

SCIENCE FICTION NEWS

NO. 21

MARCE-APRIL 1958



3 NEW MAGAZINES, NEW AUST. PB SERIES

Three more American science fiction magazines are now appearing in British editions, after almost three years in which the main source of mature and original writing in the field has been limited to two not particularly worthy magazines and a trickle of books.

In the 1953-4 period the market was flooded with magazines of American origin far beyond its capacity, and let us hope the same mistake is not repeated. But the expansion of the British field to a total of eight titles is certainly welcome.

(Contd. p. 2)

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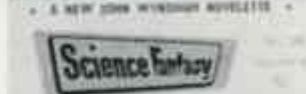


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NEW MAGAZINES (Contd.)

FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION and **SCIENCE FICTION STORIES**, both issued by Strato Publications in the same format as *Galaxy S.F.*, are well established American titles, going back through several metamorphoses and war-time suspension to 1939 when both first appeared, then edited by Charles D. Hornig, formerly of *Wonder Stories*. Both have appeared in Britain before, with their companion magazines, *Science Fiction Quarterly* and *Dynamic Science Fiction*; besides their own titles they appeared at various times as *Yankee Science Fiction*, *Space - Fact and Fiction* and also as booklets. Both now begin new series.

The present editor, Robert W. Louder, has for some years maintained a high level of work in every aspect of science fiction, with a good balance of entertainment and speculation. These magazines neither avoid controversy nor publicize fads, and their content and background material is on a particularly high plane.

No. 1 of **SCIENCE FICTION STORIES** contains:

Genius Loci - Thomas N. Scortia
The Return from Troy - Russ Winterbotham
His Head in the Clouds - Calvin M. Knox
Compulsions - Peter Storm
The Principle - A. Bertram Chandler
Just Rub a Lamp - Theodore L. Thomas
Inside Science Fiction (department)
- Robert A. Hadle
Readin' and Writhin' (reviews)
- L. S. de Camp
Editorial, and The Last Word (letters)
(Cover by Eash)

No. 1 of **FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION** contains:

Mara Trail - Theodore L. Thomas
Cat O' Nine Tails - Thomas N. Scortia
A Season of Remorse - Robert Silverberg
... And a Half-Dozen of the Other
- A. Bertram Chandler
The Convincer - David Gordon
Tale of a Pioneer (verse) - Isaac Asimov
Wanted: a Definition of Science Fiction
(article) - Bob Olsen
Readin' and Writhin' (reviews)
- Randall Garrett
Editorial, and Down to Earth (letters)
(Cover by Frank Kelly Press)

SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES — no connection with the former magazine of this title edited by Lester del Rey — was established last year under the control of Lawrence T. Shaw, one of the former editors of that excellent magazine, *IF*.

The policy of **SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES** is stated to be one of emphasis on action, the title literally describing the stories. Under Mr. Shaw, however, this will not mean what it would in most other hands.

The magazine's British publishers are Nova Publications, whose *Nova Worlds* has never had much competition for its leadership of the field as far as local writing is concerned.

OBITUARY

HENRY KUTTNER

(Santa Monica, California, 3rd Feb.)

Henry Kuttner was only 42 when he died suddenly of an unexpected heart attack recently.

He was an extremely prolific and versatile writer who used something like twenty pseudonyms at various times and often had three contributions in one issue of a magazine, particularly in the war years when he was one of the few mainstays of the field. But even so, his stories were not merely pot-boilers. The least of them had merit as entertainment and usually some original thought as well.

His first published story was "When the Earth Lived", in the tradition then called thought-variant, in the October 1937 *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, which magazine with its companion *Startling Stories* published most of his prewar stories. In 1940 he married Catherine L. Moore, also a popular writer of the 'thirties, and no doubt most of their later work was more or less collaborative.

The scientific background was usually slight, too vague to be inaccurate. But this was offset by the ability to see the significance of predictions current in science fiction and their effect on man and society, and by real writing talent.

