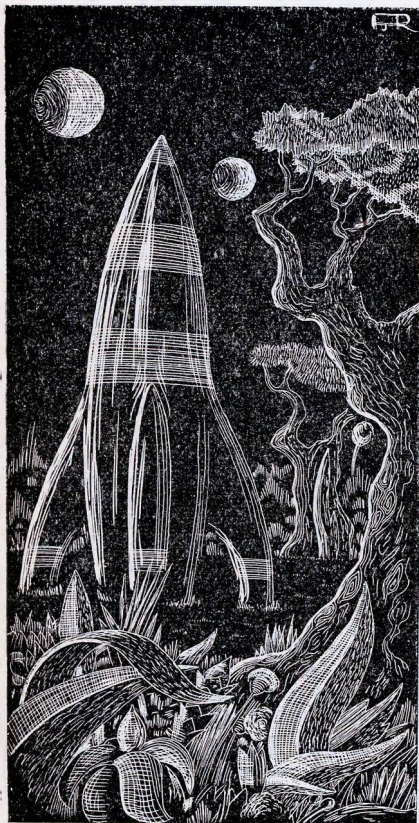


# OPERATION FANTAST

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SIXPENCE



## Operation Fantast

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## Editorial

### THE DRAWING IN OF HORNS

Editorials, so we understand, are supposed to comment on matters of general interest. We don't know if you are ever interested in what we write in ours, but we make them a precis of current information about O.F., in most cases. As you are on O.F. mailing list, we assume they are of some interest. We try to title them appropriately, and this one is so titled because, like the snail when he contacts with some obstacle, we must draw in our horns.

The obstacle in question this time is Ken's health. He has to give up quite a lot of fan-activity, and the section that will be dropped is the 'letter writing,' and a portion of the trading. Letter writing as from some two months ago, and trading gradually. We doubt if in fact many of you will notice much difference in that part of it, and we hope we can keep up supplies of mags and books in all directions. But USA folk will be affected somewhat, and notes of that are included in the circular to them.

OPERATION FANTAST, as a fanzine, will not be changed in any way, apart from the change in policy you may have noted. We are swinging away from fiction, and including more fact, and to some extent we hope the 'fact' articles will be helpful. WRITING SCIENCE FICTION is a series we hope to continue to some length, and the next article will be by E. R. James, another British author we hope you have read. We also want to include more book reviews, and will welcome offers from prospective reviewers. Suggestions for articles will be useful, but if you can write the article yourself, that will be even better! The 'prize' system is being dropped. Last issue culled some 60 votes but they were so evenly spread that it has been impossible to award a prize on them. We cannot afford to pay contributors, but we can give them free subs to O.F., or something like that. Suggestions on that point might be helpful.

The cover style on this issue has been changed; do you prefer this to the previous type! Artwork is expensive, but by reducing the cover we can probably manage a little more inside. Do you want it? All in all, this last section of the 'editorial' is a reminder that this is YOUR magazine, and we try to take note of your suggestions. Let us have them, please.

And to close, we wish all our friends and correspondents, all over the world, a merry Christmas, and a New Year that will be really FULL of peace and prosperity.

Fantastically yours,

JOYCE and KEN SLATER.

## Writing Science Fiction (2)

By F. G. RAYER.

Our Ed., K.F.S., began this series, the end of which may or may not be in sight, probably according to the interest readers show. Turn back and read what he said, for it's all common sense about scarcely expecting editors to read squiggly writing on both sides of thin paper, and so on. After that I'll try to take you a little further along the road. My own stories never come up to what I had expected them to be, before writing, but as they are being printed in NEW WORLDS, SCIENCE-FANTASY, and elsewhere, I imagine there must be something in them. I have a S.F. novel, "To-morrow Sometimes Comes," coming from Home and van Thal, about which Olaf Stapledon said he considered my central character (not human or indeed in any way *living*!) altogether fascinating. So perhaps I can make a few suggestions worth thinking over by those who feel compelled (by what inner urge I know not) to get moving on the production of S.F. stories.

First, we need some new idea, or some new slant on an old idea. Usually this will be to some extent "inspirational"—we stop in the middle of tea and exclaim, "Strike me! Wouldn't it be odd (or wonderful, or exciting) if so-and-so happened!" This is the "germ" of the story, and we may as well take as example one of my own published tales, so that I can show clearly what I mean. Say, "Adaptability" in a past issue of NEW WORLDS. Here the original conception is that alien creatures should be so adaptable (due to reasons connected with their survival) that they can take on any shape, form or colour, including the atomic structure of the item mimicked. So far there is not *story*, and that requires we think round our idea, usually for weeks, maybe for months, associating it with other possibilities, and with human characters. In this example, a few things soon became apparent. Such creatures would soon overcrowd their own planet, would seek more living space, so, we'll say, invade Earth. Forerunners of such invasion might be sent. They'd *hide*. And would they be hard to find! As we don't want to up-tip all our eggs in one omelette and leave the reader with indigestion, we make a gentle start and let our human characters begin to discover something queer is happening. A story must consist of *actual incidents* (not abstractions), so we show the aliens appearing and hiding so securely they cannot be found. This naturally causes trouble between the humans, and the big boss looks into matters and finds out what's happening. He visits the alien world in their craft, so as to show the reader what dangerous and nasty pieces of work they are, and gets back to Earth more by luck than judgment. Here he can't tell his friends what he is going to do, because the aliens are mind-readers and will be warned, but as they're mimicing metal objects, melts them down unexpectedly in an induction furnace. The completeness of their adaptability is therefore their undoing.

Now we have a plot, which is to be written up in dialogue, description, and the comings and goings of the characters. Lots of little incidents now come to mind to illustrate the points we require to make, and we select those most suitable and interesting. The soundness of our judgment here will largely determine how good the story is. Some scientific detail is necessary, and should be within the scope of personal knowledge. My solution was based on electronics (my subject). Medical, psychological, or other solutions would have been feasible, with earlier incidents recast to lead up to them.

We now have a story. We go through it to see we have nowhere used a score of words where a dozen, more aptly chosen, would do better. We need to see the people in the tale have *characters*, and act according to them. Also that we have a nice blending of action, dialogue and description, each used where most suitable. During the writing-up we may have become excited and some of our hottest paragraphs may need re-writing to make them comprehensible to strangers.



We now have a finished MS. Our great difficulty will now be that when we read it we cannot tell what we are imagining into it and what is actually on the paper, and this can only be overcome by putting it aside for at least six months. Usually, however, this feat is beyond us, so we send the MS. away, knowing the editor will probably see many faults in it to which our eyes have been blinded by parentage. Sometimes he will even fail to see the purpose of our tale, which we have not dared state in so many words, for fear of spoiling it; if so, we conclude our judgment has at some time been at fault. If he suggests clarifications, we add them, unless we see they are against our intention, which is not likely when an editor has given careful thought to a tale. If our story comes back we have had the pleasure of writing it, so what?

Probably S.F. was easier to write years ago. Now so many ideas have been exploited it is increasingly difficult to be original, and originality is essential. Many ideas we dream up for ourselves turn out to have been used before. Here we must be forgiven—we cannot read *all* the S.F. stories ever published. We must remember to build up a real story around our S.F. ideas, so that our M.S. has interest as a story, as well as a “maybe” idea. The S.F. interest and story interest entwine throughout, so that neither can be pulled out without ruining the pattern. Every incident used should have a bearing on the story as a whole. Happily, NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE-FANTASY are giving us honest, interesting S.F. stories and not insisting sexy S.F.-ettes be dragged in by the hair, but if you want to try for the U.S.A. mags you will have to drag in a woman or two for most of them, for better or worse, if your ideas on what a good story should be will let you. Women have their places in some S.F. stories, but personally I cannot feel their ability to be half-nude yet warm in space fits in with the best type of story.

