

SCIENCE FICTION NEWS

No. 17 - April, 1957

RAY CUMMINGS 1887 - 1957

One of the great names in pre-Amazing science fiction, a legendary figure to fans of the pre-war days was Ray Cummings. We regret to have to report his death in January. He was in his seventieth year.

Cummings' name has always been associated most conspicuously with the "into the Atom" theme which he originated in "The Girl in the Golden Atom", his first published story (1919) and which he worked over in numerous repeat performances: "The People of the Golden Atom", "Princess of the Atom", "The Atom Prince", "The Girl from Infinite Smallness", "Elixir of Doom" and others. Modern science fiction has left behind the Scientific Romance phase which could admit communication with worlds of atomic size, but for its day the idea was a speculative feat of the highest order.

For better or worse, his influence was among the strongest in SF of the 'twenties. Like Burroughs, Merritt, England and others of the pre-Amazing magazine tradition, he wrote fantastic adventure with a sketchy but strongly suggestive scientific foundation.



RAY CUMMINGS

(From a portrait by his daughter, Elizabeth Starr Hill.)

Though Wells obviously influenced him greatly (in his early stories he borrowed Wells' narrative method of "The Time Machine" with its theoretical introduction and anonymous characters) his stories were representative rather of the pseudo-historical and lost-race novel. There was a simplified world in

AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE SUSPENDED

SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY ceased publishing abruptly with issue No. 18 (February 1957).

Atlas Publications give no reason for closing down what was apparently a reasonably successful magazine.



SCIENCE FICTION NEWS

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY
G. B. Stone - Box 4440, G.P.O.,
Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.
12 issues 7/6d.

Covers for No. 57 (March) and No. 58 (April)

NEW WORLDS

MAGAZINES

the future, infinite smallness, the Fourth Dimension or on another planet, with humans (blonde Aryans, thanks) in a vaguely feudal society, some monsters and scientific marvels, and never-never warfare in which the visitors from twentieth century New York were bound to prove the deciding factor. Yet it was all part of the growing science fiction field, and helped to introduce new readers to more advanced ideas.

"For we survivors of the pre-historic SF age," says Forrest J. Ackerman, "Cummings spelled Glamour with a capital glam. If he hadn't imbued us with such a sense of wonder with his imagination, perhaps we wouldn't miss it so now. I will always be glad that I got him to make his last public appearance at the 1956 New York Con, where his reception by fans who had not forgotten his great contributions was most gratifying."

Wanted

ASTONISHING STORIES - October 1942
 COMET magazine - January & May 1941
 FANTASTIC NOVELS - April 1941
 SCIENCE FICTION PLUS - August 1953
 -- John Park, 29 Mill Point Rd.
 SOUTH PERTH, W.A.

1957 WORLD CONVENTION

"Although attention is already beginning to be focussed on the 1957 World Science Fiction Convention to be held in London this coming September, to which many European and American delegates will be travelling, there is little chance of any representatives coming especially from Australia to be present at the first World Convention to be held outside the North American continent.

"While we could wish that Australia was territorially much nearer to ourselves so that co-operation could be more effective, it is gratifying to know that half a world away similar groups and personalities are working to increase the overall prestige of science fiction."

— JOHN CARNELL

Australians can support the Convention by joining the World Science Fiction Convention Society this year. Subscription is 9/6d, and can be sent to the Futurian Society of Sydney, Box 4440, GPO, Sydney.

Issues 56 (February) and 57 (March) of New Worlds both have better covers than the magazine has usually featured before. Art work, if you can call it that, has been the weakest point of all the British magazines from the beginning, of course.

Contents for February: "Unit" by J.T. McIntosh; "On the Average" by Frank Bryning of Australia; "The Greater Ideal" by Alan Guthrie; "Alone" by Bertram Chandler, his first appearance here for a long time; "The Lights outside the Windows" by James White; "Guess Who?" by Philip E. High; and an article, "Contra-Terre Matter" by Kenneth Johns.

Contents for March: the first part of "Green Destiny", serial by Kenneth Bulmer; "Beautiful Weed" by E. R. James; "Time to Change" by Bertram Chandler; "The Tools of Orlas Boyn" by Peter Hawkins; and two articles, "The Unknown Universe" by Kenneth Johns, and "The Long Haul" by John Newman.

