fantastic worlds

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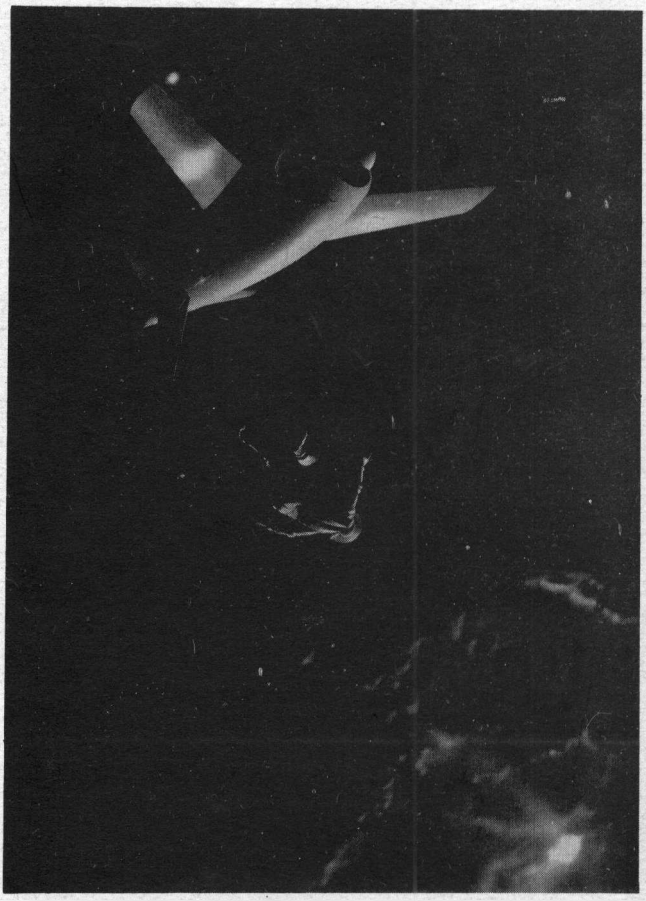
stories, articles, poems, reviews



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The FUTURE

Tetsu Yano (Japan), F. J. Ackerman (U.S.A.)

By Masamori Kojima

SWIRLS OF monstrous forms, river imps, (*kappa*) and horned, red-faced devils (*oni*) can be found in Japanese imaginative fiction writing, but none of these creatures ever come from outer space in atomic-powered rocketships. For Japan has no science fiction.

A 29-year-old news photographer in Kobe, browsing through a bookstore and U.S. magazines left by GI's, picked up and read an issue of "Imagination," full of weird fantasies so familiar to U.S. readers. It was a revelation of universal proportions to Tetsu Yano. With stars in his eyes, he wrote to the magazine in New York, asking for correspondence and "prozines" (that's how those in the know refer to "fantasy magazines").

Forrest J. Ackerman, science fiction author, literary agent and subscriber to every "prozine" published in the U.S., saw Yano's letter and sent him "prozines" and notes of "fandom" (that's how those in the know refer to readers of "prozines")

Within weeks, letters became telegrams. For Yano was determined to learn about this fiction by coming to the U.S.

Yano's burning addiction to science fantasy is immediately understandable to fandom. Fandom clubs all over this country meet regularly every week. Forrest Ackerman, years ago, learned Esperanto just so that he would have a means of communication with international fandom. Unquestionably, the spirit is close in this fraternity.

Science fantasy is a broad and tolerant area where all things are possible. Naturally, it attracts people who would not think it strange to meet one-eyed blobs of jelly from Mars. Their pride is to meet strangeness without fear.

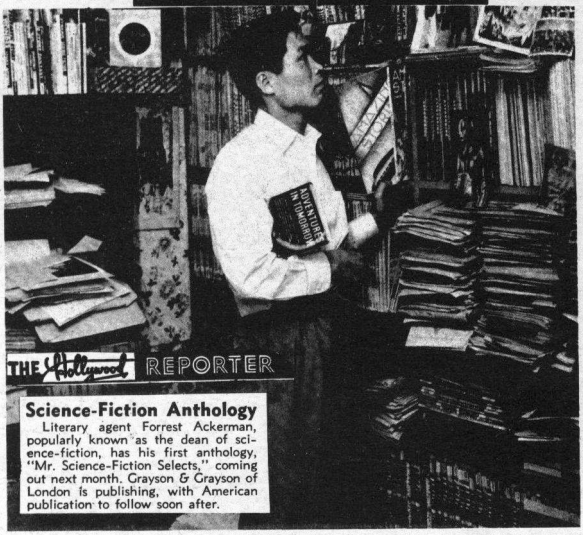

Photo by Jack Iwata

SCIENCE fiction convert Tetsu Yano of Kobe, Japan, aprowl in the library of his Los Angeles host, fantasy writer Forrest Ackerman. Yano, a photographer, wants to introduce atomic-powered spaceships and one-eyed blobs of jelly to Japanese readers.

Yano, a graduate of Chuo University and a news and architecture photographer, decided — after he tasted the heady, futuristic nectar of science fiction — to invest every yen of his own for the trip. Ackerman, though he knew Yano only through letters, willingly sponsored him, in the best tradition of fandom. Yano was greeted in Los Angeles by Ackerman and his wife, and was invited to stay with them.

Meanwhile, Yano's wife, Teruko, and baby Kumiko attended to the family photography shop in Kobe.

The Ackerman home is crammed with science fiction books. Ackerman, in fact, had to buy his house when his collection, which began 27 years ago, became too much for a seven-room apartment and three garages.

Each day, Yano would read all that he could off the Ackerman library shelves, always full of questions readily answered by Ackerman who does his work at home. At night they combed the movie pages for science fantasy movies, new, old, bad and good, and went anywhere in and around Los Angeles to catch one.

After a little more than a month's stay in the U.S., Yano translated into Japanese a fantasy novel, "We're Off to Mars," by Joe Gibson. Some words difficult to translate were "space ship" and "robot." Japanese readers will soon let him know if they understand what Yano was trying to tell them.

When his tour of the Ackerman library was completed, Yano returned to Japan to promote science fiction through translations. Wife Teruko will have to continue tending their photo shop because the Future has Caught Up with Tetsu Yano.

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an experiment in hallucination

paul preger is a cornell graduate and columbia m. a. who has, among other occupations, invented a new type of bamboo flute and a spoon for feeding infants, run a merry-go-round, and been a free-lance photographer. at present he is teaching at a private school in florida. here he demonstrates that the manner and technique of henry james, who, it should not be forgotten, wrote a number of excellent fantasies, can be profitably utilized by contemporary writers.

by paul preger

Illustration by JERRI

DR. FREEMAN EXAMINED THE MIRROR which hung over his dresser in order to reassure himself that his face was suitably expressionless, that no particular emotional qualities could be discerned in it, that the mouth, for example, was neither pouting nor tight-lipped, and the region of the eyes had neither an angry frown nor a depressed, sleepy expression, that his face, in other words, was the face of a healthy, resolved individual because no chronic emotions were expressed therein. It was broad and strong, conforming, on the whole, to the Alpine type, with a large, straight forehead, and the head was high and wide, allowing for a great deal of "cranial capacity," as Freeman often expressed it, especially in the frontal and parietal regions. Although his hair was now entirely gray, his moustache was still black; his eyes were cold, gray eyes, which the glasses, with their minus-four diopter lenses, made to appear smaller than they actually were. To be sure, he thought, it is a perfect mask --an accepting, not a rejecting mask--but by all odds a mask. He brought his right fist down upon the palm of his left hand, and walked into the office determined to begin work on the experiment at once, convinced that he was in the best possible frame of mind for it.

Now that he had moved the couch, the desk, the armchair and all his books out of the office, and nothing remained within the four green walls except a white sheet which hung in front of the window and which was the only prop required for his experiment, this room, where hundreds of patients had come to Dr. Freeman for help, each one of them ridden by fear and self-deception,


JERRI

and where Dr. Freeman had watched them calmly and objectively, and listened to their thoughts and dreams with the utmost scientific detachment and genuine interest, and gradually guided most of them back to life, this room now seemed to be the most fitting place for Freeman to perform his experiment. He closed the door and sat down on the dark, green carpet, facing the white sheet he had hung from the top of the window, and removed his glasses.

THE REAL ISSUE HERE was freedom, he reminded himself, for if his own imagination were as free as he believed it was, free of every kind of fear, free of infantile preoccupations, of guilt and hatred, and free of all care and need in the world of outer reality, might he not be able to create in his imagination a world which was complete and believable, perhaps far better than the world he now lived in, perhaps a world which would contain values and meanings and concepts far different from those which necessity and outer experience had forced upon him; and at the same time a world which was under his conscious control, designed and operated by his free will and capable of being totally dissolved at any moment if its existence interfered with the rest of the doctor's life?

Dr. Freeman sat cross-legged on the carpet, his hands clasped loosely in his lap, his shirt sleeves rolled halfway up, and he was staring at the white sheet, holding his eyes perfectly still, fixed upon one large area of the sheet. He was not feeling serious. Seriousness involves a certain lack of objectivity, and more than anything else he had to be objective about this. He was detached, light-hearted, almost amused.

In his mind he traced upon the sheet, over and over again, with as much conscious control and clarity as possible, the outline of a tall, graceful and lyrical female figure. He wanted her to look like Venus in Botticelli's painting, "The Birth of Venus," and as he carefully traced her outline now in his mind, he was creating her in the same pose, standing on the same shell, just as she appears in the painting. The dreaming, wistful face, with the watery eyes and the sensual mouth, the long, blonde hair, the light-skinned, beautifully proportioned body, the altogether feminine character of the woman, the relaxed yet delicate carriage, had impressed him so deeply when he first saw the painting that ever since he had kept her image in his mind as the paragon of female beauty. It was precisely this attraction she held for him that endangered the success of his experiment, but he had deliberately chosen, as his first step, to contrive a hallucination of her, knowing that if he could manage this much, in a matter-of-fact, objective way, if he could accomplish this much without ever allowing the project to degenerate into a sexual fantasy or to serve as the fulfillment of a wish, then certainly he could carry his investigations further; eventually he would be able to utilize all the powers of his relatively free imagination, perhaps to create an entire world, maintaining complete, conscious control of what he was doing, all the time.