Kuttner was a modest man who avoided publicity, and no doubt his dissatisfaction with his work was one reason why so little of it has appeared in book form. Apart from four books not yet published in England, some stories are in collections, however. Others are collected in "Ahead of Time". There is the series of episodes titled "Mutant" and one novel, "Fury".

ed. Editor John Carnell believes that while his regular readers will generally like the newcomer, its appeal is less to the sophisticated reader and more to those who have read little science fiction. It is certainly true that there has never been much attempt to cater for the new reader except on the assumption that he is a retarded eight-year-old, and if as Mr. Carnell thinks this magazine can reach and interest a broader audience it will be doing a valuable service.

The first issue (February 1958) contains:

The Slave - C. M. Kornbluth
Chalice of Death - Calvin M. Knox
Yesterday's Man - Algis Budrys

The second issue (April 1958) contains:

One Against Hercules - Jerry Sohl
Ten Worlds in Peril - James Blish and
Phil Barnhart
Secret of the Green Invaders
- Robert Randall

SATELLITE SERIES

In Australia, a new paperback series has begun with a flourish with four titles in a "Satellite Series" priced at 2/-.

Digest sized, each has 112 pages and includes from six to eight short stories by various writers. Each of the series bears the title of the first story (at least three of which have been changed) and the title page gives its author only. The impression of a collection of his work is corrected only by author credits at the end of each story. The selection of material is fair, though some of it has been seen here before.

Publishers are Jubilee Publications of North Sydney, who are new to the SF field. With a regrettably low estimate of readers' intelligence the first four issues are numbered from 211 to 214 and an attempt is made to pass as an imported publication. Covers are unassigned, but the first two are by some American artist (Malaraki?); the next two are evidently local work.

No. "211" is titled "Beyond the Stars" (and other stories) by John Berryman. The title story is his "Space Rating". Also included are:

The Cold Equations - Tom Godwin
Limiting Factor - Clifford D. Simak
Asleep in Armageddon - Ray Bradbury
Exploiters' End - James Cassey
Potential Enemy - Jack Reynolds
Century Jumper - August Derleth

No. "212" - "Space Station 42" (and other stories) by Charles E. Fritch. Includes:

Controlled Experiment - Chad Oliver
Last of the Vantors - Philip K. Dick
The Last Man - Charles Beckman Jr.
Between Two Worlds - Anthony Riker
The Dreamer - Jack Vance

No. "213" - "The Sands of Mars" (and other stories) by A. E. van Vogt. The title story is his "Enchanted Village", a wearisomely familiar item unwise given an even better known title. Also includes:

The Pillows - Margaret St. Clair
Operation Zero - Milton Lesser
Adjustment Team - Philip K. Dick
Thinker, Mark VII - August Derleth
No More Stars - Irving E. Cox Jr.

No. "214" - "Planet of Doom" (and other stories) by Malcolm Jamieson. The title story is his "Lilies of Life". Also includes:

Lunar Escapade - H. B. Fyfe
Retreat from Rigel - Philip K. Dick
The Last War - Arthur Dekker Savage
The Mating of the Moons -
- Kenneth O'Hara
The Image of the Gods
- Alan E. Nourse
Place of Meeting - Charles Beaumont
Last Night of Summer - Alfred Coppel

Future plans for the series are not known.

BOOKS

ONLY A TRILLION

by Isaac Asimov
(Abelard-Schuman)

Most of this book appeared previously in astounding Science Fiction as separate articles, and the definite continuity of the argument was not then readily apparent. Now assembled, they show a logical progression of theme. For a long time science fiction has been interested in the position of life in the universe, but our ideas have needed putting in order. Here Asimov has given us a biochemist's view of the most outstanding questions involved which should help clear away some of the dead wood.

Readers who have much chemical training will find many points either over-simplified or over-explained, and will have to go further to find technical accounts or formulae. But in reducing his material to simple language Asimov has not lowered his standard of thinking.

The first two chapters are new, and deal with radioactivity as a normal feature of the universe, introducing by way of its genetic significance the book's main interest, life.

Then follow "Hemoglobin and the Universe"; "Victory on Paper"; "The Abnormality

"After the Rain" by John Bowen ... P. 6
"Into Other Worlds" by Roger Lancelyn
Green ... P. 8

of being Normal"; "Planets have an Air about Them"; "The Unblind Workings of Chance"; "The Trapping of the Sun"; and "The Sea-Urchin and We".

