seas", and one of my Jim Grant gangster series, and had "Revolution in 1950" in process at the date of his untimely death.

His personality was sunny, cheerful and optimistic, even when pain-racked by cancer and unable to speak above a whisper during his declining hours. I can assure you that he had no lack of faith in the future of the human race.

That such a genial hopeful soul was able to write fiction plunged in gloom is merely a mark of his great genius.

OF STARS, MEN AND ATOMS
Notebook of Science Progress in Field,
Laboratory and Study
By Thomas R. Henry

Earliest days of the human race on earth, milleniums before the dawn of history, may be reconstructed from dreams.

Such was the belief of Sigmund Freud, founder of the medical discipline of psychoanalysis, when he penned his last testament in his London exile just before his death last September. Much of the great Austrian doctor's system for the treatment of mental diseases was based on the interpretation of dreams, which he regarded as manifestations of mental and moral conflicts based on earlier incidents in the lives of the patients.

But careful analysis of dreams, he concluded at the end, often "brings to light material which could not originate either from the dreamer's adult life or from his forgotten childhood. We are obliged to regard it as part of the archaic heritage which a child brings with him into the world as a result of the experiences of his ancestors. We find elements corresponding to this phylegenetic material in the earliest human legends and in surviving customs. This offers a source of human prehistory which is not to be despised".



STFIANA #6

By Ralph Milne Farley

"THE DEVIL TREE OF EL DORADO"

Just as this issue goes to press, I have found beneath the attic eaves of the 250-year old family homestead on Chappaquiddick Island, off the coast of Massachusetts (the same farm where the message from the skies from my classmate, the Radio Man, arrived. Remember?), a dilapidated copy of "The Devil Tree of El Dorado", a novel, by Frank Aubrey, published by New Amsterdam Book Company, New York, in 1897.

Evidently the plateau of "The Lost World" is not the only isolated unexplored region of

South America. Mount Roraima (pronounced Roreema by the natives), lying on the boundary-line between Venezuela and British Guiana, and in dispute between those two countries, is another such.

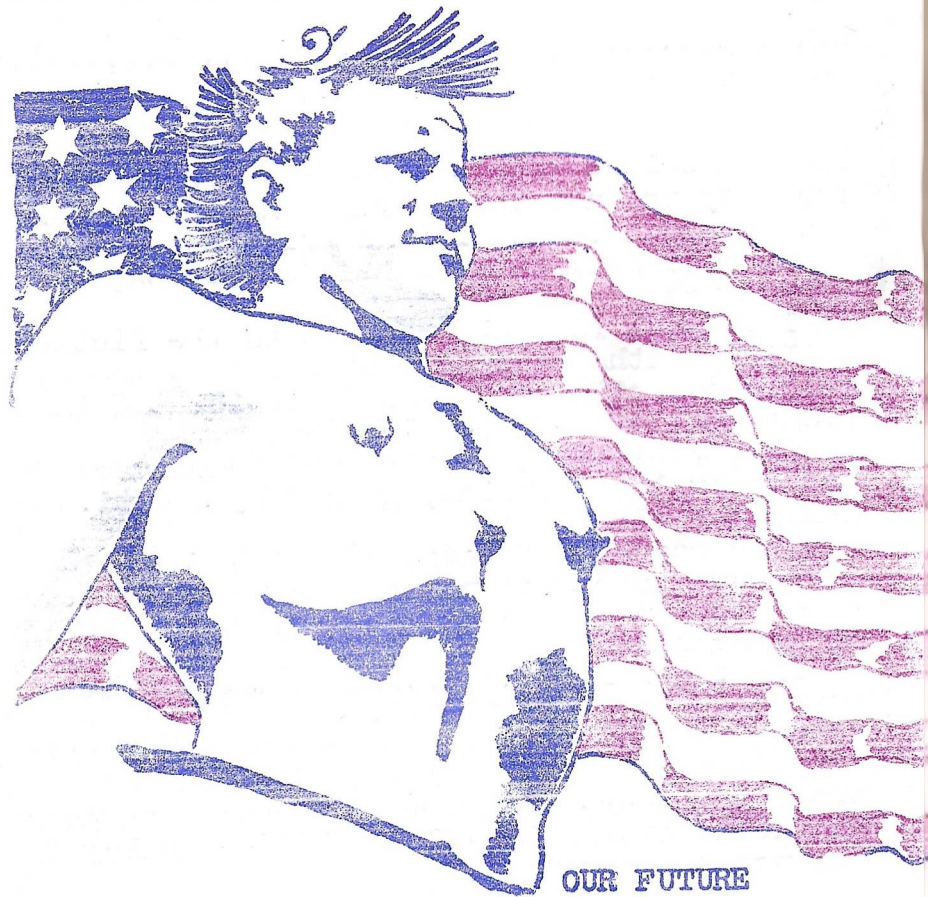
This much is fact. Now as to the fiction.