After twenty minutes, the area of the sheet contained within Dr. Freeman's imagined outline had begun to darken. He had not yet achieved a sharply defined area but it did already conform to the approximate proportions of Venus, being rather long and curvaceous. The head, neck, body, arms and legs were definitely

beginning to emerge from the white background, and this emergence was occurring in regular, rhythmical beats; one moment the entire silhouette would darken to gray and become a little clearer, and the next moment it would fade again. But every so often the emergence would proceed one step further, and the amount of fading would diminish, and in this way the hallucination progressed. Occasionally a faint reddish tint would suffuse the area, almost as if the hallucination were being filled with its life's blood.

Dr. Freeman had to admit that even these few visible results had come a little sooner than expected, but certainly that was nothing to worry about. The first real obstacle he encountered was the fact that he was growing sleepy, also sooner than expected. The temptation to fall asleep right where he sat became quite disturbing, and the temptation to get up and denounce the entire project as folly of the most absurd sort, as a mere lark which should be dropped immediately and forgotten forever, was even stronger. To counteract these temptations he made every effort to concentrate more intensely on the beautiful vision he was attempting to project onto the sheet. He reminded himself that the fatigue was undoubtedly caused by the fact that he was reversing the usual sequence of perception, that is to say, he was transforming an idea into an actual visual sensation, whereas in our daily lives we normally transfer visual sensations into ideas. Ordinarily this type of reversal occurs only during sleep--in order to produce dreams--and therefore it was probably this direct association between hallucinating and sleep which made him sleepy.

Without looking away from the embryonic image, he stood up to stretch, to flex the muscles of his arms and legs, and then he decided to remain standing for awhile. He felt an urge to move around or even lie down and close his eyes, but he was determined that nothing should interfere with the experiment. With his hands in his side pockets, his head slightly lowered, his eyes opened a little wider than they would ordinarily be, he stood there, tall and broad, staring at the sheet, and now he was able to see, quite clearly, as if it were painted on the sheet, Venus in her entirety, standing in full color, on the enormous sea shell coasting toward the shore, her hair flowing behind her, she in all her naked glory. The vision lasted only a moment and promptly faded out, but it was a welcome sign of real progress, a reassuring occurrence which gave to Dr. Freeman the certainty he needed that the experiment was running along in excellent style.

OUTSIDE IT WAS GETTING DARKER, and the winter sun, poor imitation of its real self, would soon be snuffed out by the turning of the frost-coated city. Dr. Freeman had no intention of turning on the lights. Seated on the carpet again, he strove to resuscitate the momentary vision he had just achieved. He had reached the stage where the outline, the silhouette, was clearly defined on the sheet, and the coloring and inner details were still developing, fading in and out rhythmically.

And then there was a moment when he closed his eyes and stopped; he froze in his tracks. He suddenly had become aware of his attitude at that moment, and it was not at all what it should have been, for he was already too serious, too strained

over the matter, too personally involved in the work, even though the experiment was hardly an hour old. He had not maintained the necessary degree of objectivity, or any of the lightness and humor he hoped to maintain. Fortunately the mere awareness, the immediate realization of this shortcoming, was enough to correct it, for the situation amused him, made him laugh at himself for his carelessness, made him even laugh at the grotesqueness of the whole experiment, and once again he was able to resume the more self-conscious, studied objectivity that had characterized his workmanship during the first half-hour of hallucinating.

AN HOUR WENT BY. Night crept over the city, and Dr. Freeman worked steadily, contriving with great care his replica of Botticelli's Venus, silent and motionless in a room that was now almost totally dark, engrossed in a process of creation that was nearly as astounding as Creation itself. Another hour went by--and Dr. Freeman would never have realized it had it not been for his wrist-watch. The experiment had grown more and more intriguing, not to say utterly captivating, and the actual method had become less fatiguing, less of a strain, after he had accustomed himself to it. Time, always a hostile stranger from the point of view of the unconscious mind, was hardly able to survive at all under conditions such as these, where space had no particular limits and motion existed only insofar as Dr. Freeman desired it to exist.

Before he had a chance to delight in the miracle, before it even occurred to him to stop and stand back, as it were, and consider his work as a whole entity and feel proud of it, before he even "awoke" from the semi-hypnotic state into which his hallucinating had put him, she was completed, she was real, actually standing there in the room with him, a magnificent vision, more than that--an ineluctable presence, a human being. She stood now not on her shell but on the carpet of Dr. Freeman's office, as if she had already been born, thrust from the white background into the room, from the ocean onto this shore.

His vision stood before him in the dark room, dark, that is, except for the vision, which was exceedingly bright, and for just a small amount of light that came in from the window from behind the sheet, and it seemed to him that she was the epitome of beauty, the very meaning of the word, and that she was a creature from another plane of existence, a plane of existence that no human being had been aware of until now. She stood perfectly relaxed, as if she were resting against the air, her long blonde hair coming down to her hips and swept to one side, her face expressing imperishable bliss, as if her life were one of permanent sensual pleasure, yet mingled with all this, somehow, a feeling of vague sadness and melancholy. Her body, full-bosomed, ripe and lyrical in its shape, seemed ready to receive but not actively inviting.

Dr. Freeman was not at all hesitant about admitting to himself that his achievement was a splendid one. Nature herself had never created so much beauty in one piece! These hitherto unexplored powers, these potentialities of the free imagination--what strange regions of the unknown might they lead him to next? The restless creator rose from his sitting position and came a little nearer to his masterpiece. Another idea had just occurred

to him, an idea which warranted profound consideration.

What if he desired her? What if he, who had helped hundreds of patients to free themselves of their illusions and to live without fear in the real world, he who had defended reality as the ultimate good, should now desire and love this woman who in reality did not even exist? What if he, the objective, disciplined scientist, should now allow his true creation of the free intellect, his purely intellectual vision, to degenerate into a dream of pleasure, decline into a mere sex fantasy, a substitute for living? What then?

There was no telling what might happen, no possible basis for making a prediction here. The problem would have to be investigated scientifically, perhaps as the next step of his experiment. But could he, by any stretch of the imagination, by any torturing of the limits of common sense, call this hypothetical next step which had just occurred to him a scientific experiment? That would only be using the idea of experimentation as a high-sounding excuse for an endeavor which any respectable psychoanalyst would have considered deviate to the point of being lurid.

Then suppose it was not scientific, and suppose it was sheer decadence, pure, undisguised self-indulgence. Need he, the man whose imagination was free of all guilt, have any qualms about this? Was there anything to stop him? Who, after all, was performing this miracle, Dr. Freeman, or an abstract set of notions about science? To the devil with logic and reason and all experimental disciplines, he would do just as he pleased! Furthermore, he had already completed the hallucination in a thoroughly scientific style, he had already proved that it could be done, so why not enjoy the fruits of his highly skilled labor this very moment?

Dr. Freeman, the disciplined scientist, had now been totally usurped by Dr. Freeman the impulsive humanist. Impulse had rebelled against thought and had thrown every last hesitation to the winds, and the bold experimenter, harboring not the smallest trace of ambivalence, approached his lovely vision with open arms. He was on the verge of embracing her, experiencing his first physical contact with her, when lo! she stepped back suddenly, moved away at the last possible moment, as if she were now capable of moving on her own volition. In moving away from her lover she had turned slightly to one side, so that now she stood with the sheet to her left, not behind her as it had been.

DR. FREEMAN'S REACTION to this phenomenon was one of wide-eyed astonishment; he had the distinct feeling that here was something which had happened quite without his help. He had not caused her to move. He was not conscious of having willed anything of the sort. For a moment he became the doctor again, the critical-minded scientist, and he examined her from head to foot, as a doctor might quickly scrutinize a patient who was entering his office. It was exactly as if he had forgotten that she was just a figment of his imagination, forgotten this completely, for the moment, and was regarding her as a living mortal whose behavior had become pathological.

But very quickly another wave of passion broke loose from his heart and the blood went bounding along his arteries and veins. The beauty that Venus possessed had put a painless end to all of Dr. Freeman's intellectual leanings, and once again the profound

creator gave himself up to his passions, pursued her like a youthful lover, and this time, too, the magnificent visual hallucination refused to be touched, refused to be perceived by any of the other four senses. In moving away from him she again turned to her left, so that now their relative positions with reference to the white background were quite the reverse of what they had been originally--Venus was facing the sheet, regarding her birthplace with utterly indifferent eyes, while the doctor, who had followed her as she turned, stood with the very womb his imagination had fathered now directly behind him.

DR. FREEMAN'S STREAM OF THOUGHT, normally a clear, gentle stream, suddenly transformed itself into a sea of raging confusion. First he tried to laugh, tried to think of the turn his experiment had taken as a tremendous practical joke which his unconscious mind had perpetrated on his consciousness. He tried to see humor in his situation--he, a skillful and successful psychoanalyst, wasting his idle hours chasing after day-dreams until he was so run down that he could hardly distinguish fact from fancy! But humor failed to relieve the situation, failed completely, for at precisely that moment he heard Venus breathing, saw her entire thorax expanding and contracting, positively heard the air traveling in and out of it.

He was left now with only the last feeble vestiges of his own reasoning power as his sole recourse. Exactly what had gone wrong? The woman, he reminded himself, was only a figment of his imagination. Obviously it was he who had been responsible for her movements, he reasoned, but why was he not conscious of this? Why did it seem to be so certain that she had moved by herself, autonomously? Had he fallen asleep somewhere in the middle of his experiment? He pinched himself, struck himself in the face, even jumped up and down several times, but alas, he remained in precisely the same predicament. His intellectual vision had declined into a dream of pleasure, and how his dream of pleasure was, in turn, declining into a nightmare of horror.

Dr. Freeman's desperate attempt to reason his way back to clarity and self-control had scarcely gotten under way when a new shock, a new horror, dealt this noble attempt its final, crushing blow. The very foundations of Dr. Freeman's sanity were turned upside down by this new sensation.