It is not generally realized how much is now known about the origin of life, and what can be said of the possibilities of the neighbouring planets. Asimov points out the partial answers we have to such former mysteries as the gaps between organic compounds and organisms, viruses and cells, invertebrates and vertebrates - the really important "missing links" still mistakenly cherished by mystics.

"The Sound of Panting" is in a lighter vein, humorously treating the dizzying complexity of science today and the unsolved problem of even the specialist keeping up to date in his field.

Finally, we have two facetious articles in which most unlikely premises are assumed and their consequences investigated. There is the story of Thiotimoline, the substance so soluble it dissolves before you put it in the water, and the recent problem about the goose laying golden eggs. Amusing, though a little out of place in this book.

Worth getting to have the scattered parts together. We would like to see more of the really good factual material in some SF magazines collected, and if this book is a success it may help.

SPACE TRAVEL in fact and fiction *

PART THREE

by Arthur C. Clarke

I am not sure who has the credit, or otherwise, for inventing antigravity, but the earliest reference to this popular method of propulsion seems to be in Joseph Atterley's "Voyage to the Moon", published in 1827. Atterley was the pen-name of Professor George Tucker, under whom Edgar Allan Poe was a student at Virginia University, and this work had a considerable influence on Poe's own satirical moon voyage, "The Unparalleled Adventure of one Hans Pfaal" (1835) which was not one of Poe's more successful efforts. Atterley's hero encounters a metal with a tendency to fly away from the Earth (how any of it has managed to stay on this planet neither Atterley nor his numerous successors ever explain) and by coating a vessel with it he is able to make a journey to the Moon.

This idea, of course, foreshadows that developed much more fully in Wells' "First Men in the Moon" (1901), which is still perhaps the greatest of all interplanetary stories despite its inevitable dating. Wells' "Cavorite" was, as most of you will recall, a substance impenetrable to gravity just as a sheet of metal is to light. Consequently one had only to build a sphere — or a polyhedron — coated with it to fly away from the Earth. Control would be effected by rolling up sections of the Cavorite towards the body one wished to approach. So much simpler than these noisy and alarmingly energetic rockets.

I do not suppose that Wells had ever come across Atterley's book, but I cannot help wondering if he knew of Kurd Lasswitz' "Auf Zwei Planeten" (1897) which was very popular in Germany and reappeared a few years ago in an illustrated edition. As far as I know Lasswitz' book has not been translated into English, which is a pity as it is one of the most important of all interplanetary romances. Not only did it include antigravity, but explosive propulsion systems ("repulsars" — the word later used by the old German Rocket Society to describe its own early rockets) and, most surprising of all, space stations. All the details were worked out with great care by the author, a professor of mathematics at Jena.

As another of the countless users of antigravity — though not in this case for space travel — I cannot forbear to mention no less a scientist than Professor Simon Newcombe. His famous article "proving" that heavier-than-air flight was impossible has often been quoted against him, frequently by us. It is something of a surprise, therefore, to discover that he was the author of a novel with the quaint title "His Wisdom,

the Defender" (1900) in which he showed how the aeroplane might be used as a means of abolishing war. Once again, I fear, the professor proved himself a rather poor prophet. In this book an antigravitational substance named "Etherias" was invented and used for aircraft.

Innumerable stories have used the apparently plausible device of antigravity in some way or other. It is hardly necessary to say that it won't work, at least in the way that Wells and Co. described it. There is, it is true, no fundamental objection to a substance that is repelled by gravity so that it tends to fly away from the Earth, and such a substance could, in principle, be used to lift a spaceship. But in that case it would take work to pull it down again — exactly as much work, in fact, as would be required to lift an equivalent mass of normal matter to the same altitude. Thus the only way the travellers could return, or could land on another planet, would be to jettison their antigravitational material.

An antigravity screen, as opposed to a substance which gravity repels, is quite a different proposition and can be ruled out of court at once on first principles. A little examination will show that it involves a paradox of the "irresistible force and immovable object" category. If such a screen could exist, and could be used in the manner so often described, one need only place it under a heavy object, let this rise to a considerable height, remove the screen and let the object fall — thus obtaining a source of perpetual energy! Looking at it from another angle, Willy Ley has pointed out what a paradoxical situation such a material would produce. Imagine that one had a sheet of it nailed down to the floor. Above it, by definition, there would be no gravity, and therefore the space there would have the same gravitational potential as a point an infinite distance from the Earth. Thus to step the few inches from the outside the sheet on to its surface would require just as much effort as jumping clean off the Earth!

