

THE BRITISH

SCIENTIFCTION

FANTASY REVIEW

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MARCH, 1938

Sixpence

WELLS PRAISES PRAGNELL

FESTUS PRAGNELL, British fantasy author and SFA Councilor, received a pleasant surprise in the shape of a letter complimenting him on his novel, "The Green Man of Kilsona," published at the end of 1936. For the sender was none other than H. G. Wells, peer of science fictionists, who wrote:

Dear Mr. Pragnell,—I wanted something to read last night, and I found your book on a table in my study. I think it's a very good story indeed of the fantastic-scientific type, and I was much amused and pleased to find myself figuring in it.

Wells signed the letter "H. Geewells," by which name Pragnell referred in his novel to the most sensible of all writers on the electron world of Kilsona, who was author of a book entitled "War From the Clouds." The story originally appeared as a serial in **Wonder Stories** in 1935, and was highly praised by readers.

Pragnell, a great admirer of Wells' work, received his note of appreciation through the publishers of his book, and replied thanking him. "Being entirely unsolicited, it came as a delightful surprise, and has encouraged me immensely," he said. "I am looking forward to the time when I can devote all my energies to writing."

Aged 33, living at Southampton with a wife and two children, Pragnell earns his living as a clerk in a local office and does all his writing in his spare time. Although he pre-



FESTUS PRAGNELL

viously had several stories published in the American magazines, and recently appeared in **Tales of Wonder**, he is now engaged in writing adventure novels, believing that there is more scope for them than for science fiction at present. A sequel to "The Green Man," which he wrote some time ago, has yet to be published.

(An interview with Festus Pragnell appeared in the April, 1937 issue of **Scientifiction**).

SCIENTIFICTION

THE BRITISH FANTASY REVIEW

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WE MUST GO ON!

By The Editor

ALTHOUGH this issue is somewhat overdue, **Scientifiction** still receives support and appreciation enough to warrant its continued appearance. But only just! For some time after the publication of the last issue, it was touch and go whether this one would emerge or not, and I regret to say that a number of subscribers have not yet indicated their desire to continue receiving the magazine. But fortunately others have realised, having once come in contact with it, that **Scientifiction** is indispensable to the enthusiastic follower of fantasy who wants to be kept informed of its increasing developments and to read entertaining, informative articles upon every aspect of his favourite literature.

Nevertheless, it is once more necessary for me to appeal to all our readers to interest as many others as they can in our unique little Journal, in order that it may become even more interesting and beneficial to the cause of science fiction. For it cannot function successfully until it has the support of twice as many readers as it now possesses; and there are hundreds of fans whose interest would enable it to flourish once it were obtained. Some may doubt that more than a handful of science fiction readers are enthusiastic enough to subscribe to a fan magazine. But there is no limit to the number whose support would be forthcoming if only they were persuaded that their active interest is essential to the true progress of fantasy.

It now seems practically certain that, after all these years, science fiction is to receive the special attention it deserves in this country. But our task is not complete; it has only just begun. There is all the more reason why **Scientifiction** should continue, to assist in the proper development of this promising medium and to reflect its ever-growing popularity in all its ramifications. So let's get together and help British science fiction to progress!

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"STOWAWAY" SEQUEL IN "TALES OF WONDER"

Famous Keller Yarn, "Stenographer's Hands," Reprinted

[By Our Special Correspondent]

THE first presentation of the long-awaited sequel to "Stowaway to Mars," by John Beynon (Harris), the reprinting of one of Dr. David H. Keller's early stories and the appearance of two new British authors are among the features of the second **Tales of Wonder**, published at the end of this month.

The first issue of this first British magazine of science fiction, which appeared last June, was so well received both in this country and abroad that the publishers—World's Work, Ltd.—decided to put out another trial issue. If this, too, is successful, it is expected to lead to a regular magazine, to appear at least once a quarter.

The present issue has again been compiled and edited by Walter H. Gillings, who now has the assistance of an increasing number of authors, writing specially to the requirements of **Tales of Wonder** with a view to appealing to the ordinary reader as well as the confirmed fantasy fan. So much material was available that it was difficult to decide what should be used, and several stories by new authors which it was at first thought would be necessary have had to be held over. It is hoped that these may be printed in subsequent issues.

List of Contents

Contents of the issue are as follows, stories being listed in order of length:

SLEEPERS OF MARS, by John Beynon.—This sequel to "Stowaway to Mars," which has delighted thousands since it first appeared as a serial in **Passing Show** two years ago, has been specially written for **Tales of Wonder**. Although following on from the original story, which was later published as a novel with the title, "Planet Plane," and again serialised in **Modern Wonder** in abridged form as "The Space Machine," it is actually quite a separate story. It relates the ad-

ventures of the crew of the Russian rocket-ship *Tovaritch*, which arrived on Mars after the British expedition in the *Gloria Mundi*, describing how the Martians took steps to preserve their race from extinction and what happens when the Earthmen discover the secret of the Sleepers. An incident from the story provides the cover illustration, showing the rocket-ship on Mars.

LUNAR LILLIPUT, by William F. Temple.—In this delightful story, replete with humour, a member of the London BIS and SFA anticipates the Interplanetarians achieving their ambition by depicting a rocket trip to the Moon made by three members of the Society—fictitious characters, of course. He also pictures the discovery of life on the satellite, in the form of a miniature mankind created by the last surviving Lunarian.