He felt himself being moved backward, felt himself being pushed from the front and pulled from the rear, until he was compelled to step backward, by a force which he could neither see nor understand. Something enormous and merciless was being applied to every inch of his body, pushing him backward powerfully toward the sheet, drawing him backward into the sheet, until suddenly he realized that the sheet was no longer an ordinary piece of bed linen, but a mysteriously fluid substance, a white mist, a vapor, into the center of which he was being driven. He watched the terrifying vapor slowly surround and envelop him. It passed in front of his eyes, and before it became too thick he could see his Venus through it, delicately poised in the middle of the room, luxuriant, and she was watching the occurrence, calmly looking on while her creator was disappearing into the indescribable vapor, fading into the very regions out of which she had been conjured. He could see a smile forming on her face, a smile of mockery, almost a sneer. Then the white va-

por became too dense, thickened before his eyes until he could no longer see her through it, until he could no longer see anything except whiteness all around him.

Where was he? What was happening to the phenomenon he had come to know as life? He felt as if he were about to go out any moment, like a candle in the wind.

IN THE DARK ROOM that had once been Dr. Freeman's office Venus, The Goddess of Beauty, stood alone--no one was there now to take notice of her beauty. She watched the fluid whiteness collect and condense, and finally transform itself back into an ordinary piece of bed linen, an ordinary sheet. Then she switched on the lights and pulled the sheet down from the ledge above the window and wrapped it around her body until it gradually became a white dress that she was wearing. Her mission on this earth was a long and difficult one, but now, for the millionth time, she was ready to accomplish this mission.

---

mutant

by garth bentley

Had I a second thumb, another eye,
An extra pair of arms, the world might guess
The unsuspected truth--the secret I
Now guard with unremitting watchfulness
Because those things man can not understand
Fill him with hatred and with morbid fear.
But mental powers bear no outward brand
And man has not discovered we are here.

Today I am content, unknown to stay,
A member of a newer, stronger race,
While patiently my kind awaits the day
When man will fade and we will take his place.
Unknown, we watch him wage his foolish wars;
We see his culture drowned in human blood;
And, while his eyes look upward to the stars,
His feet sink ever deeper in the mud.

A month, a year, a decade yet may pass
Before man reaps the harvest he has sown.
The sands each day grow lower in the glass.
The die is cast. . . . It will not be re-thrown.
The sun is setting on the day of man,
For this is nature's Law: The old strain dies
When it has served its purpose in her plan
And, from its ashes, shall the new arise!

cosmic conflagration

to our notion, the function of the critical article should be to assist the reader in forming a deeper insight into the work in question and in achieving a fuller appreciation of it. we have chosen this article by bob silverberg, editor of that fine amateur publication spaceship, to begin our series of critical articles, because it fulfills those ends excellently well.

by bob silverberg

THE TEN NOVELS OF OLAF STAPLEDON fall readily into two distinct classes. One is a rather small group, his conventional fiction. It consists of just three works: the masterful Odd John, the wartime Sirius, and the quite dreadfully dull and nearly posthumous A Man Divided. All of these can be construed as orthodox novels: they have characters of considerable dimensions, and plots.

The remaining books fall into some entirely different category, which can only be described--in terms of itself--as Stapledonian fiction. This group includes that truly cosmic-minded trio, Last and First Men, Last Men in London, and The Starmaker, as well as most of Stapledon's later fiction: Darkness and the Light, Death into Life, Old Man in New World, and The Flames.

Several years ago, Fantasy Publishing Company gathered up three short Stapledon works and bundled them together in one three-dollar volume, making them available in the United States for the first time. They are The Flames, Death into Life, and Old Man in New World. All are apparently photographic copies of the original English editions, judging by the typeface. The book totals 282 pages, with the first novel occupying the first 88, the second taking 170 pages, and the last only thirty.

Of these The Flames is the most intriguing. It is one of the slimmest of Stapledon's works, hardly of the same physical magnitude as his earlier, more famous novels. Despite its lack of mass, though, it poses as much of an intellectual challenge as any of his full-length novels. The Flames can be interpreted on a number of levels: as a novel of science fiction, in which case

it is notably deficient in story interest and action; as an allegorical treatment of the conflict between philosophies, in which case it is phrased in remarkably roundabout terms; or as a depiction of alien philosophy, set in the framework of a novel for the sake of convenience.

The story is told in something less than an unusual fashion: the narrator, only identified by the nickname of "Thos" (short for Thomas--doubting Thomas) has received a bulky manuscript from Cass, a friend of his, bearing the address of a "well-known mental home." Thos proceeds to quote the manuscript, which occupies 62 of the novel's 79 pages.

Cass, it seems, had been afflicted with ESP, which Stapledon refers to as "unusual powers." He has gone into seclusion in order to study his powers of foresight and para-normal ability and finds himself in a lonely part of England.

He discovers an old, disused mine and in it stumbles across a small stone. Cass picks it up, then flings it away. Immediately he is seized by "an agony of desire and alarm" and locates the stone. Considerably alarmed, he brings the stone back to the farmhouse.

There he muses over it--just a bit of igneous rock, he thinks, probably longing to be back in the primeval fire from which it came. He throws the stone into his furnace, and piles up coal to keep the fire hot.

> Suddenly a minute white flame appeared to issue from the stone itself. It grew, till it was nearly an inch tall; and stood for a moment, in the draught of the fire. It was the most remarkable flamelet that I had ever seen, a little incandescent leaf or seedling, or upstanding worm, leaning in the breeze. Its core seemed to be more brilliant than its surface, for the dazzling interior was edged with a vague, yellowish aura. Near the flame's tip, surprisingly, was a ring or bulging collar of darkness, but the tip itself was a point of brilliant peacock blue. Certainly this was no ordinary flame, though it fluttered and changed its shape in the air-current much like any other flame.

And so Stapledon introduces one of the most thoroughly alien conceptions of an alien being: an intelligent flame.

THE FLAME WHICH EMERGES from the stone and contacts Cass's mind by extra-sensory means is depicted sympathetically at first. It comes into contact almost immediately with some sort of race-mind of the flames--the old gestalt concept cropping up again--and then begins to narrate a mournful story to Cass.

Billions of years ago, a civilization of these immortal flames flourished in the heart of the sun, living a life of contemplation and unity. It was no placid Utopia, though, for even they had to struggle against the elements: they had to fight the furious energy-storms of the photosphere, and sometimes they were flung upward for thousands of miles by solar currents (the currents of space!) into an ice-cold region which destroyed them. Life for them, although happy, was a constant struggle to remain in the habitable levels of the sun.

Stapledon then describes at great length the intellectual and spiritual ideals of the solar civilization. And then he tells of the great catastrophe which overtook the people of the sun after they had blended together to form the gestalt racial mind.

> The solar upheaval that produced the planets was something completely unexpected and bewildering. For us who were exiled, it was the great and tragic turning point of individual life, and of history. The vast protuberance which was plucked out from the sun's surface carried with it many thousands of millions of us. Quite suddenly our familiar world was lost.

The flame tells of the sadness of the exile: the disruption of the race-mind, the loss of contact with those who remained on the sun, the slow deterioration of the planet-bound exiles as their worlds cooled. Cass's flame describes the final outcome, with most of the flames forming spores and hiding in rocks, while others managed temporary existences in volcanoes and, after the coming of man, in man's fires.

The flame goes on to speak of the strivings of his people, and of their hardships. He attempts to build up Cass's confidence, and does so well for a while. But Cass begins to suspect the good intentions of his fiery friend when the flame begins speaking of the aid his people will require of man.

The flame attempts to give Cass some idea of the advanced spiritual stage of his people and then, thinking he has won Cass's confidence, makes his request: a reservation covering a few hundred square miles, in Central Africa or South America, an area of "rather more than furnace heat," with the high temperature maintained by atomic energy. After a tolerable home had been created for them on Earth, the flames would continue their psychical research and, in return, would offer mankind the spiritual guidance necessary to lead it away from its inevitable self-destruction.

> Like so many other intelligent kinds, scattered up and down the cosmos [the flame says], your very nature itself dooms you to find power and never to find wisdom, save through external help. As one of your writers has said, man is only a pterodactyl of the spirit, not a true bird, perfected for flight.
>
> We have a vision, he said, of this planet as a true symbiotic organism, supported equally by your kind and my kind, united in mutual need and mutual cherishing. What a glorious world-community we shall together form!

The flame attempts to influence Cass to tell the world of the existence of the sentient flames, in order to have the reservation set aside. Cass, meanwhile, fears domination by the flames, and fights an internal conflict.

While he is deciding whether or not to accept the word of the flame, the fire grows low. As he reaches for the coal scuttle, he thinks of an act of independence which will demonstrate to himself that he is not the helpless instrument of the flame. He reaches for a jug of drinking water and suddenly flings it at the flame, which vanishes in steam and smoke. There is silence.

> Christ! There is no silence like the silence when one has murdered a friend.

THIS IS ONE OF THE FEW MOMENTS of emotion in Stapledon's unconventional fiction. The flame, a life that anteceded the creation of the Earth, is suddenly blotted out in a shower of drinking water. The death of the flame is jarring; it ends the first episode of the story.

Now there is a swift reverse. The story becomes a confession of a madman, in which Cass is virtually self-damning in indicating his insanity.

> Since that day I have had almost no sleep. Every night the accursed flames have tortured me with shame and guilt. At first they did not speak to me at all. They were simply present, and silent. And they seared my mind with love of my killed friend, and with bitter regret. Later they did speak. They professed to have learnt to understand my behavior, to sympathize with my motives, to respect my integrity. And they implored me to help both our races.
>
> But by day I have worked resolutely to defeat the flames. I have peered into a thousand fires, looking for the characteristic bright and slender cone. Whenever I have seen one I have killed it. And after every murder I have felt my soul sink deeper into the pit. Yet I know, Christ, I know, that I must be loyal to humanity. I must do my utmost to destroy those plausible fiends that intend man's ruin.

Cass goes on crusading, writing letters to newspapers, snooping around factories with furnaces, looking for the flames. He enters a great locomotive factory in the guise of a journalist looking for copy.

> I had telepathic evidence that the furnaces were infected with the living flames, whom it was my mission to destroy.

He discovers a colony of the flames living in the blast-furnace of the factory and attempts to turn a hose on them. At that point he is seized and placed--rightly so--in the local asylum.

AND NOW BEGINS THE FINAL EPISODE of Cass's story. Cass adds a few lines exhorting Thos to join the fight against the flames, and closes with an invitation for Thos to visit him at the asylum.