It must be emphasized, however, that there is no fundamental objection to an antigravity device which is driven by some appropriate source of energy, and therefore, does not produce something for nothing. Presumably this covers those innumerable stories in which the release of atomic power provides propulsion through some unspecified "space-drive". The chances are that one day it will, but at the moment it shows no sign of behaving in such a convenient manner.

ROCKETS

As we have already mentioned, Cyrano de Bergerac was the first writer to use the rocket for interplanetary travel. Cyrano, of course, had no idea of the rocket's peculiar

* From the Journal of the British Interplanetary Society, by courtesy of the Society.

virtues (or, for that matter, its considerable vices) so he cannot be given much credit for the invention. Nor, I am afraid, can this passage from Defoe's "Consolidator" (1705) be regarded as more than a pure fluke, though it is certainly an uncannily accurate description of a liquid propellant motor:

"...and as the bodies were made of Lunar Earth, which would bear the Fire, the Cavities were filled with an ambient Flame, which fed on a certain Spirit, deposited in a proper Quantity to last the Voyage..."

I wonder what would happen if one of our rocket engineers specified "Lunar Earth" for a combustion chamber lining. It might be worth trying.

Although the rocket, or some other form of "Firework", was often mentioned in the space-travel story, it was not until late in the 19th Century that it began to become prominent. Verne used it in his "Round the Moon" (1870) to alter the orbit of his projectile, and understood clearly enough that the rocket was the only means of propulsion that would operate in space; but it never occurred to him to use it for the whole voyage.

Nowadays of course it is exceptional to find an interplanetary vessel which is not driven by rockets, and there is no point in listing modern stories which have used them.

As the work of the German experimenters became more widely known, a class of painstakingly accurate stories sprang up — some, indeed, being little more than thinly disguised text-books. The German writers (Valier, Gale, etc) were good at this sort of thing, and some of their works appeared in translation in Wonder Stories. I need hardly say that few of these tales were of much literary merit, but they are still very interesting from the historical point of view.

One of the few stories which, as I remember it, did have a fairly elaborate and convincing technical background without damage to its entertainment value was Laurence Manning's "Wreck of the Asteroid" (Wonder Stories, Dec. 1932 - Feb. 1933). Manning was an early member of the American Interplanetary Society, as it was then. He once introduced the rocket exhaust equation, complete with root signs and awkward exponents, into one of his stories — no doubt to the annoyance of Wonder's compositor!

The almost universal acceptance of the rocket has left writers little room for ingenuity and one spaceship is now very much like another. Very few of them have much resemblance to the ships which, unfortunately, we will have to build for the first voyages into space. Mass-ratios and similar inconveniences do not bother the science fiction writer — much less the science fiction artist, who gaily runs rows of portholes the whole length of the hull, and depicts thousand-ton rockets racing low over exotic landscapes with no visible means of support.

Certainly the spaceships of recent fiction have little in common with those design-

ed by the B.I.S., which rapidly — though I hasten to add deliberately — fell to bits immediately after takeoff. It should be recorded, however, that the old B.I.S. collar ship has been mentioned at least once in contemporary fiction — by that talented writer Jack Williamson in "Crucible of Power" (Astounding S.F., Feb. 1939, in book form 1953).

In dealing with some of the more obvious fallacies in the popular conception of rocket propelled spaceships in my article "The Shape of Ships to Come" (New Worlds, No. 4) I suggested that the spaceships of the next century would be so much unlike contemporary pictures that we wouldn't recognize one if we saw it. Certainly if orbital refueling techniques are developed as we expect them to be, then the ships designed for true interplanetary flight will never land on any world, or even enter an atmosphere, and so would have no need for streamlining or control surfaces. Indeed, their natural shape would be spherical, but as the necessity for radiation shielding might rule this out, I suggested that a dumb-bell arrangement has much to recommend it, since the radioactive power plant could then be placed far away from the living quarters. "Tanker" rockets could be winged vessels of more traditional design which after doing their job would re-enter the atmosphere and make an aerodynamic landing.