INVADERS FROM VENUS, by Benson Herbert, M.Sc.—This is a story of radio communication with another planet and the consequences that ensue, having an ingenious twist at the end which is seldom met with in such stories. The author conveys by means of imaginary newspaper cuttings the panic that would result from an impending visitation of alien beings from space.

STENOGRAPHERS' HANDS, by David H. Keller, M.D.—In response to many requests for reprints of early American stories, this famous tale of Dr. Keller's, in which he envisages the breeding of specialised human machines, has been reprinted from **Amazing Stories Quarterly**.

THROUGH EARTH'S CORE, by John Russell Fearn.—Britain's most prolific author appears again with a short story dealing with a marvelous machine in which two men bore through the Earth, encountering life at its centre.

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IN DEFENCE OF "REMAINDERS"

Outcast Magazines Are Science Fiction's Best Propaganda

Says L. J. JOHNSON

The question of "remainder" magazines—those just-out-of-date issues which can be bought for a few pence—has long been a sore point with science fiction readers. In this article, one who is qualified to discuss the matter approaches it from an entirely fresh aspect. What do you think about it?

FIERCE controversy has been raging in science fiction circles recently over the question of current issue and "remainder" magazines. I do not think it is necessary to explain the meaning of the term "remainder," as I doubt if there is one British fan who is not well acquainted with these much-maligned "outcast" magazines. There is an impression abroad that remainder magazines cannot do "much good" to science fiction as a whole, and there are certain fans who would abolish them altogether if they could.

Apart from showing their great ingratitude to these magazines, this attitude exposes woeful lack of foresight. I am confident that doing away with remainders would not benefit the sales of current issues, as is suggested in certain quarters; but, on the contrary, would deprive the magazines themselves of a fruitful source of new readers.

In defence of remainder magazines, there are two questions I would ask. Were the first science fiction magazines you ever read current or remainder copies; and do you know of any British fan whose first independent encounter with science fiction magazines was when he purchased a current issue? When you see what the answers to those questions must be, you will realise the debt owing to the humble remainder; and if your answer to the second question is in the affirmative I will eat my hat—and yours, too—for every British fan and author I know was introduced to science fiction *via* the remainder magazine.

Keeping Up Interest

The number of British fans who have been recruited to science fiction by a chance discovery of re-

mainders at one particular store must be legion. This is amply demonstrated by a glance at the readers' columns of the magazines. But the work of the remainder is as yet unfinished. Remember when you picked up your first (remainder) issue of **Amazing, Astounding or Wonder Stories?** Other people who have yet to be converted to science fiction are buying their first copies on the remainder stalls every day; and, sooner or later, many of them will become so interested that they will buy current issues.

They write a letter to the editor, get involved in discussions with some of the fans, and are anxious to see their words in print. Purchase of current issues follows naturally, providing it is within the depth of their pocket. The majority of these new fans are what have been harshly described as "callow youths," who nevertheless will later form the backbone of the science fiction movement. So these young people, although unable to afford current issues, can have their interest maintained by remainders until such time as they can afford to buy the latest copies or take out a subscription.

I do not suggest, of course, that remainders should be sold in preference to current issues; obviously, such a course would be suicidal. But it has been authoritatively stated by the firm most concerned with the distribution of both current and remainder magazines that the two types each cater for an entirely different public. Furthermore, remainder buyers are potential buyers of current issues, but are not at first in the mood or position to spend a shilling on them.

[Continued on Page Six

SCIENTIFICTION'S

LIBRARY OF FANTASY

CONTAINING ITEMS OF INTEREST TO ALL COLLECTORS

In response to many requests from fantasy collectors, we are taking advantage of a lull in the publication of new science fiction books to introduce this feature, dealing with volumes issued in the past of which many fans may be unaware. We shall be pleased to receive details of similar items in readers' collections, for inclusion in our Library of Fantasy.

WORLD D, by Hal P. Trevarthen
(Published by Sheed and Ward, 1935).

THIS remarkable piece of British science fiction, containing scientific conceptions of the thought-variant order mixed with Roman Catholic doctrines, is sheer food-and-drink to the hardened fantasy fan; so much so that it must prove utterly bewildering to the ordinary reader. It describes how, at a time when the human race is doomed to destruction (though from what source is not disclosed), a super-scientist constructs a new world called Helioxenon ten miles beneath the surface and plans to populate it with careful chosen specimens of humanity. To perform this feat he perfects the new science of Psychophysics, which enables him to increase his mental powers by a Great Machine until his brain can absorb scientific knowledge involving the use of fifteen dimensions.

Through the Great Machine, whose workings are fully described, the founder of the bubble-like world contacts the strange inhabitants of far-distant planets in an attempt to enlist their aid in saving Earth from destruction. These creatures, their alien mentalities and habits, together with a hundred other fascinating conceptions, are dealt with by the author in a way that cannot fail to please; and in the process is unfolded a delightful love story which adds to the enjoyment of the whole.

ONCE IN A NEW MOON, by Owen Rutter (Hutchinson, 1935).

FROM this book, originally published under the title, "Lucky Star," a British film was made, giving its name to the new edition and providing it with eight photographic illustrations. The story, of itself,

is quite a simple one, but its basic theme is nothing less than that of Jules Verne's "Off On a Comet."

Upper Shrimpton, a little village on the Essex coast, is unmoved by the news that a dead star is approaching Earth at 200 miles a second, causing quakes and tidal waves in remote parts of the world. The village remains unaware of the fact that it has disappeared from the face of the Earth when it awakes after a stormy night to find itself cut off from the mainland by what appears to be a flood.