Science Fantasy No. 22 contains: "It's Cold Outside" by Richard Wilson; "The Bells of Acheron" by E. C. Tubbs; "Bargain from Brunswick" by John Wyndham; "The Black Crucible" by John Mantley; "The Principle" by Bertram Chandler; "The Hybrid Queen" by E.D.Campbell; and "Incident" by K.E.Smith.

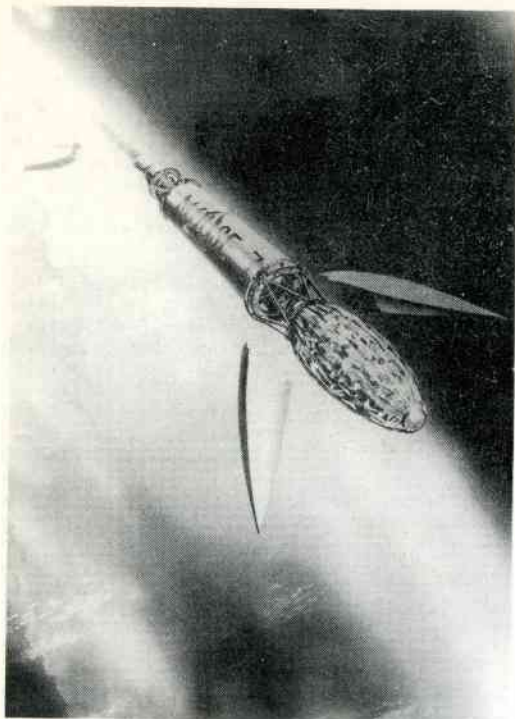
U.S.A.

Sam Merwin Jr. recently resigned from the position of editor of Leo Margulies' new magazine Satellite Science Fiction to go to Hollywood. Frank Belknap Long is the new editor. This magazine is a bimonthly which commenced last October, each issue featuring a short novel with a few shorts to fill out the issue, like a more adult Startling. The February issue has an unusual kind of collaboration in the novel, "Planet for Plunder". Originally written by Hal Clement and telling of an alien expedition to Earth from the alien viewpoint, Sam Merwin wrote the same story from the human viewpoint, which appears in alternate chapters.

Donald A. Wollheim is back in the magazine field as editor of another new title, Saturn. Art Editor of the magazine is John Giunta.

LITTLE GREEN MEN DEPT.

Ray Palmer has changed the title of his magazine Other Worlds Science Stories to -- steady, now --- Flying Saucers From Other Worlds. Well, it had to come sooner or later and Palmer is the obvious man to do it.



Part of the background of the current American Vanguard Project which is to launch the first artificial satellites next year is the theoretical work of British Interplanetary Society engineers K. W. Gatland, A. M. Kunesch and A. E. Dixon, who undertook the design of the smallest possible rocket vehicle that could be established in a permanent orbit.

Nicknamed "Mouse", the name taken over for other proposed unmanned satellites, the group's design was outlined at the Second International Congress on Astronautics held in London in 1951.

The plan called for a sixteen-ton rocket in three stages, lifting into orbit either a small payload of instruments or an inflatable metal-foil sphere clearly visible

from below. This artist's impression shows the latter plan, several distinct operations being shown together. The second stage is dropped, the third stage continues accelerating to orbital velocity, the aerodynamic nose is jettisoned and the collapsed sphere begins inflating.

The B.I.S. is co-operating in the optical tracking program needed to gain information on the precise movement of the satellite when it has been lifted, and invites amateur astronomers in Australia to join in the operation. Write to the Secretary at 12 Bessborough Gns, London SW 1, England.

HOLLYWOOD

I was a Teenage Werewolf! No, not me personally: it's been a quarter of a century since I was a teenage anything. But I have been reliably informed by James Nicholson of the American-International Film Distribution Corporation, who was Vice-Pres when I was President of the Boys' Scientific Club when we were both high-schoolers, that I was a Teenage Werewolf is a legitimate title and scheduled for production by his company. He laughed when I suggested a few illegitimate sequels, so maybe you will too: "I was an Abominable Teenage Snowman"; "I was a Teenage Creature from 20,000 Fathoms Under the Amazon"; "I was a Shrinking Teenager"; and "I was a Teenage Tarantula for the FBI".

