

SCIENCE



FANTASY



REVIEW

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

No. 4.

July 1st, 1939

STILL MORE SFN MAGAZINES?

FIVE TO HIT NEWSSTANDS IN AMERICA THIS YEAR? ZIFF-DAVIS AND PARAGON FEATURES SYNDICATE IN THE MARKET FOR FANTASTIC AND WEIRD LITERATURE!

We have received information as to the possibility of at least one and maybe five new fantasy magazines seeing publication some time in the near future.

Paragon Features Syndicate of Argo, Ill., U.S.A. is in the market for fantastic fiction of three types: straight science-fiction, adventure stories without science of any sort, and orthodox weird tales (not horror and terror stuff as featured in MYSTERY TALES, and the like).

They require stories of 1,000 words and upwards, so it is obvious that they intend them for magazine use.

Ziff-Davis, publishers of AMAZING STORIES, may publish shortly two more magazines, one of which is to be on weird lines. This information is not absolutely certain, but already Ziff-Davis are soliciting to established authors for MSS of the type they require for their new mags.

Whether the fans will welcome this news or not is a matter for conjecture; personally we consider that the number of Sfn mags on the market does not matter providing the stories are up to standard, original and well-written.

NEW FRENCH SFN MAG

B rush up your French, Fans! We have definite news of the publication of a French Science-Fiction magazine. Details as to make-up etc. are not yet forthcoming, but the publishers are in the market for stories of the fantastic type not necessarily only from French writers. Here's a chance for some of our author-readers to crash an entirely new market!

We hope to give more comprehensive information in future issues.

"SCIENCE FICTION" IS HERE

T he long-awaited magazine SCIENCE FICTION has at last hit the British Remainder shops. This publication, which has seen three issues and which has met with a favourable reception in US, has a cover in the good old style by the famous PAUL, who has also several interior illustrations to his credit. The "old maestro" of Sfn art is still "allX" with us. The stories, all complete are, in our humble opinion, quite up to average; and Patriarch Hugo Gernsback perpetrates the first Editorial, giving the mag his blessing!

SCIENCE-FANTASY REVIEW

: Twice a month :

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E D I T O R I A L.

We hope you like this issue of SFR. We have attempted to make it interesting and entertaining as possible. True, there is no fiction in the supplement but we have several fine efforts for publication in future.

We mean with your support to continue on these lines but we would like to know what your reactions are. Won't you write and tell us your opinions. Half-bricks are as welcome as posies. "On the Soap Box" provides a platform for you all.

And if any of you have theories of your own (or obsessions) why not put them down on paper, and fire them in at us. Don't worry about your literary ability, it's the idea that counts.

If you like SFR. won't you do us the compliment of recommending it to your pen-friends.

ON THE SOAP BOX.By Eric. C. Williams, London.

Best wishes to SFR. Issue 3. is the best yet, full of tit-bits and reviews, just as things should be. Have no news myself, but if I run across anything I'll "bung it in". Carry on as you are now and I'll be more than satisfied.

By Richard.E. Medhurst, London.

On the whole, No.3 seems to be an improvement, if only in point of size. Don't you think it is about time that the saga of the founding of "Tales of Wonder" is given, if not a rest, at least a vacation?

The "Golden Fleece" write up looks extraordinarily like an S.-F. Service boost. Are you being neighbourly? Re the "Moon Pool" article, it was plausible enough, but don't you think articles would be increased in value if you were to mention your authorities? The Atomic Power article is topical enough, and Key Notes continue to be ingenious, though I wonder how many of our hardworking authors could stand up to all this searching criticism?

On searching my files I find that 452 Pro.mags and mags of merit have been published. Which points to the fact that in nine months time approx just 500 will have appeared. Don't you think something should be done to make the 500th magazine outstanding. I wonder which mag will have the honour of being the half-thousandth?

(We thank the above reader for his exhaustive criticism of the SFR and he may be sure that all points in his letter will be given our most careful consideration). Have YOU sent us YOUR letter yet ??????

KEY-NOTES (4). The Result.

So far we have considered the Idea in itself and the adequate or otherwise Exploitation of it.

Now we shall examine the finished product as we have it in print. This is where we shall say what marks we award for the writing.

The question we might well put here are such as these :-

Has the author actually said what he intended to say so as to make it clear to the reader ?

Has he given the story "form" in an artistic and coherent way ?

Has he clothed his idea in garments of beauty as well as of utility ?

You might consider the Beginning, the Middle, and the End of the story.

Clarity of outline, intensity or brilliance of colour, and then conclusiveness or climax-value ; these words may prove useful tags to guide your criticism.