Thos adds an epilogue, describing his visit to the mental home. He finds Cass looking well, and then is told that the publication of the manuscript must be stopped. And there the irrepressible cosmic Stapledon intervenes for a dizzying final burst.

It seems that the flames continued to keep in touch with Cass, and gradually persuaded him to outgrow his former hostility. The terrestrial flames, their intelligence increased by the heat of the air-raids of World War II, have come to make telepathic contact with the solar survivors, who have continued their own civilization for the two billion years since the separation.

The racial mind had formed anew and had made contact with other flame populations living in distant stars. Together, they had welded into one cosmical mind, a single-minded community of many diverse worlds.

> The cosmical mind, he said, was alone, and in great need of love. Apparently these age-long explorations had brought increasing evidence of theism; or increasing awareness of something felt to be "the divine presence"; or an increasing promise that some universal Lover would presently be made known. In earlier ages the minded worlds had carefully avoided any kind of metaphysical belief; so well was it realized that finite intelligence was incapable of conceiving any deep truth about reality. But under the influence of "the new promise," the life of every individual in every awakened world was now oriented to this bright star of certainty, or seeming certainty; of "doubt-less faith," to use Cass's own words. The

> longing for the final culminating revelation became a universal passion. In all the worlds, the hosts of individual spirits waited with baited [sic!] breath for the consummation of the union of the cosmic mind with God, the hypercosmical Lover!

Here is Plato in science-fictional terms! One of the strongest points of this novel is Stapledon's translating of familiar philosophic themes into an alien frame of reference.

ABOUT THE TIME OF THE APPEARANCE of mammals on Earth, the cosmic mind began to suspect that the evidence for the existence of the Divine Lover and the impending consummation of the whole cosmical process was false. The theocracy which had come into being on the sun collapsed; chaos ruled.

> Naturally any society that had been organized on a strictly theocratic basis for a whole geological age would be thrown into confusion by the discovery that its beliefs were baseless.

In time, two sects arose on the sun--the skeptics, who wished to re-adjust the cosmical order on an Epicurean (or perhaps Lucretian?) basis, and the faithful, who wished diligently to search for confirmation of their beliefs. Sometimes for a few thousand years one would dominate, then the other. And sometimes they invented methods of violence, and war was at last known on the sun. (Sunspots?)

When the terrestrial flames re-established contact with the sun, they found the solar society in confusion. Some new party had recently appeared, attempting a synthesis of the views of the old parties. It was, it seems, an agnostic group, but yet declared--Lucretius again--that we do not really need to know the basis of the cosmos, and that

> all that is needful is the perception, the indubitable perception, of the spirit's overmastering beauty; and the perceived certainty that we are all by nature instruments of the spirit's expression.

Cass sympathizes with this view, and therefore loses his sympathy for the terrestrial flames, who have come to accept the theistic viewpoint. He maintains that it is necessary to establish contact between the flames and human scientists, reckoning that each might modify the other's attitude, and that the upshot might be a triumph of the agnostic faith among both races.

Cass asks Thos to search for the flames, and after some diligent poking in furnaces he finds nothing. Several weeks afterward he hears from Cass that the latter is trying to write a book, but that the terrestrial flames are trying to convert him to the theistic philosophy and are undermining his sanity.

Three months later Thos receives a letter from the chief of the mental home, saying that Cass had been killed in a fire in his room. Lately Cass had become deranged and had suggested arson; therefore all matches were taken away from him. However, he might have started the fire with a large reading-glass found in his room.

Thos suggests that he had been trying to focus the sun's rays in an attempt to introduce somehow a living solar flame friendly to his views into the room. Or, Thos adds, possibly a terrestrial flame might have leaped from his hearth-fire to destroy him. At any event, Thos will publish the original statement in spite

of Cass's wish to have it withdrawn.

And in this epilogue I have made it clear that Cass' final attitude was very different from his earlier hostility to the flames. In taking this course, I feel that I am being loyal to Cass himself, to the real Cass, the sane, though brilliant, scientist, who would suppress no evidence that might lead to the advancement of knowledge.

And so the book ends. Stapledon, of course, is being either whimsical or subtle in naming his central figure Cass--short for Cassandra, that is, the prophetess of Greek mythology and of Aeschylus's Agamemnon. Cassandra's peculiar characteristic as a prophetess was not that she always spoke truth (which she did) but that she spoke truth and was never believed until too late. This, I suppose, is left for the conjectures of Stapledon's readers, who can go on to picture mankind dominated by the flames, or perhaps incinerated by them.

IT IS POSSIBLE TO RECOGNIZE many of the world's philosophies as the backgrounds for those of the flames. Each philosophical concept, however, is subtly adjusted to fit a thoroughly alien mind --which, in the long run, is the closest anyone can come to devising a satisfactorily convincing alien philosophy so long as there are no aliens available. It is for this reason that I regard The Flames not as a rather crude novel or as a philosophical discussion but as a highly imaginative concept of alien life.

Although I am inclined to accept this last interpretation, it is unfortunate that Stapledon did not scrap writing conventions altogether and merely describe the type of civilization a culture of sentient flames living in the sun might have. He portrays such a culture nobly, but his tale is weighted down by the attempt at novelizing, which detracts from the grandeur and sweep of the concept and adds only melodrama.

Of course, Stapledon should never be read for fictional content. Often, when he uses the conventional fictional framework, it is poorly handled, or rather neglected. Stapledon is one of the few philosophers to use the science fiction form; he is, as the glib Forrest Ackerman says, "a meal for the mind."

The Flames is skimpy fiction. The flames are a remarkable concept, and only the slimness of the book keeps them from being widely heralded as one of the major intellectual tours-de-force of the fantasy field.

edge of infernity

we know only two things about william m. galbraith: that he lives in pasadena and that he has a fine poetic gift. the first we learned from the postmark on his submission; the second from reading this brilliant and effective poem.

by william m. galbraith

HENCE, through the eleven doors of Hades,
Mamoulian, entering all at once,
stood looking about him.
The place was apparently endless
and offered much in the way of discouragement.
Mamoulian, be it known, had favored walls,
a mantle by which not only to warm one's self
but by which also, drink in hand and pipe at a firm angle,
to look, as Mamoulian could, consummately distinguished.
High windows, too-- Mamoulian had found
in lonely, eagleistic broodings at high windows
his spirit's tallness.
A mightiness entered him betimes at these places
as if at the height of Darien. . . .
But why--and this had crossed Mamoulian's mind—
why ever forsake the cool, high marble halls,
the soft floors, the humming elevators,
for the risk and dirt and labor of achieving
no more than he could achieve so easily.
Darien indeed!
Such fools deserved their fleas!
However, be that as it may; memory was now a cruelness,
and Mamoulian frowned at the very bigness of Hades
and noted with some astonishment that even the eleven doors
had somehow taken themselves away.

This casual coming and going of things and people
was a factor that was to disturb Mamoulian
who now of a sudden observed the approach from nowhere
of a group of eleven people.
Each, he saw, was the other's duplicate,
and each seemed equally intent
upon the lonely self which Mamoulian felt
held the foreign essences of panic
and the need for running if there were the vestige of use,
which a proper instinct told him there was not.
So he watched the eleven duplicates cleverly
by watching just one,
and when he spoke he spoke with rigid assurance:
"Stability, I see, is not one of your assets
in this God damned establishment.
Bring me a room or a border or a wall of flame
or caverns of deformed demons dancing sulphurously
or pits of pusillanimous snakes,
but whatever or wherever, let there be definition."
Mamoulian in effect, not having a desk to beat
or a cane to whack, stamped imperially and sneered.
The eleven duplicates blended instantly
and the one remaining bowed and smiled and looked like a headwaiter
with a ten-dollar tip to seat,
which made Mamoulian feel considerably more at home.
"A man of taste is always welcome,
and it is so infinitely better to suffer the expected
than to wrestle with ghosts;
it is so infinitely better. . . ."
Mamoulian noticed
something that looked like towering crimson mountains
coming out of the gray nothing, and the words of his greeter
babbled around him as he watched, saying over and over:
"It is so infinitely better, it is so infinitely better.
. . ."

MAMOULIAN was not to realize,
not until much later, how subtle and cruel
and perverse were the ways of hell;
but when he did the meaning, like these hatched mountains,
was clear enough;
and he would be able to think back knowingly
on the reason for these mountains
that glowed now redly into the pliable scenery.
Mamoulian was chagrined and somewhat uneasy,
and it seemed to him that there was an odor of dust
and a grittiness of movement,
a welter of irritation riding his fluids.
"Perhaps," he muttered, and heard the astonishing echoes
clatter madly among the assembled peaks,
"perhaps my thoughts on Darien were ill-advised."
The last whispered word, sounding tumultuously
a quasi-syllabic reverberance, ended by seeming

the laughter of countless donkeys.
"Great heavens," said Mamoulian, and hardly the words
quivered when silence came and sat like a frozen uni-
verse
heavily absolute.
There was nothing left but thought.
Gelatinous,
as wearily as the labor of primordial toads,
Mamoulian thought and let it run like magma
toward his smirking companion.
"It would appear that here to the Nth degree
the mind is its own traitor.
There's nothing in this really exceptionally new,"
Mamoulian muttered,
"but the hell of it is"--at this he nearly tittered--
"the utterly magnificent inefficiency.
Tell me, my friend, is this a self hypnotic trauma
that I find myself engaged in, or are these mountains
indeed the ugly monstrosities they seem,
down to the very smell and the dusty heat?"
"Why," and Mamoulian's guide shimmered before him
like an interrupted mirage,
"why do you question?
Must you eat dirt, must you join with it
before you believe it?
I will tell you this: I walk in a soft place
and mountains are strictly hearsay and highly unlikely.
I don't believe I would care for them."

MAMOULIAN'S mind went back and back and back,
and as it went the tears fell out of him
like new born stones;
and as it went he heard the chorus of laughter;
and the universe was suddenly full of gibbering mouths.
"If only," Mamoulian cried, "I could forget,"
at which new vistas of demonic revilery
flooded upon him and the mountains
leaned and quivered above him,
and he was all alone there and his self surrounded him.