But a voyage of discovery in a fishing boat reveals that the village has become part of a tiny satellite revolving in an orbit beyond the Moon; the star's attraction has caused it to fly off Earth's surface, rounding itself into a sphere and taking its own atmosphere with it.

The main part of the book deals with the means whereby the village contrives to maintain itself until such time as the star's influence wanes, allowing it to return to a new position on Earth; and the story makes very amusing reading.

CREATION'S DOOM, by Desiderius Papp (Jarrolds, 1934).

ALTHOUGH not strictly science fiction, this prophetic study by a German writer of the future of man and the end of the world is so vividly presented that it appeals irresistibly to every fantasy fan. After depicting the world as it was when giant reptiles ruled, it traces the ascent of man far into the future, envisaging in best science-fictional style his probable development into a super-sensitive creature of brain, with all his marvellous achievements, from the creation of synthetic life to interplanetary travel.

It proceeds to deal in picturesque fashion with the many dangers

which threaten Earth from space, suggesting how mankind may die, to be superseded by giant insects millions of years hence. We read of a world war between ants and termites, of the civilisation built by the victorious ants, and of its eventual destruction; then bacteria is the only form of life surviving on the dying planet, and finally Earth itself is consumed with the rest of the Sun's retinue as the central orb explodes.

Here are nearly 300 pages of fascinating speculation based on scientific fact and sound reasoning, written in non-technical language and embellished by several imaginative illustrations; an essential part of any science fiction library, and deserving a place beside Stapledon's "Last and First Men."

VANDALS OF THE VOID, by J. M. Walsh (Hamilton, 1931).

SUFFICIENT recommendation to those who have not read this story is the fact that, prior to its publication in book form—a remarkable event at the time, in view of its nature—it marked the first appearance of a well-known British mystery writer as a science fiction author, when it was featured in **Wonder Stories Quarterly**. Even now, there are few occasions when such an advanced type of story (from the point of view of the ordinary reader) sees

print over here, for it takes interplanetary travel for granted and is replete with luxury space-ships, disintegrating rays, a Martian heroine, and all the other devices which were common to American science fiction seven years ago.

The story tells of strange incidents which occur while the space-ship *Cosmos* is on her way from Earth to Mars, including among the passengers a member of the Interplanetary Guard, which is responsible for the smooth running of traffic between the planets. Another ship is found adrift in the void, her officers, crew and passengers insensible. Then an attack is made on the *Cosmos* itself by a mysterious, invisible agency whose powers are discovered to be so great as to threaten the peace of Earth, Mars and Venus.

The situation develops into one of interplanetary warfare, in which the space fleets of the three allied worlds come to grips with the Mercurian invader, providing inspiration for what must have been the first book-jacket of its kind ever seen in England. The final act of the drama takes place above the steaming jungles of Venus, where the forces of the invader are overcome by the superior science of Earth and Mars in a battle of rays and atomic discharges.

IN DEFENCE OF "REMAINDERS"—Contd. from Page Four

Serving the Cause

Certainly, all genuine fans who can afford it should buy current issues or take out a subscription, and no reasonable excuse can be offered for their not doing so. But if a fan cannot afford current issues, to abolish remainders would to him be equivalent to abolishing science fiction itself. Therefore, as apparently there have to be remainders, why not let them pull their weight by maintaining the interest of younger readers and attracting new readers to the current issues?

Apart from catering for younger and less munificent fans, remainder magazines are probably the greatest factor in existence for attracting new members to the ever-growing band of science fiction enthusiasts. By purchasing back-date magazines

the ordinary reader is drawn inexorably into the net—from remainders to current issues, thence to subscriptions, and often thence to authorship! So that whoever enables science fiction readers to obtain magazines easily—whether remainder or current issues—is doing a real service to the cause.

If there were no remainders, I am certain there would be no British science fiction movement, no BIS, no SFA, no **Tales of Wonder**, no **Scientifiction**, **Tomorrow** or **Novae Terrae**, and none of the fine friendships that exist between individual fans; none of the squabbles either, I suppose, but that aspect of the question we would prefer to ignore. Therefore, I would ask all British fans to remember that in the remainder magazine we have actually science fiction's greatest propagandist.

Messages From Space . . . Relayed by "The Moon Man"

"AMAZING" CHANGES HANDS

AMAZING STORIES, first American science fiction magazine, twelve years old next month, has been acquired by Ziff-Davis Publishing Co., of New York and Chicago . . . Stories accepted by Teck Publications, who had owned magazine since 1931, have been returned; new owners have circled authors asking for new material, promising increased rates, emphasising all stories must be "scientifically conceivable and justifiable," conforming to the slogan, "Every story scientifically possible." . . . Serials are not wanted, but issues will contain a short novel, two novelettes and several short stories; non-fiction material will also be used.

Magazine, which "will remain essentially unchanged," will be edited in Chicago under direction of B. G. Davis; but I understand actual Editor already appointed is Raymond A. Palmer, old fantasy fan, author, former Literary Editor of **Fantasy Magazine** and associate of Weinbaum, for whose Memorial Volume he was responsible . . . It is not known if publication will remain bi-monthly, but indication is that no change will yet be made in this respect, although "certain basic improvements" will result from new ownership . . . Letter to authors states: "For the present we wish to stay away from amazing stories that offend the scientific mind as being utterly impossible . . . We are aiming to build up a number of key writers upon whom we can depend regularly for our material . . ."