It is author Aubrey's thesis that the mythical olden city of El Dorado is located in a hidden valley on Mount Roraima.

Two Britishers, Leonard and Templemore, set out to explore Roraima, guided by a native named Morrella.

They reach El Dorado, of which Morrella turns out to be the rightful king. The priesthood worship a man-eating tree, much like those of Madagascar.

The three friends overthrow the priesthood and destroy the tree. Morrella is restored to his throne, Leonard marries a princess, and Templemore escapes (with nothing to prove the truth of his adventures) just before an earthquake seals off the hidden valley from the world forever.



OUR FUTURE
by
Autolycus

In this war torn, tragic world the petty field of Science Fiction and its fans seems remote and insignificant. We argue and discuss, we bicker and quarrel over matters of no cosmic or even worldly importance, we write letters, read magazines, publish amateur outpourings. Yet do we stop a moment to realize that the earth is aflame, peoples enslaved, nations of free men and women trampled underfoot, civilization in the gravest peril since the days of Genghis Khan? Those are not only my words, they are, in effect, the words of that great leader and beacon of democracy, President Roosevelt. Wait a moment - I am not writing a political article, I am saying to

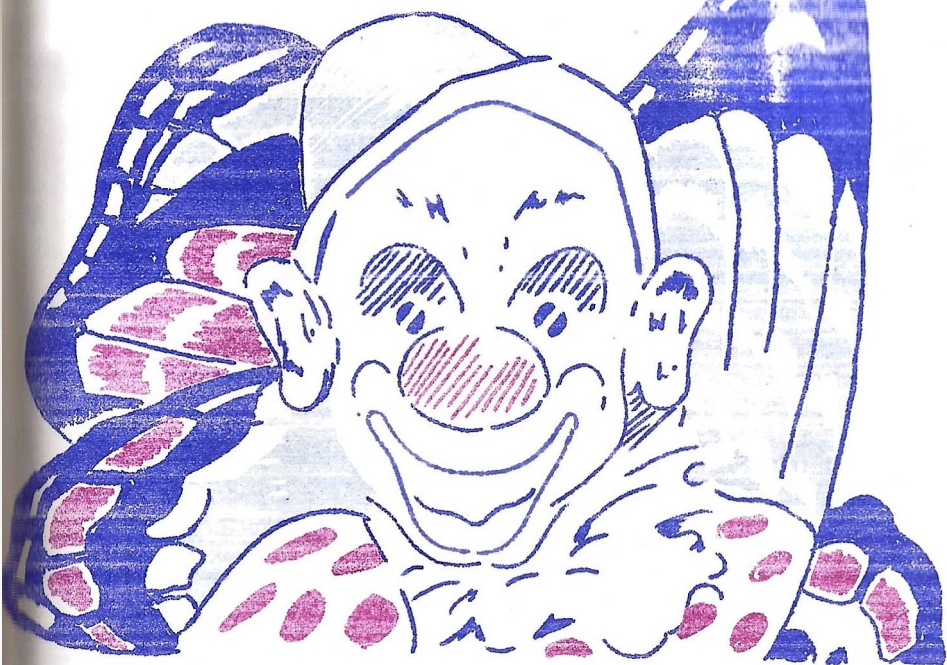
Democrats and Republicans, to Socialists and Communists, to labor and capital, to every man, woman and child in this land of ours that we must wake up and realize that today we, yes, we the United States of America, are faced with a danger never before known. Democracy, freedom, the rights of the common people are at death's door.

