



ISSUE - 5
JUNE
1941

REVIEW

ASF May '41

COVER NOVELET this month is Bob Heinlein's "Universe", a great NOVA tale of a civilization built down the generations by the descendants of the crew of a gigantic interstellar exploratory ship which missed its goal - a fascinating story - JWC informs us, via his Editorial on Heinlein's graph of Future History, that Bob's working on a sequel. Anson MacDonald, who is, as you already know from June FIDO, Heinlein again, is responsible for the other novelet - "Solution Unsatisfactory" - which poses the unanswerable question of how to form a defence against, and how to best control the inevitable irresistible weapon! Eric F. Russell hits the high-spot of the shorts with "Jay Score", he keeps you guessing right down to the last paragraph with this tale of a very tough native of Earth. Harry Walton is again present, this month with a somewhat complicated, but enjoyable incident in subspace - "Subcruiser". "Liar" is contributed by Isaac Asimov - concerning Herbie, the robot who couldn't hurt anyone's feelings! The remaining short's not really worthy of mention, being the worst that JWC has let in for many moons, a Vic Phillips and Scott Roberts collaboration under the title of "Fish Story" - very appropriate! The serial is thus left for consideration - L. Sprague de Camp's "Stolen Dormouse". This is a novel built on the same basic ideas as a serial he ran in the early UNKNOWN, "Divide and Rule!" Tale of the highly aristocratic feudal world of the future - and of the reconciliation of the parties to the feud - all hanging on the fate of the stolen semi-corpse of an engineer in suspended animation. Whacky in the true de Camp manner, but a great, and humorous tale. Illustrations by Kramer, Rogers - specially on Universe - and Schneeman. NO -- there's no article!!

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JUST enough space again this month, to note that this maglet is perpetrated at 31, Bexwell Road, Downham Market, Norfolk, under the supervision of Don J. Doughty. Kindly duplicated, and distributed with the FIDO mailing each month by J. Michael Rosenblum.

NOW I want to make an appeal to all you kind-hearted fans - yes, I know that you are hard-hearted, but maybe the next guy isn't, and this is meant for such as he. IF you can think up anything at all stf-ictional, such as a short article, or anything in the way of poesy, and even if you don't think that it's very interesting, just bung it along to the address above. I'll take all you have to send - other people may be interested in it. As you may remember, this sheet was started with the object of being devoted to ASTOUNDING, the undoubted leader of the Stfield, but it was obvious that such a policy, having such narrow limits, could not hold up very long, wherefore the sheet has evolved to the usual chatty (I hope!), and generalised stf-sheet that you hold to-day. Without your help and support in the way of material it will deteriorate to nothingness -- if you'd rather have it that way, well, just don't send anything! DonJD

RAMBLING thru' the letters that have arrived chez moi since the last ish of TT, I find that Jack Gibson is again present, asking, "What do you think of this Radiolocation? Can it be the humble beginning of the meteor-detector so beloved of sf-authors? Can it? I think so." I think so too, Jack, and so do several other people. In fact JWC - or McCann, if you prefer it that way - had a filler on that subject in an ASF a few months ago, can't find the darn issue at the moment, asking the same question - and that, lads, before we had heard a word about it! Ken Bulmer has been chasing ASF backwards, and has "run across a few copies of late 1935 and beginning 1936 Just reading BLUE MAGIC by Charles Willard Diffin. Boy, what a story! Now, if Campbell were to get some more of that style of action and plot, he would bring AST right up the top, where, admittedly, it is, but there is some mighty strong competition creeping up...The whole story has, well I must say it, an atmosphere, an aura surrounding it that is just the sort of thing I lap up. It has an indefinable something that brings it above the rut of stuff appearing to-day. I wonder what has become of CWDiffin lately? He's not, by any chance unfortunately dead, like so many SFists of late?" Gunner Ted Carnell has a word or two to say on the subject of UNKNOWN - "Of all the trials and tribulations magazine sf has gone through since 1926, nothing has affected me so bitterly as the news of UNKNOWN going large-size. I read it in FN when I reached home on thursday, and it almost turned my leave sour! I've been opposed to large size always. The size is too cumbersome to carry comfortably, read comfortably, or file decently. They look like Sob Romances or something, carted round by a love-sick swain.... maybe I'm allergic to the size, but I virtually creep all over at the thought of UNK lowering its dignity to such a level." A closing shot from Eric Needham, somewhat of an anti-climax, after the tone of several other letters on the subject - "Somehow I didn't think so much of SLAN: it is what I would call a perfectly pointless story..." And that after I had a very hot anti-van Vogtian - John Morgan - converted to a very pro-vV with the help of SLAN. List thou to John - "I can only admit that SLAN is just about the best SF story I've had the pleasure to read for a long time '""' one must give honour where it is due, and there you have it." *****
***** TT's TT -- Tittle-Tattle
**** ** from Frank Mills

ASTOUNDING and UNKNOWN: As ASF gets more Unknownish every month, Unknown changes its title to Unknown WORDDS. This brings two problems to the fore. I. Is Unknown going to feature sfn, as its title seems to suggest, or is it going to continue with its present policy??? At the moment a lot of stories that Campbell puts in ASF are really more suitable for UN, so does this mean that UN & ASF are going to change places, one publishing sfn and science-disguised fantasy, and the other pure sfn, or what??? II How are the BREs going to turn out now that UN is going large-sized? With the paper shortage I certainly do not think that we will get a large-size reprint; so that leaves two alternatives. Either there will be no more Unknown BRE, or it will continue with its present size. Both are about as bad, but if we do see something of UN it will be better than nothing -- however, I have my doubts.....

THRILLING WONDER STORIES: With the April issue this mag. enters a policy fairly similar to that of STARTLING. It will feature a long complete novel and about four shorts every month. The first, in this issue, is by that great classic writer of sfn - Henry Kuttner! However, his story is better than the usual tripe that he turns out, and it is illustrated by Virgil Finlay. The supporting shorts were fairly good, and according to the Editor, John Taine is signed up for a novel - propaganda? Well that's all for now, and I hope that you have enjoyed this gossip column. (This is not by me - and is muchly cut.D)