Look for the unexpected, co-relate the poles apart, anticipate what *might* happen, dream you're in the world of 2000 or 20,000, and you'll have ideas which should make good stories. You should have something you *want* to say—not something you drag out of yourself with some dim idea of getting a cheque for a new suit. After all, if you have no enthusiasm for the story you're writing, how can you expect anyone else to have?

## The Science in Science Fiction

By IAN WILLIAMSON.

There is a problem which is peculiar to the writing of science-fiction. indeed it is a basic, arising from its very nature. Not every s-f story poses the problem, however, but many do, and where it is met it is interesting to see how the author has tackled—or failed to tackle—the difficulty. The problem is simply stated: it is this:—

Let us suppose that you are writing a story about a new science, or an extrapolated present-day science conferring great new powers, strange weapons; all right then . . .

### WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO STOP?

It is my belief that the contempt which much s-f justly earned (and still earns) is due to failure to recognise the need for limits. Some early authors just did not see any necessity to stop anywhere. The titles invented for the magazines in those days show the trend clearly: “Amazing Stories,” “Astounding Stories,” “Wonder Stories.” The wonder is that these were not succeeded by “Incredible Stories” and “Absolutely Unbelievable Stories.” If the author does not work out some limits he is tempted to continue pulling more and more miracles out of the hat, at random, until he ends his epic in a blaze of rods, cones, and planes of force,

interlaced with X-rays, Y-rays, Z-rays, tractor beams, pressor beams, I-beams, and R.S.J.'s, all somewhere in intergalactic space, sub-space, super-space, ultra-hyper-extra-space, and so on ad infinitum. Alternatively the hero goes a-rovin' into successively more exotic dimensions, meeting more and more ‘supernal’ or ‘cosmic’ denizens—or even ‘entities’—whose appearance becomes zoologically more improbable as their powers become increasingly more indescribable, until the poor reader finds himself drowning in a morass of meaningless verbal extravagance. This stuff has neither the scientific discipline of science-fiction nor the artistic discipline of the fairy-story. This is what s-f has yet to live down.

Let us see how the problem of limits has been solved by those authors who have recognised it. Any author who is worth his salt will carefully construct the scientific setting of his tales as a logical extrapolation of either present-day science or of a new set of ‘facts’ whose truth is assumed a priori as the basis of the structure. If this is not done, the stuff has no claim to be called science-fiction—it is no more than an inferior grade of fairy story.

Given this background, stories can be classified according to the amount of explanation offered to the reader. At one extreme there is no explanation at all, the background is presented as a fait accompli, and as such is taken for granted, with perhaps an occasional device (not a principle) the explanation of which is necessary to the plot. This type has been, and still is, a very popular one, including some very good stories, usually short, as the type lends itself to economy. In ‘DECISION ILLOGICAL’ (N. B. Wilkinson, ASF, July '48), ‘BURNING BRIGHT’ (J. S. Browning, ASF, July '48), and ‘THE UNDECIDED’ (E. F. Russell, ASF, April '49), the backgrounds—interplanetary travel; robots, atomic piles and telekinesis; and interstellar exploration, respectively—are taken for granted, no explanation being offered, nor is it necessary, the stories consisting of the interplay between the various creatures and the natural forces involved in the settings as given. ‘JUDGEMENT NIGHT’ (C. L. Moore, ASF, Aug. and Sept. '43) is a novel in this class, being a romantic love story struggling in the shifts and devices of a crumbling stellar empire. Incidentally, it contains one of the finest pieces of atmospheric writing (the running fight in the disintegrating Cyrille) that I have ever read.

In all these stories the powers and limits of the science involved are not explicit, but implicit; the authors have worked out the science and constructed the background to fit. Nearly always the success of the story depends upon the plausibility and self-consistency of this background and the amount of thought and care the author has put into its ‘working-out.’

A certain degree of ‘arbitrariness’ in the limits of the super-science proposed is not necessarily bad, for it is a characteristic of the real thing. For instance, electrical science has never yet produced an efficient lethal weapon, or a flying machine. This ‘arbitrariness,’ which keeps us from the slippery slope leading to rods, cones, planes, etc., can however be explained in the story. This brings me to my other extreme type; the one in which the science is fully explained to the reader.

The author may begin with his basic hypotheses, or experimental facts, and build up his science from these ‘before your very eyes.’ George O. Smith struck this rich lode in the Venus Equilateral series, which consist of extrapolation of present-day electronics applied—with a great deal of technical-sounding jargon—to the problems of interplanetary communications and little else besides. A great many people seemed to like it. One of the things which spoil them for me was the existence (here and now, I mean) of a simple little device called the photophone, which seemed to me to render most of the efforts of Channing's crew unnecessary. A classic example of this kind of development is that of ‘similarity science’ in A. E. Van Vogt's two ‘NULL A’ stories. He begins with the experimental fact that “when two objects have a ten-decimal-place similarity, the lesser will move to the greater as if the space between them does not exist.” and proceeds to build up his science from that starting point—and into an already well-crammed story he throws in, almost as an afterthought,



as much of this as would serve many others for several complete epics. Another master (allow me my prejudices, please) in this field is Hal Clements. His method, however, is not to build his science up before you, course by course from the foundation, but to take you round the completed edifice and carefully explain the principles of construction. 'TECHNICAL ERROR' (ASF, Jan. '44) is a gem of this kind about the discovery of an alien space-vessel. Clement worked out a new technology for this, ranging from magneto-striction door-fastenings to molecularly flat surfaces in lieu of engine gaskets. The vessel was presented as the end-product of this technology. Another similar system is used by him in 'COLD FRONT' (ASF, July '46), in which a terrestrial meteorologist meets a rather fully-developed meteorology on a planet with a somewhat peculiar sun.

There is an infinity of gradation between the two extremes I have described, with good and bad stories at all points. This scientific 'skeleton' which I am describing is merely the essential bones which qualify a story as s-f; after that it depends on the author's skill whether or not he can clothe it in flesh and animate it (i.e., the literary and artistic qualities of the story, with which I am not concerned here; they may, admittedly, be the more important), but until an author recognises the need of this framework with its attendant implied limits he cannot claim to be writing science-fiction.

Some of the work of E. E. Smith is a curious anomaly here: his science of the Lens is carefully built up—although his mental 'battles' are, perhaps inevitably, clothed in astonishingly concrete terms—and his physical science begins similarly, but in moments of stress he descends to sheer 'rod and cone stuff.' Further, no sooner does he reach a limit than he must write another story to surpass it; his epic thus tends to become a mere exponential series, in which each term is the same as the one in the story before, raised to the higher power. However, he has van Vogt's prodigality in giving six for the price of one, so perhaps he may be forgiven.

Another author who possessed this 'exponential' complex was Howard Phillips Lovecraft, albeit in a far worse form—as 'AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS.' In this story, no sooner does he describe one set of horrors than he must go on to a further height (or depth) until finally he exhausts himself and is quite incapable of finding words for his ultimate horror, which is inferred only by its effect on his unfortunate characters. Enough of this digression; let us return.

Other stories which, like Clement's work, are well constructed, are 'HOBBYIST' (E. F. Russell, ASF, Sept. '47), in which the habits of mind necessary to a space-man are thought out with uncommon sense, and 'PERIOD PIECE' (J. J. Coupling, ASF, Nov. '48), being an imaginative projection of the present trend in remote control toys from an unusual viewpoint, worked out by someone who should know of what he is talking.

The unchallenged leader in this field is still Robert A. Heinlein, any of whose tales is an object lesson in background-building. The finest thing he has ever done in this respect, I feel, is 'SPACE CADET.' It is by far and away the most superb example of really conscientious scientific construction in existence. The mass of detail is astounding, and shows evidence of clear, concentrated *thinking* at every point. This IS SCIENCE-fiction, and by comparison 'THE CITY OF THE SINGING FLAME' (Clark Ashton Smith) and the aforementioned Lovecraft yarn appear as the unco-ordinated gibberings of an unbalanced glandular system, a flux of 'totem-words,' unsullied by any intellectual process.