"TALES OF WONDER" TO BE QUARTERLY

First issue of **Tales of Wonder** having penetrated to Earth's uttermost parts, and all copies disposed of, publishers have now decided to follow forthcoming second issue with regular magazine, to appear every three months . . . Report to Editor Gillings is that results, in terms of sales, are "fairly encouraging." Readers, therefore, can rest assured British science fiction has definitely come to stay . . . Greatly encouraged, Gillings is striving to ensure sufficient supply of suitable material from widening circle of authors; will shortly have article in **The Writer** entitled, "Science Fiction Comes to Britain," designed to attract fresh talent to fast-developing field . . . Nevertheless, is relying on established authors, both British and American, for most of **Tales of Wonder's** content . . . Stories already slated for third issue, due at end of June, are "The World's Eighth Wonder," by Eric Frank Russell; "Satellites of Death," by L. J. Johnson; "The Horror in the Telescope," by Edmond Hamilton; "The Giant Bacillus," by H. O. Dickinson . . .

IN OTHER FIELDS

Meanwhile, English writers spread their tentacles in other directions . . . I. O. ("World of To-morrow") Evans had short story, "Robot Revenge," in **Passing Show** recently, dealing with boxing mechanical man . . . John Russell Fearn had non-fantasy tale, "Glass Nemesis," accepted by same periodical, while Eric Frank Russell is busy writing detective yarns for America, having crashed crime pulps . . . Watch out, too, for "The Hand of Glory," by Benson Herbert, dealing with invisible airship and future warfare, to appear in one of World's Work's "Master Thrillers" end of next month . . . It is probable Herbert's "World Within" **Wonder Stories** of 1931 will see print again in **Tales of Wonder**, with their hitherto unpublished sequel. Leeds SFL plan to reprint Fearn's "Mathematica" tales from **Astounding**, in book form . . . Simultaneously, as his readers may have noticed, Britain's Ideas Man is deserting the "thought variant" style for which he is famed and confining himself to less ambitious themes, in accordance with Editor Campbell's demands . . . While W. P. Cockcroft writes plays, poetry and song lyrics, oblivious of scientifiction, Festus Pragnell has decided to give up trying to write to editors' orders . . . Says he: "I simply can't adapt my mind to so many different editorial policies. I'm not a mental chameleon—which probably means I am finished with magazine science fiction for ever . . ."

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A Fantasy Writer Confesses:

I WANT TO BE AN AUTHOR!

Science Fiction Will Live—To Express The Hopes Of Humanity

By DAVID H. KELLER, M.D.

For the first time, one of the best-known American science fiction writers, who is featured in the new "Tales of Wonder," reveals to SCIENTIFICTION readers something of his life, and proves himself the most severe critic of his many original stories.

MY STORY is that of a busy life—vocation, physician; avocation, writing. Always in my writing there has been the urge to attain, which goes far deeper than financial reward, or even the clamorous praise of the crowd, who will praise anything if the proper psychology is used on them. I was fourteen years old when I wrote my first story, and 47 when I had my first story accepted and paid for. There was a period during which I wrote for the sole pleasure of writing—poems, short stories, and eleven novels—and the result was the spoiling of thousands of pages of white paper.

It might be called a period of literary training; at least, it showed the urge to write. In the meantime I was busy, as medical student, physician, country doctor, army officer, and specialist in big hospitals. It was a constant drive to make money to support my family. During these years I accumulated knowledge about the world and the people in it, learned about life and death, happiness and futility, listened to thousands of soul-sick people tell of their hopes, ambitions and defeats.

Then, at 47, I sold "The Last of the Pedestrians" to **Amazing Stories**, and found that I could get money for my work. I needed money and wrote more, at night and on my days off duty, aided by some literary technique and a knowledge of humanity which I had acquired during the years of preparation. For a while all my new writing was science fiction—stories like "Stenographer's Hands," "The Psychophonic Nurse," "The Human Termites," "The Conquerors," "The Evening Star," "Life Everlasting" and "The Metal Doom."

The Other Keller

In a consecutive fourteen months I wrote 28 tales and sold 24 of them. It seems, as I look back on it, to have been a time of excessive pressure, for all the while I was doing my work as clinical director at the hospitals. In some way, the type of writing did not satisfy me, though in "Life Everlasting" I feel there was some fine writing. So I went into **Weird Tales**.

Editor Farnsworth Wright was kind to me; he printed my Cornwall tales, such as "No Other Man," and the fans thought my "Solitary Hunter" rather good. Then there was "The Thing in the Cellar," which was twice printed in America and three times reprinted in England. In some way, that tale has much in it; nobody who reads it once fails to re-read it, the test of value in any writing.

But I was still hunting for methods of expression, and so there developed a new author, Amy Worth. She has had over 24 stories published—stories of life, bitter, caustic, photographic of humanity as it is, and not as we dream it might be. Nobody reading those tales and knowing David H. Keller would suspect that he wrote them; things like "A Piece of Linoleum" and "The Tom-cat Reforms."

The Search for Beauty

Now, at 57, and out of hospital life, I am still hunting for a form of expression that will please me. For while I have been a writer, a "hack," turning out "pot-boilers," I long to be an author; and how many who write science fiction or weird tales are? Lovecraft was, certainly; so is

Wells. But I ask myself, "What science fiction of the last ten years will be reprinted and re-read fifty years from now?" Let the reader answer that for himself!

Therefore, with Prof. Messac, of Coutances, France, to encourage me, and my three daughters cheering me on, I start to write beautifully. Messac translates and publishes in **Les Premieres** stories like "The Question," "The Mist" and "A Gift to Aphrodite"; and in France such things are appreciated. In America, amateur magazines print "The Golden Bough" and "The Perpetual Honymoon."