MISCELLANEOUS SPACESHIPS

In addition to the main categories discussed above, there are also those spaceships whose classification might well defy even the genius who once entered in an auctioneer's catalog these successive entries: "Lot 56: 1 box oddments. Lot 57: 1 box miscellaneous oddments."

In this "miscellaneous" class are all those vehicles propelled by unspecified rays, tractor beams, fields of force, overdrives, underdrives and just plain drives. Some authors, however, have made serious attempts to evolve new methods of propulsion which at least do no violence to accepted physics and I would like briefly to mention one or two of these ideas.

Consider a cylinder full of gas. All the molecules of the gas, according to the kinetic theory, are dashing hither and thither at hundreds of metres a second, but because there are so many trillions of them all moving at random, the motions cancel out and there is no resultant tendency for movement. It is not impossible in theory that by the laws of chance all the molecules might decide to move in the same direction simultaneously, if one waited long enough. It would have to be quite a wait: according to my very rough calculations, there is about one chance in 10^{22} that all the molecules in a litre of gas would have even a small component of motion in common, and this is almost a "dead cert" against the even more astronomically remote possibility that they would have absolutely identical directions of movement.

Much of science and technology, however,

(Contd.)

depends on arranging things — stacking the cards, as it were — so that some operation, not normally probable, becomes in fact the one that actually happens. If therefore by some method of external persuasion one could induce all the molecules in a gas to co-operate and move in the same direction, presumably the container would move too, and everything that was attached to it. In the process, the gas would give up thermal energy and become very cold, so that one would have to supply heat to maintain the movement.

It is difficult to imagine a more attractive way of converting heat into motion, but I fancy that somewhere along the line that old bogey, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, will step in and show that it can't be done. The system would certainly be ideal for running spaceships among the inner planets where there is always plenty of heat available from the sun.

The idea was evolved about 1930 by John W. Campbell. Later he also produced a number of ingenious spaceships which operated on the principles of wave-mechanics and uncertainty. In the Uncertainty Theory, a particle cannot be said to have a fixed position in space but has a very small, though finite, probability of being anywhere in the universe. All you had to do, therefore, to get an instantaneous mode of transport, was to manipulate the Heisenberg equations until you were more likely to be somewhere else than where you started.

Finally, a word about ships which don't so much travel through space as make space move past them. It has often been suggested that two points which are a long way apart in our universe may be quite close in some higher, non-Euclidian or multidimensional space. As an example of this, consider the Möbius strip, the shape made by taking a strip of paper, giving it a twist of 180 degrees and then joining the ends — so that you have a loop with a kink in it. You can get from a point on the paper to a point separated from it by the thickness of the material either by going all the way round the loop, if one is restricted to movement on the surface of the material, or by traveling a fraction of an inch through the paper, if one is allowed to move off in another dimension. So the Andromeda Nebula may be a million light years away in our space — but only across the road if we know the right direction in which to move. Needless to say, many science fiction writers have found this direction and perhaps one day science may do the same.

(to be concluded.)

Wanted

Issues No. 1 and No. 3 of SLANT, published by V. A. Villa. Cash or trade SF mags.

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BOOKS (Contd.)

AFTER THE RAIN

by John Bowen
(Faber & Faber)

Science fiction, yes. If we can accept time travel or telepathy as science fiction we can take a deep breath and pass over the explanation offered here for the world-wide deluge that is the book's setting. The connoisseur of pseudo-scientific absurdities will appreciate it — atmospheric oxygen and hydrogen (sic) combining to form enough water to rain continuously for years and drown everything — but the rest of us can read on.

Never mind how, then, it rains. The breakdown of civilisation, long before the rising water has covered much land, is there — all told in a few pages, in a personal view of the disaster that shows us the whole world's fate by implication in its simple recollection of one man's survival. Because it is not the cataclysm itself that is the story, or the physical details of keeping alive and afloat to find dry land somewhere. The theme of the book is psychological.

A raft-load of ill-prepared survivors, drifting with no particular destination on an ocean that may be world-wide, cut off from whatever others may still be alive, are more than lost: the disappearance of the world they knew has left them confused and unable to cope with their problems intelligently. To all but the most self-reliant the prospect of having to build a new world from the beginning is too difficult to be faced as a real problem. Again, the experience of the disaster is so much contradictory to the assumptions and habits of thought normal in the world now lost, that these people have no confidence in their ability to face it.