Regal Films' War of the Universe will be directed by Kurt Neumann from an original story by Irving Block. Queen of the Universe is coming from Allied Artists, script by Charles Beaumont.

It looks as if we're in for the Beast Years of Our Lives, with American threatening us with Beast from Beneath the Sea, Devil Beast and Beast of Paradise; United Artists releasing The Monster that Challenged the World (formerly called The Kraken); The House of Monsters, The Green Eye, They Lived a Million Years and I Buried the Devil, all scheduled by Boris Petroff; Dragons of Lost World loosed by Al Zimbalist; From Hell It Came, by Milner Bros.; Attack of the Crab Monsters crawling out of Roger Corman's repertoire; Roach approaching The Jagged Edge with a fearsome 400-footer; Selznick Studios set to offer a new version of Beauty and the Beast; The Deadly Mantis diving from William Alland's eyrie; Attack of the Sky Creature coming down out of the clouds from Clover Productions.

Small wonder that another title that's announced is The Day the Earth Went Out of Its Mind. While the late Bela Lugosi's last appearance will be in Grave Robbers from Space.

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FORREST J. ACKERMAN

YEAR'S BOOKS

On Page 5 we have presented graphically some figures on British book production for the last two years, with the data on American activity in the same branches added for comparison. It will be noted that though we give fifty-one as the number of books issued in Britain in 1956 (compared with eighty-one in 1955) we list rather more books on pages 6-7. The reason is that in the latter section a number of juvenile novels are included as well as a few other "borderline" books.

The best book of the year is not always easy to choose, but few really outstanding books appeared in 1956. It is not hard to decide which of these is the best, but it is a decision made with misgivings. Our choice is Alfred Bester's novel, "Tiger! Tiger!" Somewhat reminiscent of his "The Demolished Man", which was based mainly on a future development of telepathy by a growing minority and the social adjustments made to handle it, in this work Bester has taken the idea of teleportation, the ability to move from place to place through some unexplained extra-dimensional route by an effort of will, and visualised a culture in which most people have learned the art. In other respects the world he shows us is realistically conceived, and brilliantly portrayed. There have been few presentations of a radically changed world in detail which have carried any conviction: Bester's world does. Instead of a mere setting for action, we are shown a living world, a fascinating world.

The action of the story takes us on a tour through the underworld of the future in particular, its crime and vice reinforced and complicated by space flight and a wealth of technical achievement besides teleportation. It's all there, from treason and genocide through piracy, blackmail, mayhem and bribery and corruption to dirty postcards ("Christians kissing cross, very smutty") and the analogue drug that gives the illusion of becoming a gorilla or a python. Altogether, a powerful book. It brings us to a new level of science fiction by its success in bringing an imagined future to life. Our only complaint is that in this, undoubtedly the year's finest novel in the field, the basic theme is not a scientific speculation but, in effect, magic.

Among the few other books of particular interest, E. C. Large's "Dawn in Andromeda" though excellent, is marred by a strong element of mysticism: indeed, there seems to have been an attempt to make it appear not science fiction but a religious work.

Arthur C. Clarke's "The City and the Stars" is a novel set in an unthinkable remote future: we say unthinkable, because the passage of thousands of millions of years is somewhat difficult to grasp, especially when they seem to matter as little as in this instance. The book is a revised and expanded — we might almost say gutted and stuffed — version of "Against the Fall of Night", and in our view is not as interesting as the or-

iginal. All the same, it is a thoughtfully written novel with plenty of content.

Other books that made positive contributions to modern science fiction were "They Shall Have Stars" and "Earthman, Come Home" by James Blish; "No Man Friday" by Rex Gordon; and "World of Chance" by Philip K. Dick.

One book of unusual character deserves special mention.

"Jules Verne: Master of Science Fiction" is designed as an introduction to the works of the first important science fiction writer. I. O. Evans has put together a selection of extracts from fifteen of the novels, tersely summarising each in his running commentary and giving a sober evaluation of the man and his work. Get this book. Its factual and critical content makes it invaluable to the scientifi-fictionist already acquainted with Verne, and to anyone else it is the best possible introduction. So much has happened in the last half century that the Voyages have been eclipsed by the fulfilment or bypassing of the prophecies, so that they have gained a different kind of interest.