SINCE he made his bow in **Amazing** with "The Last of the Pedestrians" just ten years ago, Dr. Keller has contributed nearly 100 stories to the American magazines, chiefly to **Amazing** and **Wonder Stories**. He has had several of his weird tales reprinted in the English "Not at Night" books and elsewhere, while translations of some of his best scientifi-fiction have appeared in the French magazine, **Les Premieres**. His three **Amazing** stories, "Stenographer's Hands," "The Psychophonic Nurse" and "The Ivy War" were also published in France as a book with the title, "The Ivy War."

All his stories are written in a style peculiarly his own, paying particular regard to the human element. **Amazing Stories** said of him: "He is imbued with the sentiments of true humanity, and in many of his stories is a message." Hugo Gernsback, with whom he was associated, and whose conversations with him produced the inspiration for much of his work, held him out to amateur authors as a shining example to follow; his characters, he said, were real people. Most famous of Keller characters is Detective Taine, of San Francisco, figuring in such stories as "The Menace," "The Cerebral Library."

With all this in mind I wrote "The Sign of the Burning Hart," which is now being published in France in English, in a very limited edition, and I have prepared for submission to American publishers three novels, "The Eternal Conflict," "The Stone Fence" and "The Adorable Fool." None of these four will ever be best-sellers, but they are all fine writing, all written as I have wanted to write for the past 43 years, and therefore they please me. In giving them birth I feel that I am an author, and not simply a writer.

Science and Humanity

At 57 I am still writing; if I live to be 97 I may learn to write well. As I look back on life, it seems to have taken a long time for the baby to be born; but through all the years of poverty and struggle, life has been made better and more worth-while because I have been a dreamer of dreams and have cultivated the habit of imprisoning the dreams on paper with a typewriter. If you asked me which of my writing I like best, it would be hard to answer. Perhaps of the short stories it is "The Thing in the Cellar," and of my longer science fiction, "Life Everlasting."

As far as science fiction itself is concerned, I feel that it will always live as a means of expressing the hopes of humanity. An example is "Brave New World," by Aldous Huxley. All who are interested in science fiction should read this, and will benefit if they are brave enough to face facts and intelligent enough to appreciate the horrible possibilities of future science, if it is not used wisely.

For science, separated from the humanities of life, becomes a menace to society, a thing to be feared. But Huxley's book is bitter, and holds no hopes for humanity; he did not create one character you can love. Compare them with the people in my "Life Everlasting"; compare my babies with his, and you will understand what I mean.

America's fan magazine editors and contributors have formed the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, to promote their interests.

"TALES OF WONDER"—Continued from Page Three

SUPER-SENSES, by Maurice G. Hugl.—The author of "Invaders from the Atom," one of the most popular tales in the first issue, is again represented with a story of a strange experiment, the effects of which are vividly described.

Editor and SFA

The issue also contains a selection of letters from readers commenting on the first issue, under the heading, "Readers' Reactions," and an editorial entitled, "Science Fiction—The New Literature," in which Editor Gillings emphasises the delights obtained from its reading. He states:

"Not only does this unique magazine meet with the enthusiastic approval of those who know the delights of science fiction, but it has attracted the instant attention of those who, tired of more ordinary types of literature, were looking for something unusual—something that could give them a new thrill, yet provide food for serious thought . . .

"This new literature has been re-

cognised as worthy of the attention of every thinking man and woman. Already there exist in this country thousands of science fiction readers who have watched with enthusiasm its gradual development as a distinct style of popular literature. So convinced are they of its value, both from the literary and scientific aspects, that they have their own Science Fiction Association to promote its interests . . .

"The hundreds of appreciative letters received make it abundantly clear that **Tales of Wonder** has met with general acclamation, and although as yet it is still in the experimental stage, it is hoped that eventually it will become a regular publication."

The magazine, which is priced at a shilling, will be on the bookstalls March 29th.

J. W. Dunne, author of "An Experiment with Time," has written a book for children called "The Jumping Lions of Borneo."

MESSAGES FROM SPACE—Continued from Page Seven**"WOMAN ALIVE" STAGED**

Twelve-day serial, "It Happened in 1963," by Ritchie Calder, in which ideas of fifty scientific experts went to depict world of the future, ran in **Daily Herald** recently . . . Books published lately include: "Substitute for Living," by Gideon Clark (Nicholson and Watson, 7/6), in which an inventor devises machine to reproduce the past; "The World Ends" by William Lamb (Dent, 7/6), concerning earthquake which engulfs all but few acres of Earth's surface . . . In "World Brain" (Methuen, 3/6), H. G. Wells continues his agitation for World Encyclopædia embracing all mankind's knowledge . . . Stories of several worlds make up "Thirteen O'Clock," by Stephen Vincent Benét (Heinemann, 7/6), which has distinct fantastic flavour . . . "Woman Alive," play now running in London, is adapted from Susan Ertz's novel picturing 1987 pestilence which kills all women in the world save one . . . Sid Phillips' fantastic jazz-piece, "A Message from Mars," now available on gramophone record, is described by one critic thus: "It will still be considered startlingly modern in 2038 . . . Shut your eyes and you'll feel you're in a rocket soaring through space into the unknown . . ."

U.S. FANS' NEW AIMS

Gramophone recital of science-fictional music, including items from Arthur Bliss's score for "Things to Come," was feature of London SFA meeting, at which reading of early magazine "classics" has become part of every agenda.