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the microscope

reviews by rory m. faulkner, stewart kemble, carol mckinney, marjorie sackett, and the editor.

Everett F. Bleiler and T. E. Dikty, eds. The Best Science Fiction Stories: 1953. Frederick Fell, $3.50.

Any reader is bound to quarrel with the selections of any anthology that calls itself the "best." What is remarkable in this one is that I, who am a remarkably captious and quarrelsome reader, found only four selections on which to quibble: "Counter-Transference," by William F. Temple, and "Survival," by John Wyndham, because the trick ending of both is not strong enough to carry the weight of such lengthy stories; "Lover, When You're Near Me," by Richard Matheson, because John Collier did it so much better; and "Fast Falls the Eventide," by Eric Frank Russell, because it struck me as a tedious elaboration of an idea which was worth a shorter length. But even these stories are good and enjoyable, if not perhaps "the best," and the other eleven are even better: "The Fly," by Arthur Porges; "Ararat," by Zenna Henderson; "The Conqueror," by Mark Clifton; "Machine," by John W. Jakes; "The Middle of the Week after Next," by Murray Leinster; "The Dreamer," by Alfred Coppel; "The Moon Is Green," by Fritz Leiber; "I Am Nothing," by E. F. Russell; "Command Performance," by Walter M. Miller, Jr.; "Game for Blondes," by John D. MacDonald; and "The Girls from Earth," by Frank M. Robinson..It is noticeable that all these stories come from four magazines--five from Galaxy, four from F&SF, and three each from ASF and TWS. This may show something about Bleiler and Dikty or about the other science-fiction magazines.

This is a fine selection, well printed, and built to last in a collector's library. The only really objectionable feature to the volume is the tasteless, foolish, ridiculous, asinine, dimwitted, and repulsive collection of "blurbs" attached to the stories. I should advise you to paste something over them. SS

Max Born. The Restless Universe. Dover, $3.95.

One of the world's great scientists takes you step by step from an understanding of the infinitely small atom to a comprehension of the infinitely large universe in this surprisingly readable account of modern physics. The latest theories of wave mechanics, the mysteries of perpetual change in a world where nothing is fixed are explained to you. The puzzles which relativity, electricity, and the newer mathematics present are explored by you. Seldom has modern physics been made so understandable to the ordinary person.

Included in this new, revised edition is a discussion of the

book reviews

alliance between politics and science that is well-stated and searching. It focuses upon one of the most vital of contemporary issues.

This book contains more than one hundred drawings and photographs and seven unique animated diagrams. Each of these latter consists of about one hundred and twenty-five separate illustrations in the margins, which give a motion picture effect when the leaves of the book are flipped. You see gas molecules reacting to pressure, the measurement of molecular velocities, the Hertzian oscillator in action, the strange musical phenomenon of "beats," the scattering of alpha particles on a circular screen, the motion of the electron in the hydrogen atom, and the rotation of the orbital plane.

Max Born helped formulate quantum mechanics and is author of numerous books and articles. He has one of the most understandable styles of writing in scientific literature. CMcK

Ray Bradbury. Fahrenheit 451. Ballantine, 35¢ (cloth, $2.50).

Readers of this satire must ask whether this is the world we are creating for ourselves. The burning of books is an actuality in our present civilization. Fahrenheit 451 is Bradbury's most thoughtful and satiric work. It ranks with Orwell's 1984. When one considers that ten years ago Bradbury was practically unknown as a writer, except among s-f readers, it is significant that such an eminent scholar and critic as Professor Gilbert Highet has reviewed Fahrenheit 451 with praise [see "New Books," Harper's, CCVII (December 1953), 92-94]. Few writers of science fiction have received the attention of such a serious critic. It remains to be seen whether Fahrenheit 451 is the apogee of Bradbury's writing or a launching platform for more mature literary endeavor.

There is one passage in this novel that provides a key to much of Bradbury's effectiveness as a writer. His best stories are always a condensation of sense, taste, sight, sound, touch, and emotion. He says in Fahrenheit 451 (p. 74), " . . . the more truthfully recorded details of life per square inch you can get on a sheet of paper, the more 'literary' you are. . . . Telling detail. Fresh detail. The good writers touch life often. The mediocre ones run a quick hand over her." This is an excellent self-analysis of Bradbury's work. But this technique is not always a successful formula, as the two short fillers in this volume, "The Playground" and "And the Rock Cried Out," show. Bradbury can strive too hard for an effect and mass too much detail, thereby defeating his purpose, as certain stories in The Golden Apples of the Sun showed. "The Playground"is so heavily overlaid with conglomerations of taste and touch and smell that the weak climax cannot carry the weight of touching life so often to capture the feel of childhood. "And the Rock Cried Out" is better. But Bradbury is best at condemning the wrongs of the world when he weaves a cloak of fantasy around his complaints. Satire and fantasy make his best mixture. Without fantasy it seems he tries very, very hard to put his message across; and his effort gets in the way.

Students of literature familiar with the earlier 1950 Galaxy version of Fahrenheit 451, "The Fireman," will be interested in the difference in style and pace between the two pieces. The style of "The Fireman," by being quick, sharp, and staccato, al-

most defeated the author's purpose by being continually too curt and too concise. In Fahrenheit 451 the style has changed considerably. Often the sentences are long and rolling, adding image to image and sensation to sensation. This revision in style gives a greater literary permanence to Bradbury's ideas.

A good picture may be worth a thousand words, but Mr. Mugnaini's curious scribbles have degenerated from being amusing in The Golden Apples to the mediocre in this book. They add nothing to Bradbury's similes and figures. SK

Rachel L. Carson. The Sea around Us. Mentor, 35¢.

This is the kind of book to be read over two or three times. It has already made publishing history in its hard-cover edition and will probably become the classic treatment of oceanography. For those with interests in geology or marine biology this is a must. SK

Lin Carter. Galleon of Dream. The Sign of the Centaur (1734 Newark St., St. Petersburg, Fla.), 50¢.

This, the author's second collection of verse, is pleasant and entertaining, although not very deep. Mr. Carter is a bookish poet; most of these pieces derive from one or another of the books he loves best. A dominant theme of the volume is that of dreams coming true, which should indicate that Mr. Carter is a romantic. This is, in fact, the case; and, for the production of a man who has seen military service in Korea, his poem "Cathay: Impressions of the Orient" is something of a triumph in romanticism.

Romanticism also implies the use of regular and traditional verse forms, and again Mr. Carter comes up to expectations. Most of the poems are in some form of traditional stanzaic pattern, and most of the remainder are also regular; on one page we have, for example, "Nightmare," in Miltonic blank verse, and "Dark Elixer" [sic] in the tetrameter couplets of the witches in Macbeth. One of the most effective poems, however, "Futility," is in a kind of easy-flowing free verse. Some of the verse, like "Cathay" and "Vagabond's Song," is Blandingesque. Other pieces share with those of C. A. Smith the influence of George Sterling. In view of the regularity of the whole it is too bad that there are some half-dozen ametric lines scattered through the volume--places where "devour," for instance, must be made trisyllabic.

One attractive feature of the collection is that it is profusely and very well illustrated by the author. Taken by and all, Mr. Carter is a poet whom it is worth spending fifty cents to encourage. SS

Arthur C. Clarke. Expedition to Earth. Ballantine, 35¢ (cloth, $2).

Here is a collection of some of the best science-fiction stories of the past few years. They are well written; often thoughtful; and at times amusing. They range from provocative allegory in "Second Dawn" through a clever spy hunt with an ironic ending in "Hide and Seek." These eleven stories can stand with the best single-author collections of science fiction produced so far.

Keep your eyes on Clarke. He has merely started to write s f. SK

Lester del Rey. Attack from Atlantis. Winston, $2.

A book for teen-age boys must inevitably have the usual teen-age hero, it seems. Don Miller, this hero, is an exceptionally bright lad of 17, thoroughly versed in the technique of undersea devices. Don becomes electronics officer of the first atomic-driven submarine, the navy's experimental model for the study of deep-sea conditions, which is captured by strangely human sea-men, descendants of the people of lost Atlantis.

A highly fantastic story, this, which gives the impression of being "written down" to the younger set. RMF

H. Rider Haggard. Five Adventure Novels. Dover, $3.95.

This book contains the complete text of She and four Allan Quatermain novels, King Solomon's Mines, Allan Quatermain, Allan's Wife, and Maiwa's Revenge. It is a well printed volume, in which H. Rider Haggard, a nineteenth-century teller of adventure stories in strange lands and student of primitive rites and customs in Africa, unfolds for you fascinating stories of exotic places and savage people. He creates an enchanting realm; anyone interested in science fiction would enjoy these novels. They are written in a typical nineteenth-century style, but one which has not lost its charm for the modern reader. Haggard's observations of African life were based on first-hand knowledge, for he held government positions there and lived with the Zulus. The novels

should be read separately rather than together, because they all have the same basic pattern, though different characters and situations. MS

Thor Heyerdahl. Kon-Tiki. Permabooks, 35¢.

Merely a reminder in case you have not yet read this modern epic. It tells of one of the strangest scientific expeditions undertaken by man and is equally exciting with any fictitious science. Included are 80 photographs of the raft and men who crossed the Pacific in 101 days. Don't miss Kon-Tiki! SK

Raymond F. Jones. Planet of Light. Winston, $2.

Ron Barron, a young Earth boy, hears by radar from an alien lad he once befriended when Clonar's spaceship was wrecked on Earth. With his family, he is invited to visit Clonar's home on a planet in the Andromeda Galaxy.

Expecting only the friendliest reception, the Barron family are dismayed to find themselves the object of ill-concealed hostility on the planet Rorla. Plot and counter-plot follow in quick succession, and not until the family is ready to return to Earth in disgust is the real purpose of the Rorlians disclosed.

As a sequel to Jones's Son of the Stars, this book does not disappoint the reader, being fully as enthralling as the first novel. RMF

Philip Latham. The Missing Men of Saturn. Winston, $2.

When an astronomer turns to fiction, he makes a good, sound, scientific job of it. In his latest book, Philip Latham has produced an exciting tale for youngsters--and those not so young. The planet Saturn, object of superstitious fear among space men, is the setting for the interesting story of Dale Sutton, a young graduate of Terrestro Space Academy and member of an exclusive fraternity, the Perseids.