I am rather heated on this point because both of these stories have been presented as science-fiction, which fact I emphatically deny . . . but for this I should not have mentioned them, being outside my frame of reference. 'THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JONATHAN HOAG' (John Riverside, UNKNOWN, Oct. '42), although not presented as such, is much nearer the s-f than either of the previously mentioned tales, since the author commences with one assumption—that our world is an artistic work—and builds logically on that. Further, he does not froth at the

mouth with misused adjectives in his climaxes. Next time you read Lovecraft stop at the word 'cosmic' and look it up in the dictionary. You might see what sense you can get from 'supernal' while you are about it.

Another series of intermediate type, part background, part explanation, is Rene Lafayette's 'OLD DOC METHUSELAH' run (ASF, Oct. '47 et seq.). Personally, I do not think the author has quite succeeded with his science in this series: there is an assumed background of science which is legitimate enough, and some development. My criticism is that the development does not give the appearance of being logically justified. For example, in PLAGUE (ASF, Apr. '49) ODM solves his problem by a high-speed vaccine-growing process, but from the information given in the stories there seems no reason why he could not equally well have tipped a sack of something into the drinking water, or set up a ray which would have killed all the measles germs . . . he has treated other cases in this way. Hence this aspect of these stories failed to convince me, at least. Mind you, his stories are very readable—the man can *write* (more power to his elbow), whereas Dr. Winter (ASF, Nov. '48, Jan. '49), whose medicine I am prepared to believe is unimpeachable, positively curdles my blood with his dialogue. 'THE END IS NOT YET' (Ron Hubbard, ASF, Aug.-Oct. '47) has similar faults to the ODM series: the miracles of 'viticity'-science were given no appearance of justifiability, or logical development. There was no apparent reason why viticity-science should make gold, or an air-exhausting bomb, or why it should not produce a death ray in the second instalment and so save everybody a great deal of trouble.

When you are handing out new powers to your hero, you must also make convincing the limitations of those powers, the reason why he must go through the whole struggle you have planned for him. This was the one fault in ' . . . AND SEARCHING MIND' (ASF, March-May '48, book title THE HUMANOIDS). Claypool *had* to be set off on the wrong road by an initial misunderstanding, Ironsmith *had* to sound deliberately evasive without good reason otherwise there would have been no story. 'Arbitrariness' is allowable in the background; it has no place in the development unless given justification. 'GATHER, DARKNESS' (Fritz Leiber, Jr. (ASF, May-July '43), is a fine example of apparently arbitrary powers and limits which are, in the end, accounted for plausibly.

Note that I say 'plausibly' and 'the appearance of' being logically justified; the author is not required to produce a Euclidean chain of logic; it is sufficient that, at the moment, he convinces the reader that he could if it were required. Van Vogt, for instance, very successfully persuades me that if only there were time, he could stop and explain every detail quite easily. Furthermore, if you re-read his work, you will find it is largely so; he is very self-consistent.

In Jack Williamson's previously mentioned ' . . . AND SEARCHING MIND' he only just succeeded in making it plausible in its science-development; he went a little too far and too fast for my liking. But Williamson's characters are real human beings, for which I can forgive him much—though that is another subject. I have been concerned only with the science in s-f.

There are other equally important problems, and at least one other problem which is peculiar to s-f, but they are outside my present scope. I have attempted to propose a problem, give examples of the answers to that problem, successful and otherwise. It is up to writers of future stories to make their own answers to the problem, by some careful consideration before writing.

(Editor's note.—Mr. Williamson's article has been on hand for some time, and has been held pending our change in policy, from 'fiction' to 'fact.' We hope it will be of assistance to writers, and of interest to readers. A note on authors mentioned: Hubbard and Lafayette are both Hubbard. John Riverside is Robert A. Heinlein, and we believe that Hal Clement is none other than Arthur C. Clarke! J. & K. F. S.)



# The Undying One

By ROGER DARD.

In all the great cities of the world there are dark places of mystery and terror, unseen by the bustling millions rushing to and fro on their prosaic errands, like so many ants around a hill. I think, though, that of all the cities which sprawl like festering sores upon this green planet that which contains the greatest possibilities of danger, mystery, and terror is London. For it is in London that one finds—Limehouse.

An avid reader of Sax Rohmer and Thomas Burke, it had long been my wont to wander the fog-wreathed streets of this strange quarter in search of the unusual, and that which was not to be found in the brighter Neon civilization of the Metropolis. Yet, until the singular occurrence of which I am about to relate, nothing worse than the muttered curse of a lurching drunk had befallen me.

Mystery was in the air on this night, and the smell of danger everywhere, as I groped down the foggy, ill-smelling streets on my way to the tea-shop of Tai-Long, an amiable Chinese with whom, in the course of my nocturnal wanderings, I had struck up some form of an acquaintance. A block before reaching Tai-Long's establishment I came across a small, dark side street, one which I had often passed before but had never ventured into. Strangely, on this night, I felt my legs—almost of their own volition—stop, and the most uncanny feeling, a feeling almost of COMPULSION, came over me. I lighted a cigarette with hands that shook a little and, gripping my walking-cane harder in my hand, plunged into the gloomy street, for I had decided not to deny this strange feeling which had, for the moment at least, taken possession of me.

As I plunged further into the gloom I mentally cursed myself, and with visions of thugs lying in every doorway to set upon me I would have retraced my steps, and indeed was about to—when suddenly I paused.

Across the street, in a strange, crazy house, like something out of a surrealist's nightmare, I saw a strange light flicker into being. As I stared I began to mechanically walk toward the light, despite my every effort to resist. It was as if I were being attracted to the light, as a moth is to flame!

As I drew near, somewhere in that crazy house a dark slit of a door opened and a cadaverous-looking creature bowed low.

"The mistress awaits you, John Parker," he intoned.

I started with mingled surprise and dread. This eldritch creature knew my name! Knowing that I should flee that accursed place, yet did I enter the yawning portals.

The darkness of the interior made the gloom of the street I had just quitted seem almost light. Yet, strangely, as the creaking door closed behind me, I knew not horror or panic but rather a soothing peace. It was as if a cool voice had whispered in my mind, "Fear not, no harm shall befall you."

The eldritch creature conducted me into a dimly-lighted, barbarously-furnished room. The smell of incense was strong as I seated myself upon a pile of silken cushions, and the eldritch creature bowed himself from the room.

As if that were a signal, somewhere within the dim recesses of that monstrous house a cymbal clashed. And with it a strange, reedy, weird music began to throb forth from some hidden orchestra. A drum throbbed with a wild, barbaric rhythm, and soon the music was filling the room—nay, it was filling my very blood with its wild intoxication!

Then—SHE came. Curtains parted with a sibilant rustle, and this elfin creature glided into the room. She was olive skinned, of what race

I know not, perhaps Egyptian or Persian, and possessed of a beauty so overwhelming my brain reeled. As she weaved before me slave bangles jangled a refrain upon her arms and legs. She was clad in a single gauze-like garment, which revealed, rather than concealed, her exotic beauty. Around her waist she wore a slim dagger of strange design. It was a weird, mad dance that she danced, such as I had never seen before. It was Eve tempting Adam, it was the Siren of the Nile, Cleopatra, it was Helen of Troy, Madame du Barry—but most of all it was—WOMAN. As the music rose to wild cacophony the dance grew wilder, and the single garment fell from her, as she plucked at it with scarlet-tipped fingernails. She postured before me, her small, perfectly-formed breasts rising and falling with the rhythm of her body. Suddenly, with a last clash of cymbal and boom of drum, the music stopped, and this wondrous creature collapsed at my feet. Dark, smouldering eyes fixed upon mine, she extended her arms in a supplicating gesture.