Members meet second Sunday of each month at AOD Institute, off Theobalds Road, where on April 10th Association's annual Convention takes place; leading science fiction authors have been invited.

Author of the "Posi and Nega" **Amazing** stories, Joseph William Skidmore, popular U.S. writer, met his death in motor accident at age of 46 . . . Joane Cromwell, heroine of many of his other tales, such as "A World Unseen," is actually name of his artist-wife . . . His last story, "Murder by Atom," appeared in **Amazing** last June . . .

Science Fiction's Story—Continued**YOUNG FANS OF OLD**

By "FANTASIA"

IN my last article in this series I mentioned the large number of youthful readers attracted to **Amazing Stories** during the first two years of its career. So many were they, and so greatly did Editor Gernsback value their opinions, that he devoted one of his editorials to the subject of "Amazing Youth," and expressed surprise that "youngsters from twelve years downwards" were able to read and digest such stories. "Nevertheless, our circle of young friends is constantly growing, and . . . the youngsters read the stories, not only with interest, but with intelligent understanding. Very often they are the ones that make the most worth-while criticisms," he declared, adding: "If we can make the youngsters think, we feel that we are accomplishing our mission."

Accompanying these comments was a picture of a boy aged seven who claimed to be the youngest of these readers. Some months later appeared a picture of the magazine's oldest reader, a "very religious" man aged 97, with a letter in which he described himself as having "always been a voracious reader of scientific fiction." The only criticism he had to make was against the continued reprinting of Jules Verne's stories, "Robur, the Conqueror" and its sequel, "Master of the World," having been serialised during 1928. His objection was that science had caught up with so much of what in Verne's day was fantastic fiction that his stories now proved disappointing.

Gernsback's Serial

One reprint which pleased him, though, was "Baron Munchhausen's Scientific Adventures," by Hugo Gernsback himself, which ran for six months in the same year. Written in humorous style, and depicting the wonders of Martian civilisation in vivid scientific detail, it had originally appeared in Gernsback's "Electrical Experimenter" magazine thirteen years before. He also approved of the further reprints of

Wells' stories, such as "A Story of the Days to Come" and "The Invisible Man," which appeared about this time, with several of his shorter tales.

Authors who made their initial appearance early in '28, and became familiar to readers later, although they are seldom seen to-day, were David H. Keller, M.D., Walter Kateley, Charles Cloukey, George McLoiard and Harl Vincent. Others also appearing were Bob Olsen, Clare Winger Harris and Francis Flagg, who have likewise faded into obscurity. Some of the most memorable stories of these authors were "The Revolt of the Pedestrians," "The Miracle of the Lily," "The Master Ants," "The Golden Girl of Munan." New artists also appeared, including R. E. Lawlor, though Paul still did most of the illustrating, while the magazine underwent several typographical improvements.

Wanted: A Symbol

In April Gernsback announced another prize contest, this time with the object of discovering, not new authors, but a symbol for scientification. He explained: "When I coined the word 'scientifiction' in 1915, I knew that sometime or other it was bound to become popular, and I even cherished a secret hope that some day it might appear in a standard dictionary. In any event, 'scientifiction' is a word that will grow with the added years. As science advances, scientification will advance and flourish. No one to-day can even dimly foresee what it may produce . . . What scientification needs at present is some sort of label—an emblem or trademark, so to speak. Scientifiction is too good a thing just to be used as a word in mere letters . . ."

The result was that over 900 readers, inspired by \$300 in prizes, devised many clever symbols and designs, from which one was chosen to decorate the magazine for long afterwards.

(To be Continued)

Flutter of the Fans

CAN CAMPBELL DO IT?

Here is another selection of comments from readers' letters, which are always welcomed, whatever the opinions expressed. If you have something to say of interest to other readers, do not hesitate to send in your views.

THE January *Scientifiction* was by far the best issue to date. Everything was good, with the possible exception of the book reviews. The best article in the magazine was "Campbell's Plans." Arthur Clarke's "Science Fiction for Beginners" was very good, not so much for the idea as for the way in which he captured the moods of the different stories. "Transatlantic Topics" is much better; the first article was rather disappointing. "Messages from Space" was good, as usual. . . . Instead of reviewing the latest books, conduct a series of reviews of books that can be found in public libraries, but are obscure enough to be unknown to the average fan. Encourage criticism, foster debate at the expense of such idiotic things as your Science Fiction Test.—S. Youd (Eastleigh).

Scientifiction gets better and better; the articles are remarkable. "Science Fiction's Story" is extremely interesting to a comparative newcomer like myself; the interviews with authors reveal them as something more than names, while Julius Schwartz's news is almost too hot off the plate. I did not realise before the number of pseudonyms there are about; are you sure Schachner isn't Tremaine in disguise? The news about Campbell is most gratifying. It seems as though we are going back to the good old days I've heard so much about.—Eric C. Hopkins (Plaistow).

Raising the Standard

Your eloquent editorials are admirable; they even induce me to attempt a little propaganda occasionally. "Transatlantic Topics" appeals to me, too; Julius Schwartz has the enviable ability of saying much in few words, and I hear but little news of activities "over the Pond" . . . Campbell is hitching his wagon to a star, and if a new plot is discovered it will be something to shout about. If he is of the calibre

indicated by his writings, he'll get the "mutant" stories even if he has to write them himself; but I am not very optimistic about his raising the standard of stories, because I don't think any editor can squeeze good stories out of indifferent authors.—D. R. Smith (Nuneaton).

