

SCIENCE-FANTASY

REVIEW

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Monday

"Science-Fiction: Seeker of a Better To-morrow"

May 29, 1939

FAN CLANS GATHERING CONVENTION SUCCESS

BRITISH FANDOM scored another outstanding triumph with the success of the third SFA Convention held in London. An imposing array of celebrities, very strong Provincial representation and great enthusiasm marked the occasion.

The afternoon session, given over to the Association's private business was quickly and satisfactorily dealt with, several changes in the personnel of the Executive receiving confirmation. It was hoped on all sides that accelerated progress would result. Professor Low was again elected President, the other nomination being Walter H. Gillings, Editor of TALES OF WONDER.

Evening provided the highlight of the proceedings. A crowded platform gave the large gathering of members and friends (including several ladies) over three hours varied entertainment, such well-known personalities as Professor Low, W.J. Passingham, author of several s-f serials, and W.H. Gillings giving addresses, while M.G. Hugi and Charnock Walsby - s-f authors - Ted Carnell, SFA Treasurer, BIS Clarke and F.J. Arnold - leading fans - added congratulations.

The three main speakers each asked for a more moderate policy than is being pursued at present in USA, pleading for

plausible rather than fantastic stories.

Professor Low opened the proceedings by pointing out that s-f repelled the ordinary English public by asking them to believe what they deemed to be impossible; yet if we gave them more familiar everyday objects and associations we could build up s-f story interest quite as intriguing and yet far more plausible than the spate of yarns we have to-day. Until this step were taken s-f would make no material advance in this country.

W.H. Gillings pursued the same point, although not prepared to go as far as Prof. Low. Yet he admitted the public had to be weaned on simple stories before we could attempt to approach the high level of 1930. He sincerely hoped we would never deteriorate to the level of present US stories and promised to do his utmost to keep TALES OF WONDER on the right path.

W.J. Passingham followed up with the view that the average s-f yarn was little better than a fairy tale, because it was just as impossible. To put over fiction at all you must be convincing and accurate, so he insisted s-f should be this also, giving personal examples from his own experience to prove his point. He suggested that as editors knew their public best the only way to be a successful writer was to write to

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EDITORIAL

K.G. Chapman, former Executive Secretary, dropped a bombshell at the 1939 Convention by revealing that recent changes in SFA personnel were precipitated by backbiting and insulting remarks freely indulged in by certain members.

Officials had no objection to honest criticism, but recent methods made it impossible for them to continue as before.

This position is strongly deprecated by the S-F REVIEW. If honest opinions cannot be aired without becoming objectionable, personal and vindictive and then developing into an underground whispering campaign there is something wrong somewhere - either in the SFA itself or its members. Criticisms, yes; but insults, no!

S-FR will exert its right to criticise. It will do so without fear or favour. Wherever truth is discovered that ought to be made public we shall endeavour to do so no matter how unpleasant it may be; that is our duty to s-f fans, authors and editors; and if any of our remarks may seem on occasion to tend towards personal insult we tender our apologies for such is not the policy of the Editor even though it may be that of certain contrib-

utors - or would-be contributors. Comment, too, we shall make but always in the interest of Truth and our Search for a Better To-morrow.

But calumny we abhor together with its employers; we know a few axioms concerning those to whom it is not pleasant to listen, and whose writings do not make easy reading. Our principles forbid us revealing their names. . .

ON THE SOAP BOX

By M. Windass, Leeds

So this is S-FR! I'm not so sure after reading it that the initials don't stand for Such Frightful Nonsense. However, I like your slant and I hope you won't degenerate to the level of other fan magazines; that is, wailing how bad all s-f indubitably is and how good the fans running the magazine are in particular.

And say! Who in the antithesis of Heaven is that guy Heald? Never heard of him in fandom before.

By M.K. Hansen, London

All that guff about the BIS selling its secrets (and its soul) to the Air Ministry is, I am given to understand, without any solid foundation in fact. If it did the BIS membership would drop pretty rapidly.

Please convey my congratulations on the S-FR as a whole to the right quarter. I liked the neat and newsy first issue a lot and will subscribe without fail next Sunday.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT . . . ?

FLASH GORDON serial commences in "Modern Wonder" shortly

WIDE WHITE PAGE a book by Boall Cunningham is now Remaindered @ 1s.0d. Fantasyarn of idealist civilization in Antarctic.

PRO-MAG PARS

FANTASY appears again in July! - 28th to be exact. Seems possible we are to have regular publication henceforth. Congratulations to FANTASY, and long life!

TALES OF WONDER OUT JUNE 30th PRINTS

Venus Adventure by John Beynon
Across the Abyss by G.C. Wallis
City of Machines by F.J. Arnold
Week-End Rocket to the Moon - Now!
 by A.C. Clarke.
Preacher of Eternity by M.G. Hugi
The Yeast Men by D.H. Keller
Big Cloud by Coutts Brisbane

American ARGOSY Weekly regularly presents good fantasy: Issue for February 25 features NON-STOP TO MARS by Jack Williamson - a 20-page novelet.