In such a mental state, shocked into ineffectuality, and thrust into the unknown with nothing to give them self-confidence, they are at the mercy of the one survivor whose response has been different, and whose insanity gives him purpose and decision.

The rest of the nightmare voyage is a little over-simplified, perhaps, in some of its details. But it is a terrifying picture of the religious imagination at work, beginning with experiments in magic and building up a more and more elaborate set of beliefs and practices; making the chance collection of demoralised fugitives into a functioning society with faith to keep it going — faith in silly and degrading nonsense to prevent intelligent planning for the future. There is a way out, but we are left to wonder if it would be taken in time, or the chance missed.

Excellent sociological science fiction.

BOOKS

published in
England in 1957

- Aldiss, Brian W.:
"Space, Time and Nathaniel: pre-
science" 14 shorts. Front. (Faber)
- Barlow, James:
"One Half of the World" (Cassell)
- Bayliss, A.E.M and J.C., Eds.:
"Science in Fiction"
11 extracts, 1 short story.
Cloth wraps. (University of London)
- Bennett, Margot:
"The Long Way Back" (S.F. Book Club)
(First pub. 1954, Hodley Head.)
- Blish, James:
"Fallen Star" (Faber)
- Boland, John:
"White August" Paper. (Digit Books)
(First pub. 1955, Michael Joseph.)
- Bradbury, Ray:
"Fahrenheit 451" Paper. (Corgi Books)
(First Br. pub. 1954, Hart-Davis.)
- Bray, John Francis:
"A Voyage From Utopia"
(Ed., Intro. W. F. Lloyd-Frichard.)
Front. (Lawrence & Wishart)
(First Ed. Written 1841.)
- Christopher, John:
"The Death of Grass" (S.F. Book Club)
(First Pub. 1956, Michael Joseph.)
- Clarke, Arthur C.:
"The City and the Stars"
Paper. (Corgi Books)
(First pub. 1956, Frederick Muller.)
"The Deep Range" (F. Muller)
"Earthlight"
Paper. (Pan Books)
(First 1955, Frederick Muller.)
- Dick, Philip K.:
"World of Chance" (S.F. Book Club)
(First Br. pub. 1956, Rich & Cowan.)
- Dye, Charles:
"Prisoner in the Skull"
Paper. (Corgi Books)
(Previously in New Worlds, Nov. 30-32)
- Fagan, Henry A.:
"Ninya: A Fantasy of a Strange Little
World" Juvenile.
Ill. Harold Jones. (J. Cape)
- Finney, Jack:
"The Body Snatchers"
Paper. (Beacon Books)
- Frank, Pat:
"Winter Adam" Paper. (Panther Books)
(First Br. Pub. 1947, Gollancz.)
"Seven Days to Never" (Constable)
- Frankenhörpe, E. Lionel:
"The Waiting World"
Paper. (Rader Books)
- Hayle, Fred:
"The Black Cloud" (Heinemann)
- Hubbard, L. Ron:
"Return to Tomorrow"
Paper. (Panther Books)
- Leinster, Murray:
"Operations: Outer Space" (Graysen)
- MacDonald, John D.:
"Planet of the Dreamers"
Paper. (Viking Books)
(First Br. pub. 1954, Robert Hale.)
- Maine, Charles Eric:
"High Vacuum" (Hodder)
"The Isotope Man" (Hodder)
- Mantley, John:
"The Twenty-Seventh Day"
(First pub. 1956, Michael (S.F. Book Club)
Joseph.)
- Mars, Alistair:
"Atomic Submarines: a story of tomorrow"
(P. Elek)
- Maxwell, Edward:
"Quest for Pajaro" (Heinemann)
- Mead, Harold:
"Mary's Country" (M. Joseph)
- Merrill, Judith:
"Beyond the Barriers of Space and
Time" (S.F. Book Club)
- Oruchov, Vladimir:
"Platonov: An Adventure Through Pre-
history" Translated from the Russian
by Brian Pearce. Ill. E.J. Pagan
(Lawrence & Wishart)
- Ray, Rene:
"The Strange World of Planet X"
(H. Jenkins)
- Rain, Harold:
"Few Were Left" Paper. (Viking Books)
(First Br. pub. 1955, Methuen.)
- Richards, Guy:
"Brother Bear" (M. Joseph)
- Robinson, Frank M.:
"The Power" (Eyre & Spottiswoode)
- Russell, Eric Frank:
"Men, Martians and Machines"
Connected shorts. Paper. (Corgi Books)
"Three to Conquer" (Dobson)
(Previously in Antounding S.F., Jan-
March 1956, as "Call Him Dead".)
- Savage, Richard:
"When the Moon Died"
Paper. (Vard Lock)
(First pub. 1955.)
- Shute, Nevill:
"On the Beach" (Heinemann)
- Sturgeon, Theodore:
"Thunder and Bones: stories of science
fiction and fantasy"
8 shorts. (M. Joseph)