Dale is a refreshing departure from the usual upstanding, all-American-boy hero. In truth, at the start, he reveals himself to be a snob and a bit of a cad. His character improves greatly during the hardships of the trip and the ribbing of the crew, but at the end he reverts to type, as shown by his wanton murder of the Saturnian native who had protected him and his boast that one day he would return and own the whole planet and maybe some of the others, too. While the lad may not be admirable, he is much more human and believable than most of the heroes in boys' books. RMF

Desmond Leslie and George Adamski. Flying Saucers Have Landed. British Book Centre, $3.50.

What motive a man can have to sit down, and to draw forth a list of stupid, senseless, incredible lies upon paper, would be difficult to determine, did not Vanity present herself so immediately as the adequate cause. The vanity of knowing more than other men is, perhaps, besides hunger, the only inducement to writing, at least to publishing, at all: why then should not the voyage-writer be inflamed with the glory of

having seen what no man ever did or will see but himself? This is the true source of the wonderful, in the discourse and writings, and sometimes, I believe, in the actions of men.

--Henry Fielding, Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon.

This volume contains two sections--an overly long, incoherent history of flying saucers by Desmond Leslie, which one wishes were out of the way so that one could get at the meat of the book, and a first-person narrative of a meeting with a Venusian by George Adamski.

Mr. Leslie, in the engaging manner of a public-school debater, establishes a good case for the existence of flying saucers, but beyond that one point he is much too willing to accept as "fact" any number of strange things--"some alloys discovered and analyzed from ancient Atlantean city sites," for instance--to impress one as trustworthy.

Mr. Leslie apparently needs to know how to evaluate sources and also where fact ends and wishful thinking begins. Several times in the book he says that, because we really know nothing about gravitation or extra-terrestrial conditions or some such matter, it is safe to assume such-and-such. What he forgets is that it is equally safe not to assume it. He has in his favor, of course, the fact, to which any good scientist will agree, that there are limits to what is known about the universe we live in. But he uses this situation as authority for audacious and licentious conjecture.

Furthermore, he dazzles and bewilders by the vast display of his pseudo-erudition, his wide reading in quaint and curious volumes of forgotten lore. Puzzled by references to the most esoteric material possible, without any way of evaluating them, the general reader may not notice the way in which both science and legend are distorted by Mr. Leslie to suit his ends--which are to become widely known and to make money, for which purposes he can apparently find no better way.

Mr. Leslie's portion of the book is also remarkable for an absence of any resemblance of logical progression of thought or for any organization that would assist in developing a field theory or even adequately to describe the phenomena he discusses. I am afraid that this is significant in showing that Mr. Leslie has that kind of mind which, incapable as it is of sustained ratiocination, must make a virtue of necessity and say that intuition is better anyhow.

What makes it even worse is that, in the English tradition, Mr. Leslie refuses to document many of his sources so that they might be checked on. Those which he does document do not inspire confidence. Moreover, any fair-minded reader will be irritated by the way in which Mr. Leslie decries scientists on the one hand and uses their aura of sanctity on the other, to the extent that it may be said that there are two types of "scientists" to Mr. Leslie, the named and the unnamed, and that only the latter may be credited with belief. The semanticist will also be annoyed by Mr. Leslie's trick of inventing a term and then acting as if it described something which had real existence.

Mr. Adamski presents a careful and circumstantial account, so replete with detail that it has a certain kind of spurious authenticity. I would refer the gullible reader to Daniel Defoe,

whose Moll Flanders and Journal of the Plague Year purported to be factual and were accepted by his contemporaries as being so. But, like Defoe--Crusoe's swimming out to the ship naked and returning with his pockets full of nails and the "1683" date of Moll Flanders are the classic examples--Mr. Adamski slips up on details; and, on the whole, it must be admitted that Defoe did this sort of thing better.

The two details that I like least in Adamski's account are the following:

1. Although Mr. Adamski's Venusian friend does not shake hands but rubs palms, he does shake his head "no" and nod his head "yes." The chances that Venusians would share this particular gesture with Western European culture are infinitesimal. And if explosions do not go "boom" in French and German, I doubt that they do in Venusian.

2. Any language must be written in rows, whether, as Dean Swift said, they go left to right, right to left, up and down, or aslant the paper from one corner to the other like the handwriting of ladies in England. The reason for this is that words are written in a time order and therefore must be read in a chronological sequence. Although one or two moderately well defined rows may be made out in the sample of Venusian writing Mr. Adamski gives us, by and large it is not in rows. Venusians must therefore either read all words of a given message simultaneously or lack any sense of temporal progression--either explanation is patently ridiculous. I should like to examine the fragment to determine whether the writing materials are of terrestrial origin or not.

Furthermore, I do not like two inferences which must be accep-

the observatory

Our readers have registered their favorites from the last issue, and the winners have been awarded their cash prizes--the first to William L. Bade for "The Eight Hundredth Hundred-Day," the second to David R. Bunch for "The Mad Man from Machinery Row," and the third to David H. Keller, M. D., for "The Question. First prize for illustrations went to Neil Austin for his cover, and second was Bradley's for his illustration to Bade's story. The authors and illustrators represented in this issue will appreciate your writing us if you liked their work, because their cash prizes are awarded on the basis of your votes.

Among the fine stories and articles which you will see in future issues of this magazine are the following:

FANTASY IS IN THEIR HANDS, by Leo Louis Martello
THE WINNERS, by Raymond T. Shafer, Jr.
PUT OUT THE LIGHT, by Cornelia Jessey
THE GODS OF NEOL-SHENDIS, by Lin Carter
SELF-DEFENCE, by Clive Jackson
THE MAN WHO LOST HIS SOUL, by Leslie Garrett
WOMEN MUST WEEP, by A. Winfield Garske
CARNATIONS IN THE SNOW, by Arthur J. Burks
SUSAN, by Clive Jackson
THE SILENT WRITER, by Bernard Kelly
OUT OF THIS WORLD, by E. R. Kirk

Mr. Kemble's column, "Revaluations" of science-fiction classics, arrived too late for this issue but will begin in our next.

ted if Mr. Adamski's story is true:

1. Mr. Adamski dismisses the scientific "fallacy" that other planets (not alone Venus--all other planets) do not have atmospheres like our own by suggesting that spectroscopic analyses also pick up ingredients of our own atmosphere. Thus, he says that his Venusian friend told him, all planets are capable of supporting our kind of life. I should like to know how sufficient methane and ammonia got into our atmosphere to show up as bands on spectroscopic examinations of Jupiter. I should like to know why such a concentration of lethal gases gets between our telescopes and Mars and our telescopes and Venus. (To which Adamski replies, shaking his head sadly, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio . . . .")

2. Mr. Adamski suggests that all the other eight planets of the solar system are inhabited by beings who are virtuous, noble, altruistic--who have all twelve scout virtues. Ours alone is backward. I do not think it is terrestrial patriotism alone that blinds me to the logic of that idea.

An interesting historical parallel suggests itself: Joseph Smith's visit from the angel Moroni, which was also verified by apparently reliable witnesses. Unfortunately, Mr. Adamski's Venusian did not give him access to any urim and thummim with which he might translate the message he gave him. (Fancy giving a man a message and not any means of deciphering it!) Joseph Smith's followers have done a great deal of good in the world, but I doubt that Mr. Adamski's will be so valuable; but, on the other hand, it may be safer for Mr. Adamski to go to Missouri.

Let there be, by the way, no compromising talk of "self-delusion" or "projected hallucination." Mr. Adamski has photographs, and delusions and hallucinations do not appear on film. Mr. Adamski's story is either the truth or a premeditated lie backed up by faked photographs. I think the only conclusion that can be drawn, taking all things together, is that Mr. Adamski is a downright charlatan bent on deluding his readers by a falsehood.

"But why?" Mr. Adamski asks disarmingly in the book. There are people who love to be pointed out and talked about. There are people who love to display their expertness in "arcane lore" and such matters, out of a desire to manifest superiority over the uninitiated acolyte. There are people who love to make money. This sort of people founds organizations like the Royal Order of Tibet, of which Mr. Adamski was once Grand Lama; and it writes books like Flying Saucers Have Landed.

I hope no one buys the book, for such impudent audacity should not be rewarded by success. Already it has unfortunately resulted in high-paying magazine and television appearances for Mr. Adamski, and I understand that a sequel--to which I wish bad cess--is in the offing. Put this one down with Scientology and the Shaver Hoax, both of which it strongly resembles. SS

Milton Lesser. The Star Seekers. Winston, $2.

Readers familiar with science fiction will realize at once how much the author owes to Heinlein's "Universe" in his conception of a space ship which is a self-contained world on its way to a distant star. The ship is a huge sphere divided into four concentric areas, whose individual populations have lost contact with each other and also have lost all knowledge of the original purpose of the ship, which they believe to be the whole universe.

Though this book is intended for juveniles, older science-fiction addicts will enjoy it for the very sound sociological and philosophical concepts lurking under all the adventure. RMF

Jeffrey Logan, ed. Outer Space. Marco, 75¢.

The thirteen brief articles in this symposium vary in style and information. Perhaps this is to be expected in a rotogravure job produced for popular consumption. Certain problems connected with space flight are aired by such familiar hands as Willy Ley, Wernher von Braun, Heinz Haber, Oscar Schacter, Leslie R. Shephard, and others. The most satisfying feature of this book is the collection of illustrations. There are official government photos, stills from movies, illustrations from s-f magazines and rare books. The pictures make a delightful pot-pourri. The text is decidedly thin on the technical side. SK

Richard Marsten. Danger--Dinosaurs! Winston, $2.

Another of the once-popular time-travel stories is this account of the adventures of a guided expedition through the "time-slip" back to the age of the giant reptiles of Earth's Jurassic period.

Due to the stubborn willfulness of one of the members, a big-game hunter who violates the strict provisions of the law laid down by the time-slip bureau, the party is plunged into a series of hair-breadth escapes. Three of the party are killed, and by an ingenious twist on the old time-travel paradox, the fact of their existence is wiped from the memory of the survivors.

While ostensibly a book for the juvenile reader, this novel is well worth the attention of readers of all ages. RMF

Samuel Mines, ed. The Best from Startling Stories. Holt, $3.50.