Issues from March 11 (six in all) contain SEVEN OUT OF TIME by Arthur Leo Zagat former partner in the Schachner-Zagat axis.

Latest Remainder of ASTOUNDING is February 1939 issue, which contains no outstanding stories.

"Crucible of Power" by Jack Williamson reads more like a synopsis than a story. Shorts are cameo-like but entertaining; Schachner's and Kummer's stories are passing good.

"Cosmic Engineers" starts as a serial in this issue but comment is withheld until all parts are published.

Don't miss L. Sprague de Camp's letter about King Arthur fable.

Cover excellent.

SCIENCE FICTION, Charles D. Hornig's new magazine has already seen two issues in U.S.A. but has not yet been seen in this country either current or Remainder. With the August issue out in America June 20th, this magazine will appear monthly; is at present regarded as the only real s-f magazine operating across the Atlantic.

KEY-NOTES (2) Why Do You Read?

In the Notes last issue we gave suggestions as to a method for use in determining the value of stories and articles you read. Since you were asked to allot some 70 marks for the Idea, it may be as well to ask the question given above in order to arrive at this marking.

I suggest that you READ for three reasons at least:-

1. To gain knowledge
2. To experience some kind of pleasurable sensation.
3. To acquire something which will, or may, prove useful in life.

The three are radically distinct, although they may well be intermixed. For example, one person may argue that he is not interested in 1. unless it comes under 2. or 3. That would demonstrate a short-sighted view of things, but as a rule it would be quite inaccurate. Actually every man is interested in the pursuit of knowledge for its and his own sake, whether he admits or is aware of the fact or not.

More common are those who state they read for entertainment (2.) only. They, too, demonstrate that the statement is not to be taken too seriously whenever they ask for certain better standards of writing, plots, or the like.

Therefore, it is wiser to include all three factors in your critique. Mr. A. may make up his 70 thus: (1) 25; (2) 20; (3) 25; while Mr. B. allots 10, 40, 20. They differ very considerably, yet both allow 70 for the idea. Why do YOU read?
 -ELG

CONTAGION TO THIS WORLD

a book by Fedor Kaul is now available as a Remainder @ 1s.0d. Brilliant crippled scientist infects Europe with a malignant plague. A very well written novel that is recommended.

SCIENCE-FICTION IN 1938: A Review

LAST YEAR was undoubtedly the most eventful in the history of science-fiction since 1926 saw the birth of science-fiction magazines with the first issue of AMAZING STORIES. More new publications appeared on the market than in any other similar period, while great changes took place in those already established.

In England, FANTASY's first tentative issue was followed in America by MARVEL SCIENCE STORIES, STARTLING STORIES, and promise of DYNAMIC SCIENCE STORIES and FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. As each is continuing to appear science-fiction's supporters must have increased correspondingly in number; a fact which we not with satisfaction.

These new magazines are at least up to contemporary standards and give hope that with the inclusion of book-length novels in MARVEL and STARTLING we shall get many first-class yarns in future.

Changes in the established magazines are no less important. AMAZING STORIES now appears under the banner of Ziff-Davis Publishing Co. of Chicago, and from October onwards replied to fans requests by becoming a Monthly.

Two s-f authors secured editorships: Raymond A. Falmer of AMAZING and John W. Campbell, Jr. of ASTOUNDING. Future contents pages will prove whether or not this new trend is beneficial.

On the Art side, new blood appeared. Julian S. Krupa and Robert Fuqua gracing AMAZING's pages met with a mixed reception. Paul is once again in print in MARVEL and DYNAMIC, while Wessolowski and Morey continue to lead the field. In March, ASTOUNDING's title doffed "Stories" for "SCIENCE-FICTION"; in December, the cover-title was adopted to more modern style of lettering. This issue

boasted a revised contents page, while book-jacket illustrations were introduced, Editor Campbell claiming good reception of the changes.

On the whole, progress in 1938 shows great promise for the future. Whether this promise will be fulfilled or not remains to be seen. A higher level of writing is definitely necessary, and far more hack work must be consigned to the editorial waste-basket. Fans must keep up the pressure until their demands are met.

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THE WAY TO A NEW-TO-MORROW

IN HIS recent radio speech, the Duke of Windsor said love of Peace should precede love of country. In other words only internationalism can save the world from the destruction of a future war.

S-f is in itself international in nature with fan activities extending throughout the globe, and surmounting all national frontiers. Many yarns praise a future World State in which individual countries will be welded together in universal brotherhood and Earth as a single nation will reach a glorious new To-morrow!

We read much of the necessity for and the "benefits" of a future war and that the highest form of Service one can give is to train to kill one's fellow men. We must confess our distrust of such doctrines. S-FR demands who wants to fight whom. Our difficulties with other nations are not so great that we must cease thinking of solutions to them and resort to savage emotion-relieving slaughter. This, too, is the belief of the Little Man in every state.

Looks like we've got to push science-fiction harder than ever, both at home and abroad, and make the nations realize there are real alternatives to war.

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WHY IS POLTON CROSS?

Because we fear Thornton got the Ayre!

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