What can science fiction fans do about it? Some, of course, want to do nothing. Some believe in isolation, an isolation that is no longer practicable. Every day the Atlantic and the Pacific grow more narrow, every day we are coming closer and closer to a doom that we can avert only with the utmost effort. We are told that if Hitler and his Nazis cannot cross twenty-two miles of English Channel, how can they cross three thousand miles of Atlantic Ocean? Does Hitler have to cross the Channel? Cannot he defeat a powerful nation and achieve hegemony of Europe by use of submarines, surface raiders and aircraft? Cannot Hitler, if victorious in Europe, defeat the United States, first by economic, second by political, and last by military means, when we face a world entirely hostile to our way of life and thought?

Some of us are pacifists, some are Communists who believe that this is but another imperialistic war. I say both are wrong. We have a stake in this war because upon its outcome will depend the future of our own country. Do you want to work - or slave - for a dictator or do you want to exist under a free, democratic regime such as we have had since 1776? It is not just another imperialistic war. Communists to the contrary (please remember that I am expressing only personal opinions, not those of the editors, and Michel, et. al. are welcome to a comeback argument), this is a war for freedom. We live or die free men or slaves according to its outcome.

What can we do? We can talk, write and act for democracy and freedom. We can aid the oppressed by word and deed. We can place science fiction at the service of decent men and women throughout the world by supporting the right, the just cause, by denying any and all aid to a brutal enemy and by supporting justice and righteousness. We can give and keep on giving to the side that supports our ideals. I leave it to each one of you to decide what that side is, and to decide what you can do. "It is later than you think". In the battle between truth and falsehood, between freedom and oppression we must decide now, not later but now, today, just where we stand. It would be impertinent of me to tell each and every one of you what to do. But I do say - do all you can in every way to preserve the freedom our forefathers fought for, the freedom we cherish today.

Science Fiction fans are slightly cracked, sure I admit that. But - and this is important - we are cracked in the right direction. We have been and still are the forward looking people. We direct our gaze beyond the trials and troubles of today, beyond the tribulations of this earth, far into the space that some day our descendants will conquer. Will we prove worthy of those descendants, will we pass on to them a heritage of value or a heritage of toil and slavery? What nations are today destroying science and all its hopes? What nations are filled with a lust for brutal, military power? What nations are fighting to create a world of living robots who will be forever incapable of reaching the stars, of searching time and space, of creating a brave, new world. Ponder all these things carefully. You and I live and think in terms of science and progress. They are synonymous with freedom, they will be destroyed by dictatorship. Choose the right side and work and fight for it. Science can only survive and flourish in a free world.



MISCELLANEA
by Trivia

There seems to be quite a lot to write about this month. I haven't any gossip or scandal to retail - anyway most of that stuff is for children and not for more mature and intelligent readers such as subscribe to THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN, the outstanding magazine in its field (unpaid advertisement). Also this is no time for petty trivialities. We are all more engrossed in matters of deep concern to the world and can spare no effort for chat-chat.

The first item of importance to those of us who are inmates of the Science-Fiction bughouse is the appearance of the first issue of STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES. Right away I want to say that it is a most welcome addition to our kind of literature and has gained in yours truly a constant reader. Not only did I spend 15 cents cheerfully for the first issue but I sent 90 cents immediately for a year's subscription. Greater faith hath no man.

Seriously the new magazine is worthwhile. In one way it constitutes a new departure. The first 55 pages are devoted to science-fiction stories and the remainder of the magazine (except for editorial insert) is devoted to fantasy-fiction. No matter what you want, here it is. Not only do you get what you want, you also get it in good quantity and high quality. Of course the stories are not at all uniform in plot or story telling ability, but the level is extraordinarily high for a first issue, way ahead of several of the older publications, and an inspiration to the reader to continue.