When she spoke, her voice was like the tinkling of bells in the desert night. "John, John, beloved, come to me, who have waited these eons for you."

I took her soft body in my arms and covered her exquisite mouth with kisses. "Who—who are you?" I begged.

Her kisses burned like hot coals upon my mouth, and for a long time she did not answer. Then—"Look into my eyes," she softly commanded.

I looked—and suddenly it was as if I were looking into the very pits of Hell itself! I plunged into blackness, there was a roaring in my ears. The blackness lessened, became a yellow fog, swirling about me like the tentacles of some vile entity. I groped through the fog, and found myself standing upon a vast desert. SHE stood beside me, and together we watched a toiling gang of slaves staggering under the great blocks which I knew were to build a great pyramid. She was a Princess of the Royal blood, I knew that instinctively. Perhaps I was a Prince, I knew not, for I had eyes only for her. As I stood with her, her lips, sensuous and cruel, smiled at me, her lover, so that I showed not horror when the whip she carried lashed the backs of the groaning slaves. Then the yellow fog was upon me again, and when once more it cleared, we stood together again, but this time in a rough, horse-drawn cart. There was a wild yelling, and as I looked I saw the slaving faces of a mob, shouting obscenities, shaking fists, dancing with merriment. SHE stood proud, arm in mine, driving the mob to fury with her cold disdain and contempt. Dimly I perceived we were French aristocrats, on our way to the guillotine. . . . Again, the yellow fog wreathed its vile fingers around me, and this time, when it reluctantly retreated, we were in old Salem. A figure, lean, ascetic, garbed in sombre black, stood with finger levelled at us, screaming "Witch! Demon! Thou servants of Satan . . ." As I saw the crazed faces pressing round us I knew in this life we, too, were doomed. More scenes faded and glowed before me, scenes of incredible horror and obscenities, as life after life, existence after existence, passed in review before me. . . .

I woke, crying in horror, my hands pressed before my shuddering face, as if to blot out sights which once seen could never be forgotten. But fear ebbed, like tide from a beach, as I felt her silken body against mine, felt her burning lips against mine, felt her naked arms entwine my neck. . . . "Now, do you know, John, my beloved?" she murmured.

"Pre-existence," I murmured, "but how—when—"

"It began in that land the Barbarians of this age now call Egypt," she chanted. Her eyes burned into mine. "You were a Prince, and I—a Princess of the Blood Royal. But, in addition, I was a Sorceress, the greatest in the land. In my studies I had long looked for some means of perpetuating my youth and beauty, and yours, too, my royal lover. Ail the land feared me, the Princess Sadi, the Sorceress of the Nile." She smiled, as if remembering.

"The eldritch creature who admitted you came to me. He was a powerful Sorcerer who had been banished from a far Kingdom. In return



for my protection he showed me the secret only he knew. The secret of how to transfer the living flame—that which some call soul—from one body to another. We drank, together, of the magic potion. And so, ever since, right down the ages, the flame has quitted our dying body to find refuge in another." Her sensuous lips smiled. "Now we go to fulfill our destiny, a destiny only I and yon Sorcerer know of."

A sudden chilling thought struck me. "But—I——," I gasped.

Her eyes glowed like hot coals. The sensuous, carmine mouth seemed amused. "I know, my beloved," she murmured, "there is one who would stand in our way. Take this," she handed me the bizarre dagger, "use it well, that me may be together again, for all eternivty."

With a cry I took her into my arms and covered her perfumed body with my burning kisses. Then she was gone, and as I cried out in my anguish, her words floated back to me, "... use well the dagger."

The rest you know. How the police burst into my apartment, to find me standing over the murdered body of my wife, clutching a bizarre, blood-stained dagger. How I fought wildly, screaming strange names, among them one which sounded to their barbarous ears like "Princess Sadi." And now I sit in the death cell, and wait for the grim-faced men to come and take me away. As the time draws near a little prickle of fear and doubt runs up my spine. Was that wondrous creature who danced the exotic dance for me really a Princess of Egypt, a Sorceress of the Nile? Or was she some evil adventuress who hypnotised me into murder—for some hellish sport of her own? Am I merely a prosaic 20th Century Englishman or am I, indeed, A Prince of Ancient Egypt? When my body plunges through the trap, will it be into eternal blackness or will it be into a new life—where Sadi, the wondrous creature of the Nile, will be awaiting me? I wonder. . . .

THE END.

## Browsing Thru

By K.F.S.



Matheson come in with shorter tales, making a very fine 'author' line-up for a first issue. Other interesting points about this first mag are the

High spot in reading material in the pulp field of recent months has been hit by GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION, first issue (October) of which shows that Editor Gold would not profit much by advice from John W. Campbell. Part story is TIME QUARRY, by Clifford D. Simak, who is perhaps best known to modern readers for his 'CITY' series. Supporting novelets are THE STARS ARE THE STYX, by Ted Sturgeon, in which a novel method of disposing of 'unsuitable' members of society is propounded (if you examine the method in the light of history you'll find it is Sturgeon's writing that makes it appear novel, though), and Katherine MacLean comes up with a 'medical base' tale titled CONTAGION. Fritz Leiber, Fredric Brown, Isaac Asimov, and Richard

cover, which has been produced by a new engraving process—personally, I think that the cover is poor in that it illustrates nothing in particular, and as art work it has a long way to go to equal the similar work of Bonestell. Then there is a FLYING SAUCER competition . . . in less than two hundred words give your theory, and win umpteen prizes. In the few million words which have been written on FS I doubt if any possible solution (or any impossible one) is left, but you can try. At least that section is worth while for Willy Ley's introduction alone. Second issue contains Tony Boucher's TRANSFER POINT, a last man and last woman (with a twist) tale, and tales by Asimov, Leiber, and Brown. GALAXY are also issuing in the same format, which is very close to that of ASF, a series of SCIENCE FICTION NOVELS, first of which reprints Eric Frank Russell's SINISTER BARRIER.

The other new arrival, edited by Jerome Bixby of PLANET, goes under the mouthful-name of TWO COMPLETE SCIENCE ADVENTURE BOOKS, will be quarterly, first issue dated Winter '50, and contains Asimov's PEBBLE IN THE SKY, and L. Ron. Hubbard's space-opera THE KINGSLAYER. The second issue will have Ed Hamilton's STAR KINGS (now available in a pb edition from SIGNET under the title BEYOND THE MOON) and a hitherto unpublished work by Arthur C. Clarke. Tentatively, the third issue is scheduled to run a 46,000-word yarn by James Blish.

Hillman Publications are now due on the market with two pb size mags, one for original work, and the other for reprints, to be edited by Damon Knight. First reprint will be Isaac Asimov's PEBBLE IN THE SKY. . . . Doubleday sold the copyright twice in one week, by error. Of previously forecasted new mags, the Gnome Press items will not now appear, as they have been 'crowded out of the field,' and shortages caused by the war have prevented the slick AMAZING being produced. This is now postponed indefinitely. This same shortage has caused a page cut to 162 in recent issues. The fact that AS will not improve in format has not prevented some continued improvement in content, however. December issue contains a very good tale by Raymond F. Jones . . . DIVIDED WE FALL, in which men are pitted against synthetic 'humans' . . . so mankind believes. Apart from its title, BATHE YOUR BEARINGS IN BLOOD, Simak's story in the same issue, is also good; the other three are 'run of the mill' tales. November was a somewhat better issue, all round, and I especially like Mack Reynolds' slightly whacky yarn ONE OF OUR PLANETS IS MISSING, and also a neat short by Les Crouch, THE DAY THE BOMB FELL. An interesting note on these two issues is the fact that the 'girlie' cover is missing! November's symbolic cover is definitely good. October issue recommended tale is GATEWAY TO GLORY, Fredric Brown, and also well to the fore was Simak's SEVEN COME BACK. All the tales in October are slightly over average for AS, in fact. L. Ron Hubbard has written a sequel to THE SLAVES OF SLEEP (which appeared in UNKNOWN) titled THE MASTERS OF SLEEP, and this has been printed in October FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. Perhaps not quite so good as the first tale, but certainly something worth reading. In six months an enlarged version will be scheduled for book printing, I imagine. And a tale in the UNKNOWN tradition, concerning a Crusade across the Holy Land led by King Godwin of England, written by Geoff St. Reynard, is in the November issue. Titled MISTRESS OF THE DJINN, first 30,000 words of this tale made me think maybe I had my history wrong . . . but the explanation is good. Don't read the end first, if you wish to really enjoy the story. Geoff does know his Kings of England. And in December Editor Hamling scores another bull with Lester Del Ray's WHEN THE WORLD TOTTERED, based on the Ragnarok myth. Supporting stories in these issues may not attain such a great standard, but they are quite good in the main.