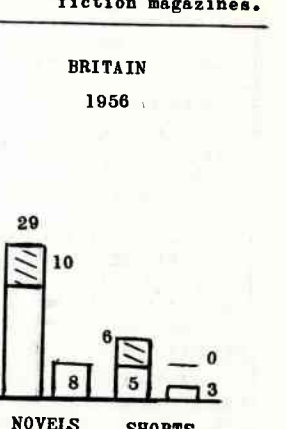
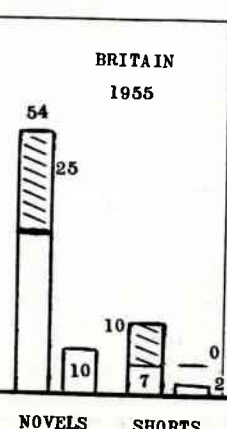
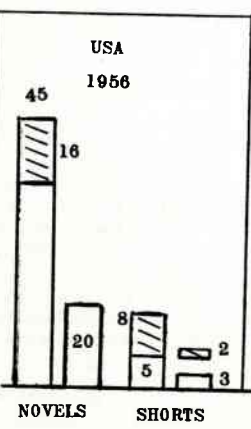
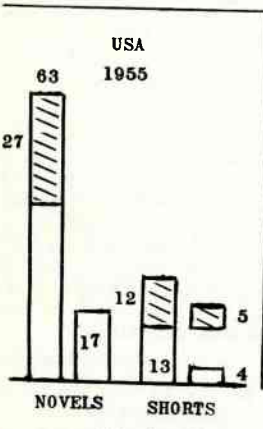
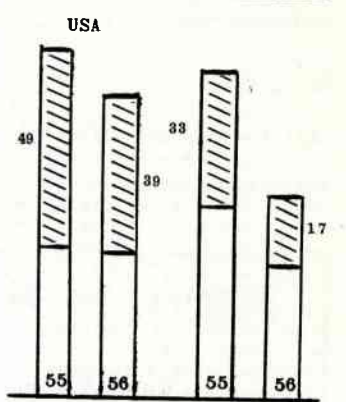
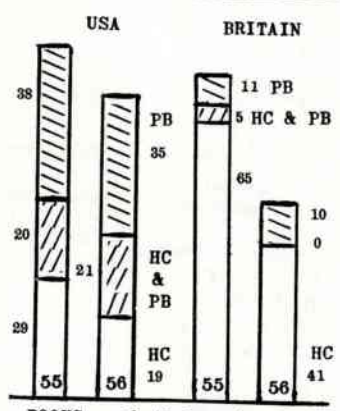
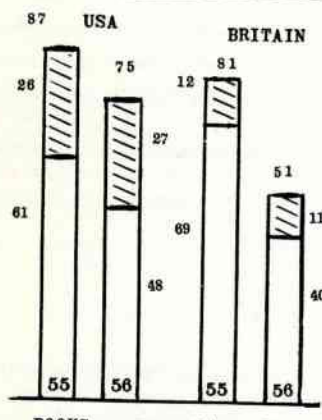
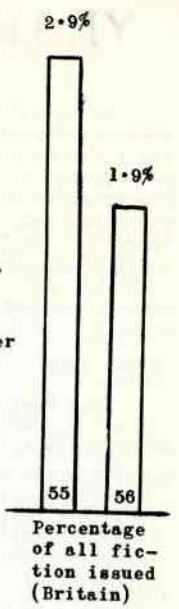
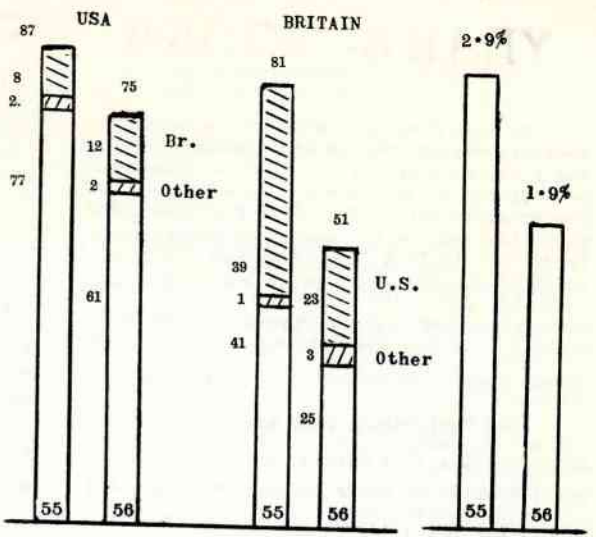
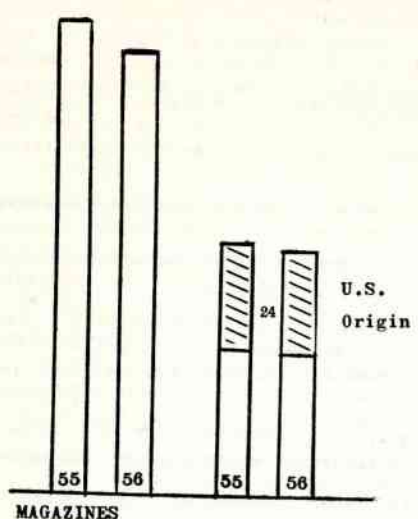
Confucius (or somebody) is supposed to have said that one picture is worth a thousand words. But the kind of pictures which British publishers consider appropriate for dust jackets on science fiction books are not in our opinion worth more than one short harsh word. Yet in 1956 there seemed to be a trend toward vague daubs of color suggesting nothing in particular, which was a real improvement.