Perhaps one reason for the magazines success is the skillful mixture of established authors and the almost amateurs. Among the former who appear are Merritt, Keller, Howard and C.A. Smith. In the latter class are Kyle, Blish, Wollheim and Lowndes. Comparisons, as the saying goes, are inevitable, but I would venture the statement that the more or less amateurs who are rapidly gaining professional status are displaying talents fully as great as the already established authors. As a matter of fact I am of opinion that "The Abyss" by Doc Lowndes is by far the best story in the issue; if he keeps up the good work Doc is on the road to genuine success. On the other hand I feel badly let down by the leading story "Dead Center" by Gottesman. Perhaps I am prejudiced but I believe that Gottesman (by any name) has been overpraised by his friends and is a long, long way from being a genius - or even a moderately good writer. Here he has a whiz of an idea, one that certainly has never been overworked, and what does he do with it? Just tell a puzzley yarn with no smash, no climax. It left a bad taste. To put it plainly we were - scientifically speaking - taken for a whale of a long ride and got no place. I would suggest that he take more pains with future attempts.

On the whole STIRRING SCIENCE STORIES appeared to this more or less senile and goofy reviewer to be a first-class magazine, one that will attract more and more readers if it keeps on the same path. More power to it and all praise to the Editor who is giving the beginners a chance they deserve. And who, did you ask, is the Editor? Who crashes the science fiction field with a bang first go? Why, none other than our old friend, a genuine old timer in science fiction, one of our outstanding all-time fans, the right honorable Donald A. Wollheim. Cheers for him. He isn't feeding us pap.

What next? Well, The Strangers Club is going strong up Boston way, or perhaps I should say up Cambridge way - who knows where one city stops and another starts in that part of the country. Widner, Swisher and Singleton are among the leading lights. Meetings are held almost every month. In February the club will hold its anniversary meeting and hopes to make it sort of a winter Eastern convention.

Did any of you read the paper presented before a recent meeting of the American Physical Society by Professor Bethe of Cornell and Dr. Marshak of Rochester on the "cosmic mechanism"? It deals in a technical way with the workings in the interiors of the most important stars in the universe known as the main sequence stars, of which our sun is a relatively minor member. It is a splendid contribution to astrophysics, not easy to read and understand, but certainly of outstanding importance. A copy can, I believe, be secured from the Society. A short resume was printed in The New York Times of December 27th.

An excellent, technical and highly scientific account of recent advances in atomic physics is "The World of the Atom" by C. Moller and Eddie Rasmussen. Published by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, England. Price 10s. 6d. Very much worthwhile to the serious and rather advanced student.

DON'T FORGET THE DENVENTION

I suppose you have all heard that Lowndes has taken over the Editorship of "Future Fiction". That is good news. Doc is a fan who knows Science-Fiction and what the reader really wants, and if given a free hand can produce a crackerjack magazine. I quit "Future Fiction" after reading a couple of issues because it was obviously not for adults, but am starting in on it again because I trust Doc to give us something worthwhile. Will report later on my opinions of the effort.

Some of the fans are getting big recognition in the art field of Science-Fiction magazines. Several pictures in "Stirring Science Stories" came from the pen of Roy V. Hunt, a Denver fan, who is Art Director of "The Alchemist" and of CFS magazines. He will also have material in DAW's other Stf. magazine "Cosmic Stories". James M. Rogers, formerly Art Editor of "THE SCIENCE FICTION FAN" has crashed the professional field in a big way, contributing to the second issues of both of DAW's publications.

Sometimes the Editorial Staff of FAN are not in entire agreement over the remarks and comments of Autolytus. If you like his article in the present issue, that's fine, but if you don't like it, remember that this is a free country and, thank heaven, we still have freedom of the press. While FAN is not deliberately going out of its way to print controversial articles, most certainly they are not barred provided they are within the bounds of decency.

Before signing off - and about time too - I would like to ask any of the readers if they know what has happened to Starstruck, pardon me I mean Star gazer or something like that, Miske? Remember sometime ago he took a crack at us for publishing a second rate magazine. I don't recall exactly what he said - not of too much importance anyway - but I'm just wondering if he has changed

his views. We think we are fairly good. That isn't our only source of the value in the FAN comes from the numerous contributors to our columns. If they will keep up the good work we will maintain our high standard.

A final note, and the best news this writer has heard for a long time. I have just had a letter from our French colleague and I believe two or three others got carbons of the same letter. A fascinating document and one that should be published after the war is over. Of course it cannot under any circumstances be printed now. However, I am sure that all stf. fans will be delighted, as I was, to learn that he is alive and well after going through one of the most tremendous battles in history. Some time I hope we can get mail back to him. Why not save our Stf. magazines to mail him when the time comes?

Hasta la vista.

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