Another editor maintaining a very good standard is Sam Merwin, in TWS and SS. Leigh Brackett's tale, THE CITADEL OF LOST AGES, in Dec. TWS is not to my taste, but I thoroughly enjoyed Charles L. Harness THE NEW REALITY, in which the postulate that only the things men



believe are really real is used, and Eric Russell's short *MACHINERY* is amusing. Six other tales make this issue worthwhile—TWS/SS seem to give more for the money than most. February issue tolines Jack Vance with *OVERLORDS OF MAXUS*, and Emmett McDowell, whose *I, THE UNMORTAL*, concerns a hero who is both immortal—and not alive. Human, too! I mentioned SS November in last OF, but did not note Hubbard's *TOUGH OLD MAN* in that issue. For those who like just a little sentiment in a tale, I recommend this. January features a newcomer for SS, C. H. Liddell, with a sheer fantasy yarn, *THE ODYSSEY OF YIGGAR THRALG*; Mr. Thralg is an unfortunate, but highly respectable, gnome who falls foul of those accursed creatures, humans. As a result of his contact with them, he is cursed with an unusual affliction for a gnome. Also, the third in the current Captain Future series, by Hamilton, which features Ezra Gurney this time.

As a special award, I am going to mention a fanzine in the middle of this review of the pro-mags. None other than Bannister's *NEKROMANTIKON*, Autumn '50, gets this unusual honour. Two reasons, firstly the excellent five-colour cover, and, second, the very fine fantasy yarn which fills most of the issue. *TWILIGHT FELL AT CAMELOT*, by M. Houston, based on the Arthurian legends, is a story deserving of professional publication to a wider market than I fear Manly's otherwise 'top-line magazine can command.

The re-issued *MARVEL*, Nov. '50, Vol. 3, No. 1, starts with a dull thud as the lead story flops dismally into the morass of my overworked imagination. I always try to see what the author has 'done.' This time I could almost smell it, if I may be permitted some slight crudity. Arthur J. Burke, whose two tales, *SURVIVAL* and *EXODUS*, have long held a position of honour in my (purely imaginary) roll of great stories, has perpetrated a thing called *TRIN*, described by the publisher as 'mind blasting.' I agree . . . . Secondly lengthy story is by Gardner F. Fox, *TEMPRESS OF THE TIME FLOW*. Mr. Fox normally writes for the 'comics' . . . . The two medium-length tales are somewhat better, although that by L. A. Eshbach is a 'dated' tale. A. Bertram Chandler, with a story written into a Venusian pioneering scene, has done quite good work, and the three short tales are the best. Paul Chadwick's piece, *THE DAY THEY LANDED*, is semi-humorous, Cedric Walker has produced a good first-pro-published work in *THE GUINEA PIG*, and A. E. van Vogt is represented by *THE CATAAAA*, previously printed in *FPCI's FANTASY BOOK*, No. 1.

*FANTASTIC NOVELS*, Nov., reprints *THE HOTHOUSE WORLD*, by Fred MacIsaac, which, although written in 1931, is still very good reading and can be accepted as a 'current' story. *CROSS OF MERCURUS*, Harry Walton, in the same issue, originally written in 1941, does not stand the test of time half so well. Next (January) issue will feature the late Arthur Leo Zagat's *DRINK WE DEEP*. October F.F.M. had Arthur Stringer's *THE WOMAN WHO COULDN'T DIE*, which is but borderline stuff, supported by *THE WEIGHER OF SOULS*, Maurois, and *NOR MOON BY NIGHT*, by Peter Cartur, both the latter being more the type of material I expect to see under the banner 'Fantastic.' Dec. issue will feature *BROOD OF THE WITCH QUEEN*, Sax Rohmer's semi-scientific fantasy. The third of Popular's reprint trio, A. MERRITT *FANTASY*, will not be continued, October being the last issue according to my current information. In addition to the England Novel mentioned in September OF, that issue contained Williamson's *RACKETEERS IN THE SKY*, a good yarn, and *THE DEVILFISH*, which is hardly a fantasy, by Elinore C. Stone. Super Science Stories, which dropped the 'spaceship' shape from its banner with the September issue, is improving. A Neil R. Jones 'Jameson' story in that issue is perhaps the weakest, and Poul Anderson's *THE STAR BEAST* the best, but a short tale by Alfred Coppel, *HALF-LIFE*, which concerns a 'brain-in-a-box,' rates high, and the shorter yarn by Hubbard, with a surprise ending, is also very good. November issue runs a long tale by Anderson again, *FLIGHT TO FOREVER*, plus shorter

stories by Coppel, Neville, and Robert Moore Williams, to name the 'known' authors. (A point that interests me personally is that OF never seems to get reviewed in this mag . . .)

Ray Palmer's second mag, *IMAGINATION*, opened out in October with a good first issue, longest tale being *LOOK TO THE STARS*, by Willard Hawkins; it is good as well as long, having a mixture of space-travel, 'Adam-and-Eve' theme, and some pre-destiny intermingled. The result is very readable. Chet Geier turns out a nice fantasy in *THE SOUL EATERS*, somewhat in the Merritt style, and the other three tales are by Rog Phillips, Kris Neville, and E. W. Ludwig. Format is the same as *OTHER WORLDS*, by the way. The December issue has eight tales, and includes some names new to me in the author line-up. I recognise Guy Archette (Chester S. Geier), John Beynon, and Mack Reynolds; Milton Lesser is familiar, but the other four seem new. I've not yet read the issue, so can't comment . . . to be frank, if any more magazines come out I'll have to give up reading some of them . . . but October *OTHER WORLDS* has had my attention. Editor Palmer kicks off with a diatribe against reprint mags . . . those of you who read my comments in last OF will doubtless be as amused at this as I was. Ray must think readers have short memories! However, I do agree with the point of view put forward in that section of the editorial . . . but I also agree with Will Temple's letter in Dec. TWS—if the author can rake in royalties from reprints, all well and good. But to the story content; Fredric Brown has produced something called *THE FROWNZLY FLOGGELS*, based on pic by Hannes Bok. That sort of thing is okay for interest occasionally, although by right of place it belongs with other 'curiosa' in fanzines, but when we get two in one issue I start wondering if Ray is making any money out of this 'zine . . . he has to use an awful lot of filler. Second item of this nature is attributed to one Hubert George Wells, and is a synopsis of 'his posthumous epic of man's conflict of his inner nature.' I don't think I need point the distinction that makes the difference. If you don't see it at first glance, examine that name again.