MAGAZINES

The overall impression gained from the magazines originating in Britain was in 1956 — as in 1955 — one of mediocrity. They had plenty of readable fiction, with very little either original or very good. On the other hand, Astounding and Galaxy were very much alive, with plenty that was outstanding — very good sometimes, more often very bad.

Astounding held its long established first place, despite some very poor fiction and an increased trend to mysticism. Among the pseudo-psychology, occult powers, political sermons and plain adventure thinly camouflaged with never-never future settings, a few genuine and excellent science fiction stories appeared. Robert Heinlein's "Double Star" stands out as by far the best magazine story of the year. P. Schuyler Miller's book review department is still the most reliable appearing in a newsstand magazine.

Finally, this is the only magazine in the field with a professionally finished appearance. All the others give a very poor impression with slovenly design and production (apart from Nebula which does show care if not imagination) and very bad illustration.



First editions and new editions of novels and volumes of short stories, shown separately. NOVELS: left hand column, first editions, showing proportion of novels which are the writer's first in the field. Right hand column, new editions including PB's. SHORTS: Proportion of "anthologies" representing several writers to volumes by one writer shown in each column.

BOOKS

issued by British
publishers in 1957

- Asimov, Isaac: "The End of Eternity" Novel
(Boardman)
- Bester, Alfred: "Tiger! Tiger!" Novel (S&J)
- Bleiler & Dikty eds.: "The Best Science Fiction Stories - 5th Series"
"The Best Science Fiction Stories - 5th Series" (Grayson)
- "Year's Best Science Fiction Novels - 2nd Series" (Grayson)
- Blish, James: "Earthman, Come Home" sequel
(Faber)
- "They Shall Have Stars" (Faber)
- Boland, John: "No Refuge" Novel (Joseph)
- Bounds, S. J.: "World Wrecker" N (Foulsham)
- Bradbury, Ray: "The Golden Apples of the Sun" Shorts (Corgi PB)
- "The Silver Locusts" Sn (Corgi PB)
- Brennan, F. H.: "One of our H-Bombs is Missing" Novel (Gold Medal PB)
- Burke, Jonathan: "Pursuit Through Time" Novel
(Ward Lock)
- Capon, Paul: "Into the Tenth Millennium" Novel
(Heinemann)
- Chilton, Charles: "The Red Planet" Novel
(Jenkins)
- Christopher, John: "The Death of Grass" Novel
(Joseph)