I am enclosing a Postal Order for another year's subscription to *Scientifiction*, and am as pleased as Punch to be sending along with it another from my friend . . . About publishing stories—don't do it! *Scientifiction* is, and should be, essentially a news-magazine. Wishing you and the world's best science fiction fan magazine every success.—C. R. Forster (Hexham).

When Interest Flags

Whenever my interest in science fiction flags a little along comes your magazine, filled with familiar names, telling of latest events, and I am filled with red-hot enthusiasm. There is your excellent pep-editorial, Julius Schwartz's exposé of American science fiction; and again may I congratulate you on your book reviews? For a full hour I sat enthralled by your Fantasy Test, and although I dislike John Russell Fearn's yarns ("Mathematica Plus" is an exception), I liked your giving him an opportunity to defend himself—to say the least—strange stories. . . . Taken all round, *Scientifiction* is a sure-fire, 20 h.p. automobile roaring its way, constantly accelerating, towards the science fiction Shangri-La.—Peter G. Sherry (Glasgow).

I am convinced that the inclusion of fiction in your magazine is exactly what is needed to make it more popular. You might start with a serial and one short story each issue. The idea of a story contest seems worth while. . . . Regarding the features of *Scientifiction*, I have few complaints to make. I like especially the book reviews and the interviews with writers.—Edwin G. Morgan (Glasgow).

ROUND THE FANTASY FIELD

With TED CARNELL

One of Britain's best-known fans contributes information upon current science fiction affairs and reveals some things to come.

MARCH issue brings a change of name to *Astounding Stories*, which henceforth will be titled *Astounding Science Fiction*. As Editor Campbell explains: "The word 'stories' conveys very little to the average chance reader, whereas the words 'science fiction' immediately convey the magazine's true contents." The issue has a good Wesso cover taken from Dow Elstar's "Something from Jupiter," and three excellent interior illustrations by Schneeman, who recently made an artistic comeback.

Arthur J. Burks commences a two-part story, "Jason Sows Again," editorially considered one of the best he has ever done. Burks is rapidly becoming one of *Astounding's* leading authors; since 1930 he has had nine stories published, six of which appeared before 1934. His last three have contained some excellent descriptive material, typical of the "million-words-a-year man," as he has been dubbed.

"Rebirth's" Successor

Another change in this issue may well cause the many followers of "Brass Tacks" and "Science Discussions" to puff out their chests, for their pet pages have been shifted to the middle of the magazine. But there's a catch in it! Ends of stories take up the spaces at the rear, so that now you'll have to read the ads along side. Which reminds me that Arthur Clarke, renowned for his BIS work, penned a hot criticism of Leo Vernon for his article on "Rocket Flight" in the January issue, and that Clarke's letter will be printed in April "Science Discussions," with a defensive reply by Vernon.

Also scheduled for April *Astounding* is the start of another serial, entitled "Three Thousand Years," by Thomas Calvert McClary, author of "Rebirth," the 1934 classic which Desmond Hall, former Associate Editor, declared recently was the best story *Astounding* ever published. Although the new yarn is

not a sequel to "Rebirth," Editor Campbell hopes it may prove a worthy successor to it. It presents the problem of a world to be rebuilt from the shattered ruins of civilisation by men deprived of tools, devoid of food or shelter. Other stories in the issue will be "Negative Space," by Nat Schachner; "Iszt, Earthman," by Raymond Galun; and "The Faithful," by Lester Del Ray, a new author.

Next "Mutant"

Looking further forward, I hear from both author and Editor that the next "mutant" offering will be a three-part serial by Jack Williamson, "The Legion of Time," first part of which will appear in the May issue. Regrettably, the story is not concerned with Williamson's famous characters, Giles Habibula and Co., of "The Legion of Space" and "The Cometeers," but he tells me he has ideas in mind for yet another adventure with them. Also in the May *Astounding* will be the first article of Dr. E. E. Smith, entitled "Catastrophe," dealing with the birth of the Solar System.

Stories lined up for May also include "Brainstorm Vibration," a sequel to M. Schere's "Anachronistic Optics"; "Static," by Kent Casey; "Island of the Individualists," another of Nat Schachner's "Past, Present and Future" tales; and "Ra for the Rajah," with which John Victor Peterson makes his second appearance. Editor Campbell describes this latter as "an unusual story with a most unusual and strong style," and adds: "I am interested to know what readers will think of it."

"Wonder" Wants Votes

Highlight of the April *Thrilling Wonder* is "Hollywood on the Moon," first of a new interplanetary series by Henry Kuttner, dealing with the movies of To-morrow. Following Sir James Jeans comes Sir Arthur Eddington with an article on "Eclipses of the Sun," while Jack Williamson's "The Infinite En-

emy" and "The Dark Age," by Clark Ashton Smith, are also included in the issue. Slated for the June number are "The Dual World," by Arthur K. Barnes, "Murder in the Void," by Edmond Hamilton, and Paul Ernst's "Terror in Utopia." Other stories coming up are "The Great Chaos," by Ray Cummings, depicting a second Ice Age; "Dweller in Outer Darkness," by Frank B. Long; "The Exterminators," an interplanetary yarn by another new writer, Frederick Arnold Kummer, son of a famous American novelist.