Once again I'm left with a whole pile of mags, and must just make short notes on them. Sorry, but ASF is again one of the unfortunate items which cannot be done justice. August had two stories worthy of note, *LAST ENEMY*, H. B. Piper (or Fyfe, as you please), and *A PINCH OF CULTURE*, by Bernard I. Kahn, plus one more in de Camp's 'Viagens' series. De Camp opens out a three-part tale in this series in October, *THE HAND OF ZEI*, which shows signs of being a lively and amusing tale. His article in September issue is also interesting. Best tale in that issue, by William Morrison, *THE SACK*, is only a short . . . but very neat. *METEOR*, by William T. Powers, is also good, and although I found Leiber's *THE LION AND THE LAMB* rather slow, it makes interesting reading. *WORLD MOVER*, by GeOSMITH, in *FUTURE* Nov. (now 20c.), is best and longest tale, and has the intricacy of a vV yarn. *FANTASTIC STORY QUARTERLY*, Fall, reprints Coblenz' *IN CAVERNS BELOW*, and *THE LONG FLIGHT* by Carter Sprague is a new tale which depicts a rather unusual situation. *WEIRD TALES*, November, has nothing outstanding, but the usual selection of good yarns for folk who appreciate material of this type is there. *AVON FANTASY READER* 14 appeared in October, with ten tales including another Robert E. Howard reprint, and others by Bradbury, Cummings, and Whitehead. I'll agree, as some folk have pointed out, that I rather skip the British mags in these reviews—but our schedules just won't fit. At the moment I could cover *NEW WORLDS* 7, but by the time you read this NW 8 will be out. However, I rate the tales in NW 7 as: Best two, *PLAGIARIST*, Peter Phillips, and *QUEST*, by F. G. Rayer, with John Brody's *THE DAWN BREAKS RED* tagging along well behind. Will Temple's *MARTIAN'S FANTASY* is an attempt at humour, and it is amusing, definitely, but with only four stories in the issue I wish Ted Carnell had used something more serious. I am afraid that *SCIENCE-FANTASY* No. 1, edited by Walt Gillings, did not impress too favourably. E. R. James' *ADVENT OF THE ENTITIES*, a sequel to *PREFABRICATION* (*FANTASY* 2, April '47) was good, although the break in continuity was



rather too great. You'd's MONSTER was a reprint from somewhere, I am sure. Arthur Clarke's TIME'S ARROW was fair, but I'm sure Arthur can do better. THE BELT, long tale by J. M. Walsh, was not at all the type of tale that I like to see. Of course, if it is Editor Gillings' policy to print material which will 'educate' the initiate reader from the standard of 'tripe' mags up to the heights of literary excellence of aSF, GSF, and NW, maybe he is on the right lines. But this material will not go down too well with the 'veteran' fan, I fear. John Spencer & Co. have produced a third mag, TALES OF TO-MORROW No. 1; one tale at least shows an improvement over the items in their previous four mags. But they have a long way to go to even equal the (personal opinion, Walt) mediocre S-F i. And now I'll retire: apologies to all offended parties!

## Book Reviews

by E. J. CARNELL.

Completists will doubtless desire the hitherto unpublished work of Stanley G. Weinbaum, THE DARK OTHER, (FPCI \$3.00), but this tale, written early in Weinbaum's short but famed career as an author, is not typical of his better and later work. It is more a story of sex-obsession, although having the elements of fantasy-weird fiction. One reviewer has already stated that this book should not have been published, for it smudges Weinbaum's otherwise excellent reputation. This may be so; however, the book is out, and you may buy it. But let us move on to pleasanter things, such as the Fletcher-de Camp whacky tale THE CASTLE OF IRON (Gnome, \$2.50). This tale has been rewritten to fit the revised ending of THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER, and personally, I feel it has been improved—only slightly, of course, for it was already a very fine story. But it is now one which ranks high even for the de Camp-Fletcher combination. It is to be hoped that on a future date a third tale will appear, to remove one of the characters from the somewhat difficult position he is left in at the end of this story. L. Sprague de Camp also has a book, probably due to be released in January, from Prime Press. This is non-fiction, but of great interest to s-f fans. The title will be LOST CONTINENTS: The Atlantis Theme in History, Science, and Literature, and it comprises some 90,000 words of text, plus 20,000 of appendices and other 'end matter.' Excerpts have appeared in the form of de Camp's recent articles in aSF, and one is yet to be published in GALAXY. If you have liked the articles, you will like the book.

Isaac Asimov's latest, THE STARS, LIKE DUST, due from DOUBLE-DAY (\$2.50) will be closer the present day than was PEBBLE IN THE SKY, dealing with the anarchic period before the establishment of the FIRST EMPIRE, when Earth, while a ruined planet, has not yet been forgotten as the original home of mankind. The yarns which comprise the FOUNDATION series proper will probably be issued by Gnome as a tri-ology at a later date. Other items to come from Doubleday include THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS, a new tale by John Beynon, under the name 'John Wyndham,' and the second Bradbury Book, FROST AND FIRE. From the American Press, there are many more titles, all perhaps as important as those mentioned, but as with KFS in BROWSING THRU, I find it hard to cover them all, so it is perhaps best to do justice to a few. From the British publishers, the outlook appears favourable. At least one publisher (BOARDMAN) is taking the risk, and is issuing THE BIG EYE, by Max Ehrlich, and Fredric Brown's WHAT MAD UNIVERSE? at 7/ each. Other items which will appeal to certain sections of fandom are Mervyn Peake's GORMENGHAST (E. & S. 15/-) a sequel and conclusion to the microcosmos of TITUS GROAN, and THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SUN, by Paul Capon (Heinemann, 9/6). This latter I have not

yet read, but it has been noted by H. W. Smith's in their book news as 'a scientific romance,' and I am informed that it is of a higher standard than most British works of this nature. One of the recurrent sociological novels will have some appeal, also. THE FURIOUS EVANGELIST, Hugh Hickling (Redman 10/6) deals with a future Britain where an anti-democratic feeling is in political vogue. Unfortunately, this work, although amusing is somewhat immature.

I should be negligent indeed if I did not mention THE CONQUEST OF SPACE, although news of the British reprinting of this masterpiece by Willy Ley and Chesley Bonestell, is probably stale. Published at 18/6, this edition is slightly smaller than the USA printing, and the original end papers have been omitted. However, this size fits the average book-shelf with greater ease than the larger print, and the end papers are a repetition of some which appear in the body of the work, so this loss is not great. The other three items which are worth mentioning are INTERPLANETARY FLIGHT, by A. C. Clarke, B.Sc., perhaps better known to O.F. readers as Arthur C. Clarke. This slim 8/6 work from Temple Press makes an excellent continuation study to follow CONQUEST OF SPACE, and although we would all perhaps rather see Mr. Clarke writing more fiction, he has produced here a worthwhile book for the serious reader: second of the three is the work of Immanuel Velikofsky. WORLDS IN COLLISION, (15/-) again a reprint from USA. This has received much publicity, and so I hardly think it requires more than a mention. Third and last is the new edition of ATLANTIS: 'The Antediluvian World,' by Ignatius Donnelly, edited by Egerton Sykes. For Atlanteans, this book is, of course, a classic. Originally published in 1882, it has been the source of much 'Atlantean' writing. It is a pity that Mr. Sykes should have made the mistake of misnaming one of fandom's heroes, and the 'Atlanteans' antagonists.

As a closing note, mention must be made of the 'WORLD FANTASY CLASSICS,' a slightly larger-than-pocketbook series in which are being reprinted under new titles, various of the war-time longer stories from the USA pulps. Ed Hamilton's A YANK AT VALHALLA, appears as THE MONSTERS OF JUNTONHEIM; THE BEASTS FROM BEYOND, by Manly Wade Wellman, was better titled STRANGERS ON THE HEIGHTS, in SS, '44 Summer. THARKOL, LORD OF UNKNOWN, (Hamilton) is another reprint from STARTLING. For the newer readers, however, here is chance to get for 1/6 the best stories in backdated mags that would cost them considerably more to-day.