- Clarke, Arthur C.: "Childhood's End" Novel
(Pan PB)
- "The City and the Stars" Novel
(Muller)
- Crispin, Edmund ed.: "Best SF - 2" Shorts
(Faber)
- Del Rey, Lester: "Step to the Stars" Novel
(Hutchinson)
- Derleth, August ed.: "The Other Side of the Moon" Shorts (Grayson)
- "Portals of Tomorrow" Shorts
(Cassell)
- Dick, Philip K.: "World of Chance" Novel
(Rich & Cowan)
- Duncan, David: "Another Tree in Eden" Novel
(Heinemann)
- Fleming, Ian: "Moonraker" Novel (Pan PB)
- Gordon, Rex: "No Man Friday" N (Heinemann)
- Gowland, John: "Beyond Mars" Nov (Gryphon)
- Gribble, Leonard: "Atomic Murder" Novel
(Digit PB)
- Heinlein, Robert: "The Green Hills of Earth" Shorts
(Pan PB)
- Hingley, Ronald: "Up Jenkins!" N (Longmans)
- Hough, S. B.: "Extinction Bomber" N (Lane)
- Johns, W. E.: "Now to the Stars" Juvenile
(Hodder)
- Kornbluth, C. M.: "Christmas Eve" Novel
(Joseph)
- Kuttner, Henry: "Fury" Novel (SFBC)

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FEATURE FILMS—

"Pygmy Island" Sol Lesser
"Dark Spring" Fritz Lang
"Target—Earth!" Abtoon
"The Nth Man" Golden State
"4-Sided Triangle" Alexander Paal
"Doc Methuselah" Flory Films
"Undersea Armada" Geo. Fox Prodn
"Wolves of Darkness" Am-International
"This Island Earth" Uni-International

TELEVISION—

"Nightmare in Algiers" ABC Motorola
"Adaptive Ultimate" Sci-Fi Theater
"Marked 'Danger!'" Sci-Fi Theater
"Masquerade" Four Star Theater
"The Vicarion" William Schary
"The Room" J. Arthur Rank

SCIENCE FICTION RESEARCH FOR—

George Pal William Alland Ivan Tors Ray Bradbury
. Playboy Charles Beaumont Curt Siodmak Paul
Coates DeVallon Scott Roger Corman Mike Moser
. Hank Fine Jeff Brown Kurt Martell James
Nicholson Alex Gordon Bela Lugosi M. Esko
Al Zimbalist Wyatt Ordung Vincent Sherman Bill
James Tom Gries Ed Spiegel and Louis & Bebe Barron.

AGENTORIAL SERVICES BETWEEN 1946-56 FOR—

Ib J. Melchior A. E. van Vogt Isaac Asimov Jack
Williamson Anna Hunger Fritz Blocki Adele
Comandini Edmond Hamilton G. Gordon Dewey
Jerome Bixby Martin Varno Milton Luban Kris
Neville Hope Lugosi Curtis Casewit Cleve Cartmill
. Raymond F. Jones Paul Blaisdell Albert Nuetzell
Richard DeMille Sam Merwin Jr.

MEETINGS

Featured speakers at the 15th annual Philadelphia Science Fiction Conference were Robert W. Lowndes, Sam Moskowitz and George O. Smith.

Lowndes spoke against one of science fiction's traditional bad habits, excessive use of jargon, especially the casual references to imaginary and undefined overdrives, spacewarps and the like.

"To assume that everyone is familiar with the many idioms commonly used in SF stories and that they can be used promiscuously is a great mistake." He added, "Technical language is not bad in itself, particularly when used to buttress the authenticity of the story, but it should be used carefully and only where it serves a purpose."

Moskowitz spoke on "Ray Bradbury: the Influences that shaped him."

Smith gave a revised version of his address on interplanetary communication, heard on several previous occasions, this time illustrated with a recording he had made to show the anticipated noise level.