It is hard to believe that the stories in this disappointing collection really are the best from the magazine they represent. The best of them, surprisingly enough, is "What's It Like Out There?" by Edmond Hamilton, who has a long record of producing the dullest hack-work in the field. This is the best story of his otherwise uninspiring career; it is a shame that a man who can write as well as this hid his talents behind Captain Future for so long. Also rereadable is Jack Vance's "Noise," more a poem than anything else but good of its kind. It has style, yet is not overwritten.

The other stories include "The Wages of Synergy," by Theodore Sturgeon, a long, warmly characterized, literately written, and challengingly thoughtful story spoiled by a wretched plot, for which even the editor thinks some apology is necessary; "The Perfect Gentleman," by R. J. McGregor, a shallow attempt at humor; "Moment without Time," by J. T. Rogers, a long-winded story with great possibilities, damaged by an underdeveloped ending; "The Naming of Names," a middle-drawer Bradbury story which Mr. B. has wisely not included in his collections; "No Land of Nod," by Sherwood Springer, a hard story to criticize because one does not want to be called stodgy, but it does seem that more could have been made of the theme; "Who's Cribbing?" by Jack Lewis, an amusing story, though not worth re-reading; "Thirty Seconds--Thirty Days," by Arthur C. Clarke, a story which is realistic

and gripping on one hand but underdeveloped and ill written on the other; "Dormant," by A. E. van Vogt, a story of equally great promise and disappointment; and R. D. Locke's "Dark Nuptial," a story of some merit but not enough to justify its being reprinted.

The book is attractively designed, but slender and of low quality for the price. SS

Ward Moore. Bring the Jubilee. Ballantine, 35¢ (cloth, $2).

"What if the South had won the Civil War?" This question has tantalized the imaginations of many. Moore carries off a clever tour-de-force based on the premise that the South did win. He begins in one of the possible words of "if" with a victorious South and brings it up to the present--where the hero transfers to our own world. Overall this is a good performance. But there are flaws which weaken its effectiveness. Hodge Backmaker, the hero, is unreal. He seems capable of only two things--vacillation and copulation; the only time he never hesitates is when the latter is under consideration. The HX-1 time machine is too gimmicky. The detail of the Gettysburg battle is extremely sparse. Worst of all is the author's idiosyncratic spelling of words using an apostrophe. But don't let these minor defects spoil your enjoyment of this story--ever if you live in the South. SK

Frederik Pohl, ed. Shadow of Tomorrow. Permabooks, 35¢.

Pohl does it again and produces another pocketbook anthology equal to Beyond the End of Time. Anthologies such as these are worth every penny of the price. Included are tales by Heinlein, Leiber, Wyndham, Boucher, del Rey, Piper, Clement, Blish, and others. Why pay for a high-priced hard-cover anthology when a tenth of the price can buy this? SK

Clifford D. Simak. City. Permabooks, 35¢.

All but one of these tales appeared in Astounding during the "golden forties"--enough said. Simak writes about his dogs and robots with sympathy and humor. The inter-chapters, supposedly by a dog-editor, are a delightful burlesque of modern scholarship. A real bargain in pocketbooks. SK

Theodore Sturgeon. E Pluribus Unicorn. Abelard. $2.75.

This attractively designed and well printed volume contains thirteen stories by Sturgeon, at slightly over 21¢ a story--which is possibly the biggest bargain in science fiction today. One of them, "The Music," has never been published; and it happens likewise to be the weakest story in the collection, the kind of etude that anybody might have written, with none of the essential Sturgeon qualities about it.

Of the remaining twelve, three seem to me to be slightly below the level of the rest--"It Wasn't Syzygy," "The Sex Opposite," and "Cellmate." They all have their good points, their moments of Sturgeon, but conventional elements weigh them down so that they find it hard to get going.

But the other nine stories in the volume--including one, "Scar," which the science-fiction reader probably has never seen before--are all superb and demonstrate once again that Sturgeon is one of the very finest writers of science-fiction or fantasy. They are all pure Sturgeon.

What makes Sturgeon different? First, intensity of emotion--not only in the use of powerfully dramatic situations but in the language itself. Every story that is really Sturgeon is his because he has put some of the very texture of his soul into it, has put into it part of his essential being, his loves, his hates, his memories, his life. His stories seem to have a real existence because every one of them has a part of his own vibrancy in it. All the reader can hope for is that there is a lot left before the well runs dry.

The second quality that puts Sturgeon above most of his contemporaries is his interest in language. He loves to use language, to play with it, to build with it, to experiment with it. The style of these stories is sometimes more exciting than the plot.

The third of Sturgeon's inimitable qualities is that he has a depth and richness of invention. Most of these stories have trick endings. The trouble with most O. Henry-twist stories is that when you're through with them you say "So what?" and never want to reread them; the surprise is all, and once you know the surprise you're through with the story forever. But Sturgeon puts enough into his stories--enough heart and enough head--that they're satisfying right up to the ending and beyond. If you go back and read them again you still enjoy them, and you get more out of them.

This is a much better collection than Without Sorcery, which was very uneven in quality. E Pluribus Unicorn is as good as most other writers' best all the way through, and for 69.23% of the way it's high up above that level.

Other features of the collection include an essay by Groff Conklin and a bibliography of Sturgeon's anthologized and collected stories. Mr. Conklin had a chance to say some very good and important things about Sturgeon. He didn't. The bibliography is interesting but neither useful nor valuable. SS

H. G. Wells. Seven Science Fiction Novels. Dover, $3.95.

Recently Mr. W. H. Auden said in praise of George Bernard Shaw that he "was not H. G. Wells." I should say that to the extent that Mr. Auden cannot appreciate these fine novels, by so much less is he a true poet. For here Wells is the poetic creator of new life, and as long as you read his books you are living in his imaginary world. Whether Wells was a philosopher I do not know, but I am sure that he was a master at making fiction convincing and at gripping you with a compelling story, told with tolerance and humor.

Anyone who wants to write science fiction should read these novels to find out how it is done. They are classics because they are still good reading after half a century; they read as if they were written this year, except that they are infinitely better than most of this year's authors could do.

The present collection contains The Time Machine, The Island of Dr. Moreau, The Invisible Man, The War of the Worlds, The First Men in the Moon, The Food of the Gods, and In the Days of

the Comet in a handsomely bound and, except for a few printers' errors, well printed volume of 1,015 (not, as claimed, 1,024) pages of text. This is a considerable bargain, and the book is well worth buying.

SS

H. G. Wells. 28 Science-Fiction Stories. Dover, $3.95.

This collection consists of 26 short stories and two novels, chosen by Groff Conklin, which is in itself a recommendation. Most of Wells's finest stories are here--classics like "The Country of the Blind" and "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" to gether with stories like "The Magic Shop" which deserve to be better known. Naturally, anyone who knows Wells will cavil at the selection of some of the stories and the omission of others, but Conklin has chosen well to appeal to almost all tastes.

The two novels--Men Like Gods and Star-Begotten--show Wells in decline. The tolerance and genial humor of the earlier books has turned to bitterness and preachiness. But for all that, they show more clearly perhaps than the other works that Wells was in a very true sense a poet--a man with a vision of wonder and beauty, with a gift for making it come true.

It is a shame that this volume, which one would like to place in a permanent collector's library, should, unlike its companion reviewed above, be so carelessly made up typographically. It is, in fact, hard to tell how the present volume was perpetrated. To imagine it printed does not explain the stupid and inconsistent botch made of the running titles, particularly in the novels; yet to imagine it lithographed from an earlier edition does not explain the numerous printers' errors, for anyone who photographs an earlier text surely may choose to photograph a good one. In either event, in binding and makeup generally, despite an attractive jacket by John Sirchia, the book is inferior to its mate. It contains 915 pages of text rather than the advertised 824.

SS

Sea Serpent by CARR

fantastic worlds
1428½ s. bundy dr.
los angeles 25, california

the man who lived twice

FRANCIS FLAGG, SCIENCE-FANTASY author and poet, who first died in 1922, died again in 1946.

The strange story of "Francis Flagg" is a sad but beautiful one of brotherly love.

Francis Flagg Weiss was the name of a young hero of the first World War. In 1919 he returned from Germany and married the woman of his choice. He supported his young wife by working in the shipyards, until the Depression of 1920-21 threw him out of a job.

His wife was to have a baby. To conserve his fast-dwindling savings, he took a job shoveling coal. His older brother, Henry George Weiss, was constitutionally subpar and couldn't help. He had to stand by while the stronger Francis--"dynamite in a slim package," Henry called him--shoveled coal twelve hours a day for seven days a week, 84 hours a week for $18.

Francis was a young giant; he could stand it, for a while. He fed his wife; himself, sparingly; but there was no money for x-rays, a hospital, a home nurse. Just the girl in a bed in a little, poorly lit room; and him, coming home tired each night.

Henry was helpless--as the doctor was helpless when he was hastily summoned to find the prospective mother writhing in premature labor pains, the baby unable to come because of a stricture.

The wife died in agony.

The baby was still-born.

The husband grieved to death inside a month.

But, Phoenix-like, Francis Flagg lived on. When Henry George Weiss turned his hand to writing in 1927, he started erecting a literary monument to the memory of the brother whom sorrow had sent to a heartless grave.

So for twenty years Henry George Weiss, under the name of "Francis Flagg," contributed stories of high imagination, of future worlds and strange lands, to the fantasy magazines of America. "The Cities of Ardathia," "The Dancer in the Crystal," "An Adventure in Time," "After Armageddon," "The Master Ants," "The Mentanicals"--these were some of his. "A beautiful imagination," a reader once wrote of him, "of that intangible quality which fastens itself to our very cores--and clings." He left a literary legacy of a quarter hundred wonder stories in print in the U. S. A. and England when he died in Martinez, California, in 1946.

The tale is not yet told. I, Alden Lorraine, collaborated with this writer, poet, "Francis Flagg," on several of his stories. We were linked together by a strange destiny. Because, you see, my real name is not Alden Lorraine. I too seek to perpetuate the memory of a dear younger brother, who fell abroad in battle in World War II.

by alden lorraine

jenny's friends

tom reamy, our new associate editor, is an undergraduate at mcmurry college in abilene, tex. despite his youth, he evinces a considerable amount of talent, both in writing and illustrating. we are delighted to welcome tom to our staff and know you will be pleased to hear that he will be a frequent contributor.

by tom reamy

JENNY WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD and loved spiders--that is, all except black widows, and she liked them too, only in a different way. One had bitten her one day, and she got so mad she ate it and promptly threw up green all over the floor. Despite this, there was an enchanting flavor present that she couldn't resist.