## Fanzine List

- GALLEY, the little magazine quarterly. \$1.50c. per year. Not strictly fantasy, but of general interest to fanzine editors and others. Proof, Inc., North Hollywood, Box 190, Calif., USA.
- THE NEKPROMANTICON. Quarterly, \$1.00 per year. An excellent fantasy fiction mag., printed: 1905 Spruce Avenue, Kansas City, 1, Missouri, USA.
- RHODOMAGNETIC DIGEST. The most adult of current fanzines. I think it is bi-monthly, but can't see why I've not had October. 25c. per issue. 2524 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley, 4, Calif., USA.
- FANSCIENT: An excellent pocket-size photolith mag. news and fiction, and bibliographies. 6 issues \$1.00. Don Dav., 3435 NE 38th Ave., Portland, 13, Oregon, USA or 6 for 5/- thru Op. Fantast.
- SCIENCE-FICTION NEWS LETTER. Bi-monthly, up-to-the-minute news of general interest. 10c. per copy, Bob Tucker, Box 260, Bloomington, Ill., USA.



**MEZRAB.** A thoughtful and interesting mimeo-ed zine. Free. from Marion and Robert Bradley, Box 431, Tahoka, Texas, USA.

**THE FANZINE EDITOR** A 'must' for all fanzine editors and publishers. Quarterly, free: Lee D. Quinn, Box 1199, Grand Central Station, New York, 17, N.Y., USA.

**PEON.** Bi-monthly, general interest and fiction, articles, etc., 9 issues \$1.00. Charles Lee Riddle, PNI, USN, Fleet All Weather Training Unit, Pacific, c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, Calif.

**CHALLENGE.** Specialises in sf. poetry. Quarterly, \$1.00 per year. Avalon World Arts Academy, Rogers, Arkansas, USA.

**THE EXPLORER.** OO of I.S.F.C.C. Articles, yarns, and club news. 50c. per year. Ed Noble, Jr., Box 49, Girard, Penna., USA.

**SCIENCE, FANTASY, and SCIENCE FICTION** Fiction, artwork. Quarterly, sub rate 75c. per year. S.F. & S.F. Amateur Press, Box 696, Kings Park, L.I., N.Y., USA, or 6/3 thru Op. Fantast.

**FANTASY ADVERTISER.** The name is descriptive. If you want to buy or sell, this is the 'zine. 75c. per year, 1745 Kenneth Road, Glendale 1, Calif., or 5/4d. thru Dell's (see small ads.)

**UTOPIAN.** 40 Pages of articles and fiction. 25c. per issue. R. J. Banks, Jr., 111 S. 15th St., Corsicana, Texas, USA.

**ORB** "with an eye on fandom." Rate not known, but believed 20c. per issue. One of the liveliest zines, but an awkward size. Bob Johnson, P.O. Box 941, Greeley, Colo., USA.

**SIRIUS.** Nice and lively, but could be better mimeo-ed. 15c. copy, Stan Serxner, 1308 Hoe Ave., Bronx 59, N.Y., USA.

**WESTERN STAR.** A neat and informative newsletter type of zine. 12 for 50c., Jim Kepner, 1534 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, 11, Calif., USA.

**ALEPH-NUL.** An N3F 'zine, irregular, as the only issue I've had is May, and I've subscribed! Good, tho. Rate not quoted, Bill Venable, 32 Park Place, R.D.4., Pittsburgh, 9, Pa., USA.

**FANTASY TIMES.** The only difference twixt this and NEWS LETTER is that SFNL is printed 12 for \$1.00, James V. Taurasi, 137-03 32nd Ave., Flushing, N.Y., USA.

**THE TALISMAN.** Quarterly, neatly produced, adult, fiction and articles. \$1.00 for 6, Roy W. Loan, Jr., P.O. Box 3224, Columbia Heights Station, Washington, 10, D.C., USA., or 5s. for 7, to Walter A. Willis (see SLANT below).

**SLANT.** A printed 'zine produced by a wild Irishman, lately infesting London. Contains some of the best amateur fiction recently printed. TWO items at least have already seen professionally reproduction! 9d. per copy, or 2 for one 25c. prozine. Walter A. Willis, 170 Uppernewtownards Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

**BURROUGHS BULLETIN.** Rate and periodicity (!) not quoted. Vernon Coriell, 1314 Janssen St., Pekin, Ill., USA.

**THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN.** OO of the N3F, free to members only. Full details of the N3F thru Op. Fantast.

The above seems to represent a pretty fair selection of this last quarter's mailings. If you were missed, I'm sorry. Mention of a couple of British 'zines is made elsewhere, so keep your hats on, Mike and Derek. I regret that it will not be possible to keep this listing as a permanent feature, but I shall include at least ten of the best 'zines in each issue. Fanzine editors may have a ten word advert, not including address, for 10c. or 1/-, however.

#### THE FANZINE PUBLISHER

In U.K. there are four of us, who put out 'little magazines,' known to the science fiction world as 'fanzines.' These four are Walt Willis, who you will find listed under the FANZINE LIST: Mike Tealby, who is also the librarian of O.F.'s Postal Library, and Derek Pickles, who has just joined our ranks. The fourth, of course, is myself. Mike's 'zine, WONDER, is a neat little effort in a half-foolscap size, and is issued quarterly, 2/- for four issues. Mike has a personal slant towards Flying Saucers, and the Shaver Mystery, which he reflects in his 'zine. I don't

hold this against him, for it is a facet of fantasy that needs attention. In my own efforts I have generally decried both these subjects. Mike doesn't hold that against me, either. Derek's 'zine I've not yet seen, it is so new. Title is PHANTASMAGORIA, rate 1/- for four issues, quarterly. This is a new venture for Derek, who is already successfully acti-fanning with a 'clipping bureau,' and who has recently extended that service to 'research' into books for folks who have neither the time, nor opportunity, to do the work themselves.

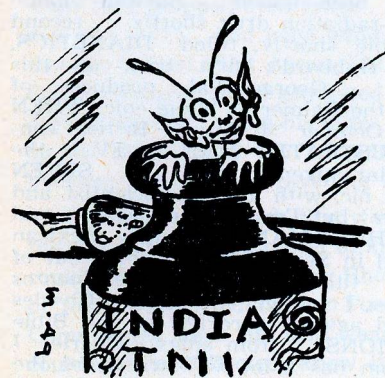
We enjoy ourselves, publishing, editing, and trading, etc. We'd like to see you join us, either as an editor-publisher, or as a contributor. Preferably, as an editor. Don't expect to make a profit, tho. Mike's zine at last pays for itself, but I know mine doesn't, and I doubt if Walt's does. Until Derek gets really going, I don't suppose his will. But if you have a spare five bob a week, you can afford to publish quarterly, and have fun.

Your basic requirements are that 5/- per week, and access to a typewriter and some means of reproduction. If you have those, there is nothing to stop you. You'll find we will be glad to give you the benefit of our not inconsiderable experience, we can give you mailing lists, and some publicity. We can help you with material, for we all have files of items which for some reason or other we have not used. We will be willing to help you estimate costs, suggest methods of layout, and explain the 'tricks of the trade.' There are plenty of those...

If you have any real desire to get into our small circle, just drop one of us a line. NOW... We are considering starting an Amateur Fantasy Publishing Association, and we'd like you in with us from the start.

Derek Pickles, 41 Compton Street, Dudley Hill, Bradford, Yorks.  
Walter A. Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, N. Ireland.  
Micheal Tealby, 8 Burfield Avenue, Loughborough, Leics.  
Capt. K. F. Slater, 13 Gp., R.P.C., BAOR, 23.