BOOKS OF THE YEAR (Contd.)

- Suddaby, Donald:
"Prisoners of Saturn: an interplanetary adventure"
Ill. Harold Jones. Juvenile.
(Bodley Head)
- Verna, Jules:
"Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea"
Front. (Ward Lock)
(First Br. Pub. 1873.)
- Walter, V. Grey:
"Further Outlook" (S.F. Book Club)
(First pub. 1956, Duckworth.)
- Walters, Hugh:
"Blast Off at Woomera"
Juvenile. (Faber)
- Vella, H. G.:
"The First Men in the Moon"
Paper. (Corgi Books)
(First pub. 1901.)
- Vyndham, John:
"The Midwich Cuckoos" (M. Joseph)

RUSSIAN

Two novels were published in English by Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow

- Obruchov, Vladimir:
"Plutonia"
Translated by Faiana Solasko, ed. by Margaret Hamilton. Ill. G. Nikolaky.
- Tolstol, Alexei:
"The Garin Death Ray"

NON-FICTION OF INTEREST

- Green, Roger Lancelyn:
"Into Other Worlds: Space-Flight in Fiction, from Lucian to Lewis"
(Abelard-Schuman)
Critical survey
- Moore, Patrick:
"Science and Fiction"
Critical. (Harrap)
- Eastwood, W. (Ed.):
"Science and Literature: the literary relations of science and technology: an anthology"
Odd collection of factual and fictional material with some scientific theme.
(Macmillan)

INTO OTHER WORLDS

by Roger Lancelyn Green
(Abelard-Schuman)

Not enough work has been done yet for an adequate history of science fiction to be written, and there is little to be said for most of the books which have attempted to describe all or part of the field. But there is a great deal to be said for this work.

Anticipations of space flight, the most obvious branch of early science fiction and the most interesting today, have been considered before, and quite a lot is known of their evolution. But in this book Green has for the first time brought together all the most important early examples, described them intelligently and let them speak for themselves in well selected quotations at some length, and noted their significance. This time an important part of the field is dealt with in a manner that can be taken seriously.

There are faults, certainly. Having no real knowledge of modern science fiction, Green's account breaks down in confusion at the turn of the century. He has wisely not tried to say very much about modern writers, but what he does say would have been better omitted. He treats C. S. Lewis seriously, for example, taking his fantasies and David Lindsay's "A Voyage to Arcturus" as outstanding modern work. He misses the point in Olaf Stapledon's "Last and First Men" (not apparently having read "Star Maker") even after quoting from Sir Humphry Davy, of all people, a striking anticipation of Stapledon's views concluding: "The Universe is everywhere full of life, but the modes of this life are infinitely diversified, and yet every form of it must be enjoyed and known by every spiritual nature before the consummation of all things." And some scarcely relevant children's books are mentioned.

But these faults do not detract from the interest of the book in its survey from Lucian to Vella and Burroughs, which throughout is both entertaining and sound. You can find here real information about such legendary books as Astor's "A Journey in Other Worlds", Cronin's "A Plunge into Space" and Greg's "Across the Zodiac", and a good idea of their qualities. Such minor defects as failing to identify Joseph Atterly as George Tucker only emphasise the author's first-hand acquaintance with the material.

Green states his purpose as "...to share the delights of half-forgotten fancies with readers who can then turn with a new interest to the rich harvest of the present." Surely the first object of the literary historian.

Highly recommended.