Large, E. C.: "Dawn in Andromeda" N (Cape)
 Leinster, Murray: "Operation: Outer Space"
 Novel (Grayson)
 Lott, S. Makepeace: "Escape to Venus" Novel
 (Rick & Cowan)
 Lov, A. M.: "Adrift in the Stratosphere" Juv
 (Blackie)
 McIntosh, J. T.: "One in Three Hundred" Nov
 (Museum)
 Maine, Charles E.: "Escapement" N (Hodder)
 Mantley, John: "The Twenty-seventh Day" Nov
 (Joseph)
 Matheson, Richard: "Born of Man and Woman"
 Shorts (Reinhardt)
 Mines, Samuel ed.: "Moment Without Time"
 Shorts (SFBC)
 Moore, Patrick: "Domes of Mars" Juv (Burke)
 — "Wheel in Space" Jv (Lutterworth)
 — "World of Mists" Juv (Muller)
 Nourse, Alan E.: "Trouble on Titan" Juv
 (Hutchinson)
 Russell, Eric Frank: "Deep Space" Shorts
 (Eyre & Spottiswoode)
 Sellings, Arthur: "Time Transfer" Shorts
 (Joseph)
 Sieveking, Lance: "A Private Volcano" Novel
 (Ward Lock)
 Sloane, William: "Stories for Tomorrow"
 Shorts (Eyre & Spottiswoode)
 "Sometime, Never" Three short novels
 (Eyre & Spottiswoode)
 Stark, Raymond: "Crossroads to Nowhere" Nov
 (Ward Lock)
 Stewart, George R.: "Earth Abides" Novel
 (Corgi PB)
 Stuart, W. J.: "The Forbidden Planet" Novel
 (Corgi PB)
 Suddaby, Donald: "The Star Raiders" Juv
 (Scottie PB)
 Temple, W. F.: "Martin Magnus on Mars" Juv
 (Muller)
 — "Martin Magnus on Venus" (Muller)
 Tenn, William: "Of All Possible Worlds"
 Shorts (Joseph)
 Trevor, Meriol: "The Other Side of the Moon"
 Juvenile (Collins)
 Tubb, E. C.: "Alien Dust" Shorts (SFBC)
 Tucker, Wilson: "Wild Talent" Novel (SFBC)
 Verne, Jules: "Around the World in Eighty
 Days" (Fontana PB)
 — "Journey to the Centre of the Earth"
 (Scottie PB)
 — "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the
 Sea" (Abridged) (Collins)
 "Jules Verne - Master of Science Fiction"
 selections ed. I.O.Evans. (S & J)
 Wallace, Edgar: "The Green Rust" (Ward Lock)
 Waller, Robert: "Shadow of Authority" Novel
 (Cape)
 Walter, W. Gray: "Further Outlook" Novel
 (Duckworth)

Wells, H. G.: "The World Set Free" (Collins)
 Wilding, Philip: "Shadow Over the Earth" Nov
 (Hennel Locke)
 Wyndham, John: "The Seeds of Time" Shorts
 (Joseph)

editorial

Since publishers started deliberately issuing SF, some hundreds of books have appeared in the USA only. Only a small number of these — and by no means a good selection — has had British publication. This is the direction in which most progress can be made if any British publishers want to make progress. And they should, because their record so far is nothing to brag about.

The reason why we get so much elementary and half-hearted writing, stuff that no magazine editor would consider good enough, is the idea (which makes a limited amount of sense) that there is only a small number of readers able to appreciate fully developed modern SF, and therefore there is a need for something simpler for the uninitiated. The fallacy here is that simplified fiction only creates a market for more and more simplification. Science fiction stands or falls on its content, on ideas, on speculation. The present trend in British books is to avoid speculation — at all costs, do not ask the reader to think about anything — by encouraging writers who are incapable of it.

J. M. Rosenblum has pointed out recently that it is common today to see statements such as the one he quotes — "To classify this book as science fiction in the ordinary acceptance (sic) of that term would be a mistake. It is plausibly written, entirely convincing and innocent of pseudo-scientific jargon." — in other words, as he points out, the author knows no science. Who is expected to buy a book on such a recommendation?

These feeble efforts by writers with no knowledge of the field are at least as difficult for the new reader as the most technical — although very few books assume much technical background anyway — and far less interesting. The approach is wrong. If an introduction to SF is needed, what could be better than the approach it actually had?

Quite apart from the question of the great books of the pioneers — though these are not as generally available as could be wished — there are many prewar books which are unfamiliar in England today, which were written when there was no educated audience and which therefore had to explain rather than assume familiarity with their theories.