## General !Chuntering



Gnurrs (from the vood-vork out), hunkles (happy), and now the kwiggi (take two and) ... M.o F. & S.F. is sure producing a Marvellous Menagerie! ... British fan Peter Glover is now in the R.A.F. ... and by now everyone knows that the editor of SPACE-WARP has joined the army, and so goodbye WARP ... but fandom will not forget Art Rapp easily, methinks ... Peter Ridley has joined the British fans who 'have sold a story' ... who says fandom is devoid a sense of humour? ... I asked USA correspondents to put cards in packages as wrappers were often so badly torn that sender's name could not be read ... does anyone need the two of diamonds or the five of spades? ... Vol. II, on cover of last ish of O.F. was a printer's error ... 'Mac' apologises ... a little late to comment on the NORWES-

CON but for the benefit of folks who have not yet heard, it was an unqualified success ... NEW ORLEANS was voted for the '51 convention site ... anent FOUNDATION and FIRST EMPIRE yarns, Isaac Asimov says 'If I live long enough, all the Galatic History I can dream up



will be sketched in' . . . I'm sure O.F. readers will join me in wishing Mr. Asimov a very long life . . . he better make a date with Doc. Methuselah, just to keep us happy . . . one result of the NORWESCON is a new organisation 'Fantasy Writers of America,' backed by Tony Boucher, Howard Browne, Bea Mahaffey, de Ackerman, and Rog Phillips, among many others . . . indirectly, this is another step up for sf in general . . . aSF announce an anthology from their back files, to be selected by readers . . . EVERYBODY'S, Oct. 21, contains two extracts from Ley & Bonestell CONQUEST OF SPACE, with pics, 4 page spread . . . a new fanzine to come shortly from Vernon L. McCain, titled WASTE-BASKET, should be interesting . . . Vernon get around . . . every letter I have on file from him bears a different address! . . . I had a letter recently from old time J. Michael Rosenblum, now retired from acti-fandom . . . among other things Mike says . . . 'you can mention where suitable that Betty and I are pleased to see all fantasy enthusiasts at our home' . . . the address is 7 Grosvenor Park, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, 7 . . . Betty and Mike is nice folks, folks, but drop 'em a line of warning before you barge in . . . on Science-Fantasy 1 a well-known fan comments . . . 'Science-Fantasy Review attained a world-renowned high standard . . . Science-Fantasy professional hits an all-time low' . . . a little too harsh, perhaps, but honest. Walt, it was not up to my expectation either . . . Roger Nelson has started a fan club in San Diego, and membership is picking up . . . keep it local and stay happy, Roger . . . F.F.M., Dec. issue, has not appeared, but a Jan. issue is on the stands, only 112 pages, no inside illos. and in a blurb on Pop-Pubs inside cover SUPERSCIENCE and FANTASTIC NOVELS are not mentioned! . . . page content of F.F.M. has dropped to an estimated 600 words . . . latest Bantam Books include HOW TO SURVIVE AN ATOM BOMB, and a small anthology by Lewis Padgett. A GNOME THERE WAS . . . latest collection of Lord Dunsany. THE STRANGE JOURNEYS OF COLONEL POLDERS, published by Jarrolds. 9/6. Nov. 16th . . . SHASTA Publishers have announced intention of concentrating on new tales. Mel Korshak states that reprinting is fast becoming impossible owing to over-activity in that field . . . this will be good news if the new stuff is worthwhile . . . AUSTRALIAN MONTHLY. Aug. 50. was yet another periodical to print a combination of CONQUEST OF SPACE & DESTINATION MOON . . . Britain's own flying saucer was announced in the press around Oct. 21, named the ECTOPLAT, this 6 ft. plastic disc has no engine, or working parts, but can be made to fly around in circles at a height of some sixteen feet for just as long as the operator wishes . . . no details of method have been issued . . . Harwell atomic scientists are hoping to produce an anti-radiation drug shortly . . . second book on DIAETICS should be available shortly, titled: DIANETICS. WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU . . . Hubbard's first book on this subject had sold 55,000 in October . . . George Pal, producer of 'Destination Moon,' is now working on the Balmer & Wylie epic. WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE, for Paramount . . . October '50 Argosy British. contained yet another Bradbury. THE ILLUSTRATED MAN. . . TV in the USA now gives Buck Rogers and similar juvenile sf . . . SEVEN DAYS TO NOON is an sf based British pic, with a 'mad' scientist and an atom bomb . . . that may sound 'corny' but I'm told the suspense and action in the film almost equals THE THIRD MAN . . . a new Mexican mag. featuring fantasy in part, appeared in September . . . three out of six yarns in first issue were fantasy . . . title: 'Antologia. De Cuentos Fantasticos, Policiaos, y De Misterio'—no. I can't get you copies. Charles Lee Riddle, in October PEON, protested against a review of the Bible written in a fanzine titled INCINERATIONS . . . from effigy. Charles I couldn't agree with you more . . . fandom has a lot to learn about the basic question of respecting other folk's beliefs . . . at this point I start to tear out my hair, as my pile of clippings and notes appears mixed . . . next item in the pile is headed 'YOU AND OUR FRONT COVER JUMPER,' and continues with a lot of funny things about K1.P2, etc. . . . JOYCE! . . . it looks like I come to a sticky finish . . . oh, well. merry Xmas and a happy New Year to you all . . . K.F.S.

## Last Stage Reflectorsman

By TERRY JEEVES.

A hard-driven pentagonal screen completely protected the Planet Drencho III.; that screen, powered as it was by the power of disintegrating xenon atoms and calculated by no lesser brains than those of the Pueruns, had heretofore stopped every beam, bar, or hexagon of energy that the Macromic fleet had been able to bring to bear upon it. But now Reflectorsman Nikkinson was hurtling toward it, away from Puer, at the nigh to inconceivable planetary velocity of his non-cuprous speedster.

He had to penetrate that screen and get back to Terra if the Macromic fleet were to prevail against the terrible weapon even then being forged by the Pueruns. Even now, when scant lightsecs separated him from its deadly energies, he was busily computing his striking angle and cancel-beam energies in order to break through that hellish veil. Seconds later he flipped over a switch, and from the nose of his speedster there flashed a beam no less powerful than those of the Puerun fort itself. There was a blinding flash as the two forces met, the very fabric of space was torn for an infinitesimal microsecond, then he was through. Even as he went loose and his ship accelerated to interstellar-eating speeds, the screen behind him vanished as the Puerun Fleet rose after him.

The Pueruns gained, in spite of everything he could do. In the omniplate their stubby hulls grew larger and larger, until at last out flashed a tugger bean and his tiny vessel made the instantaneous stop peculiar to loose vessels. Within seconds he was englobed and they were beaming him with their primes. Nor was Reflectorsman Nikkinson idle; well was it for the Puerun Captains that day, that their screens were xenon driven, for Nikkinson fought . . . fought while his outer screens glowed pink . . . fought while they passed from visible light down to infra-red . . . fought while they dropped even lower . . . still he fought when they dropped right down to D.C.! And even while he fought he was frantically reflecting a thought to Port Pilot Aynes, but no thought could get through that madly driven thoughtference generated by the Pueruns and which filled space for daysecs around. Now his outer screens were gone, and they were working on his inners; they too fell and his wall shield was the only protection between him and the ravening forces of their beams.

Nikkinson laughed; that wall shield was driven, not by xenon, but by the newly discovered power of krypton atoms, and nothing then computable could disrupt it. Hexagons, Rhomboids, Parallelopipeds, and even triangles of force were tried by the Pueruns, but all in vain. Then the Puerun Commander tried his last weapon, the Decacone of Force. He knew it could not be deflected, knew it was invincible. With a cold thought he ordered his gun-layers to prepare the Decacone. Then it was fired. The Puerun Commander thought that nothing could withstand that awful blast.

He was right. . . .

(Last of the Last Stage Reflectorsman.)



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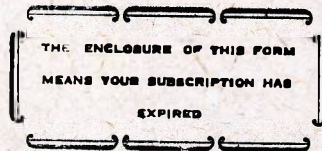
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