The attic in the old house where Jenny lived was filled with spiders--shiny sleek ones and soft furry ones. She liked the furry ones best. They tickled so pleasantly when they cuddled up to her ear.

Jenny ran her hand along the peeling wallpaper, searching for the switch. She pressed the button. The naked bulb sprang into bloom. Jenny took the two stones from the pocket of her starchy new frock. Her pale eyes peered around the attic. Across the dusty trunks, filled with forgotten dreams and musty memories . . . past the picture of the roly-poly bald man . . . past the three dressmakers' dummies--each a little larger than the last . . . past the skyscrapers of magazines.

She tiptoed cautiously toward the magazines, the two stones clutched moistly in her hands. She stopped and held up the stones. She clicked them together . . . once . . . twice . . .

Something scuttled somewhere in the darkness. She clicked the stones again, harder. The something scuttled toward her. Others followed. She put the stones back in her pocket, and, after carefully brushing the dust from the spot on the floor, she sat down.

She felt a pin-prick on her ankle. It was a black widow. Jenny hissed and grabbed. The glassy-eyed arachnid ran for its life, fearful of being eaten.

Illustration by REAMY

The spiders swarmed over her. Something was wrong. The spiders came to her and then raced back into the shadows. Jenny giggled, "What's the matter?"

The spiders scurried back and forth between Jenny and the darker regions of the attic. Then they didn't come back; they stayed just inside the edge of the light watching her.

She grabbed the stones from her pocket and began beating them together furiously. A large noise was behind the trunk. She stopped and listened breathlessly. The spider that came out was about a foot high and bright red. Jenny gasped.

"Do not be afraid," said a voice in her head. "I won't hurt you." The countless other spiders were racing madly about. The red spider came to her. It had something transparent over its head. It didn't look like any of the other spiders Jenny had seen. Not only its size but other things were different.

"I've never seen you before," said Jenny.

"I just arrived this revolution," said the spider's voice in her head. "I'm lost."

"Lost? From where?"

"My ship. We landed, and I went to search for food. I got lost." The voice in Jenny's head quavered.

"Don't feel bad," said Jenny and patted its red body.

"But I've got to get back to the ship. I've got to report that I've found some of our own kind." It glanced around at the other spiders, who danced frantically. "You see, we're going to invade your planet, and, now that I've found others, it will be much easier."

The spiders cavorted.

"Where is your ship?" asked Jenny.

"It's behind a large green building with an all-glass front and a long pole on top with red lights running up and down it," said the invader.

"That must be the super-market," said Jenny. She pointed. "Go that way six blocks and turn right and go four blocks. You can't miss it."

The red invader, with tears of gratitude running down his cheeks and making little puddles in the transparent helmet, clutched Jenny's hand between its front legs. "How can I ever repay you? How?"

The other spiders pranced.

Jenny thought. She grinned. "I hate those black widows. They always bite me. You could tell me how to kill them."

"I'm glad you mentioned that. Imagine, eating one's own kind." It pulled a tiny, shiny tube from a pouch around its thorax and handed it to Jenny. "After we take over, we're going to have to do something about those beastly cannibals, but, in the meantime, just point this. Goodbye." It disappeared.

Jenny looked thoughtfully about. Suddenly she pointed the tube. The black widow turned brown and curled up. A tiny curl of smoke rose from its roasted body. Jenny picked it up and gingerly tasted it. She threw up green again. Roasted or raw, they still made her sick. But that flavor . . . mmmm . . .

She went and sat back down on the floor. The spiders marched to her and began romping. Jenny could hardly wait until the invasion. Just think of all the spiders there would be to play with. And they talked! What fun!

She pointed the tube. French-fried this time. Maybe . . .

the fireside

AT THE CLOSE OF EVERY YEAR it seems to be incumbent on everyone to look back over the preceding twelve months and survey them. Now, although this is a literary quarterly, and as such is interested in new things and in new ways of doing old things, I have a firm respect for tradition. And, although by the force of circumstance I am a few months late with my list, I would not let the first issue of 1954 go by without casting a backward glance over 1953 and picking out those science-fiction and fantasy stories which seemed to me to have most of the stuff of which literature is made.

First let me say a word about the nature of the selections generally. I do not pretend to be all-inclusive. I have not read every issue of all the thirty or however many science-fiction magazines that there are. But I read quite a few science-fiction or fantasy publications each month. And what I look for as I read is the story that seems to have lasting qualities, the story that seems to have in it the real literary stuff. Last year, in the course of perusing something like 75 magazines, I found just six stories that struck me as having really classic stature. I'll list them here alphabetically, by author's name.

1. GRAHAM DOAR. "So Wise, So Young," Amazing Stories, June-July 1953. Mr. Doar's story of a spaceman, his mother, and his younger brother was one of the most touching and human stories that I read last year. Mr. Doar rode sentiment to its farthest limits yet stopped well short of sentimentality; the result was a deeply moving study of the real emotions of real people in a world of the future.

2. HENRY KUTTNER. "Or Else," Amazing Stories, August-September 1953. This is one of the most brilliant satires that science fiction has yet produced. Mr. Kuttner applies keen insight to the traditional theme of science fiction that the Starmen are going to come in their flying saucers and solve all our problems. In a vastly entertaining and highly stimulating story, Mr. Kuttner dramatizes such a situation and shows that this bit of wishful thinking is nonsense.

3. WARD MOORE. "Lot," The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, May 1953. A savage story, "Lot" stretches to a remarkable climax of tension and suspense before snapping in a clever and characteristic conclusion. The whole effect is more unusual for the story's emphasis on realism and its careful delineation of a family that is, if not precisely average, at least uncommonly common. Valuable also is the ambiguity in the treatment of the major character's personality, for it aids the realism and raises speculation in the best tradition of science fiction.

4. MICHAEL SHAARA. "Soldier Boy," Galaxy, July 1953. Mr. Shaara may have an ax to grind about the necessity for preparedness, but it is greatly to his credit that he has written a story in which any such moralizing is played down in favor of a percep-

a chat with the editor

tive study of a certain type of man in a certain type of situation. The conclusion of the story is a heartening affirmation of the essential dignity of the human individual; and the character drawing is moving and memorable.

5. HOLLIS SUMMERS. "How They Chose the Dead," New World Writing, III. Mr. Hollis has written a story in which carefully developed realism gives way, at the end, to an element of fantasy. The effect is a hard emotional impact which serves to express the only conclusion mankind can ever draw from the fact of the inevitability of death--a conclusion which has, nonetheless, been drawn far too seldom. The story is, in the highest sense, moral, yet it is not didactic; and the quiet, careful writing is a craftsman's delight.

6. WALLACE WEST. "Listen, Children . . . Listen," Fantastic Universe, October-November 1953. This is the best story of a long career and one of the best weird tales of the decade. It represents a perfect blending of a realistic story of childhood, told with a loving attention to detail, with one subtly developed stroke of the supernatural. The result has the emotional impact and vividness of real life rather than that of a contrived fiction. As a story of childhood it is as good as any of Faulkner's; and as a supernatural story it is equalled by only a very few stories in recent years.

Conclusion: 1953 has been a good year.

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fantastic worlds
1428½ s. bundy dr.
los angeles 25, california

thunder and roses

Dear Mr. Sackett:

As two of the people who have been called the "dean of science fiction," maybe I can throw some light on the "dean" business.

So far as I am concerned, the whole thing began when my telephone rang when I was in New York. A voice asked if I were Mr. Jenkins, and I admitted it. The voice then insisted, was I the Mr. Jenkins who wrote science fiction. I admitted that too. Then the voice--a feminine voice--asked how long I'd been writing it. I searched around in my memory and came up with a number of years which happened to be wrong. I said twenty-five years, or thereabouts. Actually it's more. Then I said:

"But what's this all about, anyhow?"

The voice said:

"This is Time magazine. We're doing a piece on science fiction, and you're the dean, so we're going to say so."

"Hold on!" I said. "It seems to me that Ray Cummings has been writing it longer than I have."

There was a long pause. A pregnant pause. Then the feminine voice said severely:

"Mr. Jenkins, we prefer to accept our own authorities!"

And the phone clicked off.

That started it. The fact is that I wrote my first science-fiction story in 1919, and it was published early in 1920 in the then-weekly Argosy. The title was "The Runaway Skyscraper," and it is being reprinted some time shortly in an anthology.

If it's worth arguing about, the matter can be settled on that information. I honestly don't know whether Ray Cummings started before I did, or not. Somebody once told me he started off in The Thrill Book. I think that must have been in 1921. But he may antedate me. Certainly I've been enjoying his stuff for a good long time.

The word "dean," in connection with a profession, usually seems to mean longevity in the practise of the profession. I think the argument, so far as it is one, is rather silly. For myself, you may consider me lifting my hat respectfully to anybody who may have written science-fiction longer than I have, and to everybody who writes it better than I do.

Sincerely,
WILL F JENKINS
("MURRAY LEINSTER")

[The title "Thunder and Roses" was used for the letter column in the second issue of fantastic worlds, edited by Edward W. Ludwig. When I succeeded to the editorship, I dropped the feature for the sufficient reason that no letters received seemed worth the expense of lithographic reproduction. Mr. Jenkins's letter, however, was at once so pertinent and so gracious that it demanded to be passed along to our readers; and I see no reason why the column should not be revived whenever there is a worthy occasion for it. Letters should be sensible discussions of topics raised in the magazine, extensively developed but not over 400 words in length. SSJ

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A word to fans. There are some excellent photo-offset mags on the market today. Their editors are footing the bills—and spending a lot of time to make them the best in fandom today. Support them with your subscriptions and your letters. We would like to salute some of them. fantastic worlds, INSIDE, DESTINY, ABSTRACT... (And remember STARLIGHT 30¢ a year, one of the best buys in fandom!)

Cordially,
The Editors