Where is John Taine? We have seen his "Seeds of Life" and "G.O.G. 666" in the last two years, but these are far from being his best works. It would be more to the point to bring out "Before the Dawn", "Tomorrow" and "The Greatest Adventure", for instance.

OBITUARY

Died in 1956:

A. M. LOW (London, aged 68)

Archibald Montgomery Low (the title of Professor came from the Royal Artillery College, where he taught Physics, 1919-22) was a practical scientist early in his career, producing both a flying bomb and a guided missile in 1918 patents. He devoted more time to popular science writing, fortunately perpetrating only a few abominable science fiction stories at various times. He was a keen supporter of SF, however, serving as President of the pre-war British Science Fiction Association — and at the same time, of the young British Interplanetary Society.

BELA LUGOSI

(Hollywood, aged 73)

Bela Lugosi, Hungarian-born actor, was one of the screen's institutions in his later years. He played magicians, vampires and mad scientists in dozens of horror pictures, and so belongs in the tradition of science fiction, for to Hollywood SF is merely another term for horror.

BOB OLSON

(Los Angeles, aged 72)

Alfred Johannes Olsen Jr, who wrote as Bob Olson, was a popular writer in pre-war years. He first appeared in *Amazing* with "The Four Dimensional Roller Press" (June 1927), first of six stories which linked his name inseparably with the *Fourth Dimension* for pre-war readers. Another interest which he developed in a number of stories was ants and their society. He was strongly critical of the magazine science fiction of the 'fifties as un-original, lacking both accuracy of background and plausibility of theory, and his last work was a long critical essay on the field, not yet published.

FLETCHER PRATT

(Long Branch, New Jersey, aged 59)

Fletcher Pratt was a versatile writer, science fiction being only a minor part of his work. He wrote over fifty books, mainly historical and biographical, with some on subjects as diverse as cookery and codes. He worked on various newspapers, was a war correspondent in World War II, and was probably the only major SF writer who was once a professional boxer. He wrote probably as many SF stories in collaboration as alone — mainly with L. Sprague de Camp. He translated SF novels from French and German, and in the past few years had been one of the few

professional critics who reviewed SF competently. His reviews appeared regularly in the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

F. ORLIN TREMAINE

(Stony Creek, New York, aged 67)

Frederick Orlin Tremaine probably did more than any other editor since Gernsback to improve science fiction. He was in charge of the then named *Astounding Stories* from its revival in October 1933 to the end of 1938, and in that time he transformed not only the magazine itself but to a considerable extent the character of the magazine field. Having been on the Clayton editorial staff for five years, he knew the original *Astounding* and probably worked on it behind the scenes. It was the first science fiction magazine with a strong popular slant in contrast to Gernsback's more specialised magazines, emphasising action at the expense of speculation. The trend in 1933 was strongly towards fantastic adventure: one of the things Tremaine did was to put the stress on science again, and he developed *Astounding* into something we could accept today. It was successful enough to virtually put its competitors out of business.

He wrote little himself, and his later magazine *Comet* was a war casualty.

Editorial (contd.)

Where is A. Merritt? His neglect is inexplicable. Only his last three novels have ever been printed in England, not only his poorest works but also quite different from the others. In America it would be hard to name another writer in the field who has had a comparable following. Since his death his popularity has continued steadily, if it has not indeed increased, and a new Merritt reprint now and then remains a safe bet. Colourful fantastic adventure with slight pretension to scientific speculation? True, but it certainly belongs in the field, to which it made a definite contribution and introduced many readers. Obviously it should have been a race to get into print first with "The Moon Pool", "The Metal Monster" and "Dwellers in the Mirage". But we are still waiting.

Ray Cummings, Ralph Milne Farley, Victor Rousseau, S. Fowler Wright, Fred Mac-Isaac, George Allan England, to mention a few at random, all wrote books that could well be made available to new readers.

And in the mean time, while we are subjected to books by characters who have never written SF before, and obviously never read it either, there are books by Asimov, Bond, Clement, Heinlein, Williamson, Brown, Coblenz, Pohl and Kornbluth, E.E. Smith, Pangborn and de Camp — for example — which we have not seen and probably won't.