Up to the time of writing, no decision has been reached on the proposed companion magazine to **Thrilling Wonder**, though reports from U.S. indicate that it is almost certain to emerge, bringing with it another story by the late Stanley G. Weinbaum. Editor Leo Margulies, who has asked fans to let him know if they would like another and bigger magazine—and who wouldn't?—says, however: "The idea is still nebulous, and a great deal depends on the number of requests we receive. So it's up to all fans to send in their votes." He also wants their opinions on the work of the new fantasy artist, Alex Schomburg, appearing in **Thrilling Wonder**.

SFA "Tops" in U.S.

Britain's SFA came out on top as the leading science fiction fan organisation in a recent ballot orga-

nised by Jack Speer, of Oklahoma, to gain a consensus of opinion on various topics appertaining to fantasy. The three top fans were Donald A. Wollheim, of New York; Sam Moskowitz, New Jersey, and Jack Baltadonis, Philadelphia, with Forrest J. Ackerman, of Los Angeles, and Olon F. Wiggins, Colorado, as runners-up. The three favourite fan magazines were the **Science Fiction Collector**, **Science Fiction Fan** and **Cosmic Tales**, while those considered to be in the strongest positions were the **Fan**, **Science Fiction Critic** and **Science-Fantasy Correspondent**. All, of course, American publications

The glowing praise accorded our few English fan publications seem to have roused the ire of one, Robert Bahr, who in an article in the **Critic** on "Those British Fans" accuses us of hypocrisy, stinginess, jealousy and ingratitude, both in regard to the superiority which we claim for our fan magazines and the partiality of some British readers for remainder issues of the professional publications. Says he: "The American fan magazines outclass any published in Great Britain completely, as a comparison will readily show The British magazines will have to go some to top the hundreds of superb stories, articles and poems which have seen print in this country"

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SAVE THOSE BRICKBATS!

An Author Hits Back At The Critics

By MAURICE G. HUGI

The author of two stories in "Scoops," ill-fated British fantasy weekly of years ago, who has reappeared in "Tales of Wonder," pleads for a more tolerant attitude towards such experiments amongst those who are prone to unjust criticism.

"HERE we go gathering nuts in May!" sang the poet; and "Here we go hurling brickbats every month!" might well be the cry of the hyper-critical readers of science fiction magazines. I often wonder why it is that scientifiiction has that effect upon its devotees, that they simply *must* fling injurious criticisms at well-nigh every story published.

Is it a habit they have acquired, or is it due to bad temper—or just a childish desire to be considered a "smart Alec"? Whatever it is that inspires them, it seems to me that the critics invariably rave about piffle and condemn what is really the best in science fiction; and this is no encouragement to a writer, for the better he does the more pin-pricks he receives.

I often think that if these carping critics had been a little more tolerant to the late-lamented **Scoops**, and had shown more patience, it might have lived down its bad start and passed out of the infantile stage into something more dignified. But no—"Tear it to bits!" was the war-cry of the critics, and instead of encouragement the Editor received a constant series of brickbats. The result was that after twenty issues **Scoops** came to an inglorious end.

Breaking It Gently

Now we have **Tales of Wonder**. Is this enterprise to be allowed to continue, or will it suffer the same fate at the hands of the hyper-critics? Although it is in a different category, and has been well received by the majority, there has undoubtedly been some discontent in science fiction circles, chiefly because of the lack of super-science and the simplicity of the stories in the first number.

Agreed that, compared with the American magazines, the plots of the stories were more-or-less unoriginal; but it is not the aim of the publishers or Editor to compete with the American product. The home market is raw—very raw, as far as science fiction is concerned. Progress can only be made slowly; the public must be educated in order that it may acquire the taste for such material, and by the public I mean the vast majority of readers who have never encountered science fiction as we know it.

To them it is a novelty, which first must be given to them in mild doses; then later on, as their incredulity passes, they may be able to appreciate full-blooded science fiction of the type to which we have become so accustomed. This is only common-sense; but the critics have neither the patience nor the reasonableness to see it. And, unless I am much mistaken, if **Tales of Wonder** does not pursue its course with sufficient rapidity for their liking, off will go their letters of abuse and needless disapprobation, irrespective of market conditions and editorial judgment.

A Slow Process

They never pause to consider how much careful thought has been brought to bear upon the subject before the publisher ventures forth with a magazine, before the writer puts his pen to paper. So, think a little, dearly hated critic, before you hurl your next brickbat. You have read science fiction (American brand) these several years; but what about your neighbour? What does he know of science? Has he that easy familiarity with isotopes and isostasy, tensors and tesseracts, equations and ectogenesis, which you yourself only picked up from reading the Yankee magazines?

SAVE THOSE BRICKBATS!

(Continued from previous page)

Remember that in England the elementary schools skip science, while the secondary schools skim it, and that nowhere is it taught as it is in America. The U.S. publishers had a ready-made market for science fiction, but the British publisher has to create his market—or most of it—and it can only be done by a slow process. You cannot expect him to plunge into the fray with super-science stuff of the type that has taken years to evolve in America.

Therefore, let **Tales of Wonder** develop gradually without being prematurely throttled by destructive criticism. Faulty science, poor writing, plots that are weak; by all means criticise them, but if these faults are not present, restrain yourself, even if advanced scientific notions are missing. Don't slang, don't grouse; instead, advise and suggest, and let British science fiction go through its teething troubles with every chance of success.

NEW readers may obtain copies of earlier issues of **Scientifiction**, containing interviews with John Beynon (Harris), Festus Pragnell, Olaf Stapledon, Eric Frank Russell and John Russell Fearn, at 7d. per copy post free.—**Scientifiction**, 15 Shere-road, Ilford.

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