Remember that you are to deal with the actual writing here, not with the Idea or Exploitation.

You have then completed your criticism of the story. You know whether you like the story, what you like best about it or in it, and exactly why you like it.

Put it in another fashion, you have made sure that you really understand the story ; you have given practical Expression to that Understanding ; and that you are in a sound position to apply the criticism by suggesting alterations and improvements.

Here are my complete "marks" for Wellman's story which I used as an example :-

40 - 45 - 50 :: 135.

And your marking is ?

E.L.G.

GLEANINGS.

Gathered by Ron. Holmes.

ARGOSY'S new deal seems to be more and even more stiff. April. 15th. issue printed, "JUST A DREAMER", by Creighton Peet. about a man who dreamed of the future. While the April 22nd. issue published "MINIONS OF THE MOON", by W. Grey Beyer, a fantasy of the year 7966. A.D. The June. 24th. issue starts a new serial "Seven Footprints to Satan", by A. Merritt, (6pts). And due to appear a few weeks after the conclusion of that, is a new story by the English author Jack Mann, entitled "The Ninth Life". (6pts)

The March issue of "BLUE BOOK" features "The Amazon Woman", by H. Bedford-Jones in which the past is viewed through a television machine. The story has cover illustration which is very well done.

February DOC SAVAGE prints an 80 page yarn, entitled "The Yellow Cloud", of planes attacked by a strange emanation.

The April "GOLDEN FLEECE" has another time story. "Octave Seventy five" by Vincent Cornier. Of a man who is transported to 2438. A.D. by time globules. Time and time again ! this time, Comrades of time by Edmond Hamilton. In WEIRD TALES, March issue, well illustrated by Jack Binder.

LOST HORIZON FOUND ?

Does there exist in the remote Himalayas a real "Shangri-La", 'the abode of peace' of the film "Lost Horizon". A recent message from Allahabad claims that such a place has been discovered. It is presided over by a saint 350 years old, and a group of Christian savants, including Englishmen and Americans who have renounced the world. A.B.

WANDERTINGS

BY

WAYFARER.

American fans are making a drive for story illustrations on the back covers free from lettering. Palmer may comply if he gets enough letters in favour.

This mag, which hasn't printed a serial since November last, will soon publish one by Nelson S. Bond, "Sons of the Deluge." Title intrigues us. We hope it's good.

If you are interested (we are not), Amazing's circulation is now said to exceed that of Astounding. So what? Some of us still prefer Astounding.

Morey does the cover and several insides for the August issue. Glad to see this oldtimer on covers again, it sure brings back memories.

It is rumoured that Palmer may leave Editor's sanctum - we dunno the why's and wherefore's - we just heard.

Amazing will run a cover contest beginning with August issue. Write letter on "If I were Editor", win and you'll get an original illustration drawn by Fuqua, Krupa and Co. Go to it, fellas - have a National Gallery in your own sf den!

THRILLING WONDER, August cover is sub-
ject of a new con-
test. Write short story round it and
hope to win \$25 - £5 to you!

This mag is improving. Personally we consider this issue best for some time - well upto new standard set by June anniversary. "Race round t h e Moon" by Kline, complete novel is in best vein of 1930 - 33 s-f vintage. Need we say more? A.B.

SPECIAL NOTE TO SUBSCRIBERS

Subscriptions to SFR can no longer be arranged through the SCIENCE-FICTION SERVICE, all payments for future issues to be sent to editorial address.

(NOTE: Our roving bookworm will report in this department any out-of-the-way s-f books, plays etc. which he unearths during the course of his expeditions in search of such material.

WHILST recently on the prowl around my special haunts I ran to earth a copy of "The Sin of Atlantis" by Roy Horniman (John MacQueen, London 1900) novel about modern 'memories' of Atlantis and introduces a dream of the lost land. As I have never seen it before, must be very rare.

Also picked up "Romance of a Mummy" by Th. Gautier (Spencer Blackett 1886) - archeologists discover Egyptian mummy & papyrus, which latter becomes theme of novel. Not exactly s-f but good fantasy of its kind.

Any readers possessing rare fantasy & s-f novels are invited to write to "Wayfarer," c/o SFR, 14, Henley Ave., Liverpool 21, giving short details of plot, publisher, date of issue (if known) and of course, title and author. Your co-operation will be very welcome and all contributions will be duly acknowledged in this department.

WAYFARER.

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WEIRD WHISPERINGS.

Thomas P. Kelley, author of "I found Cleopatra" and "The Last Pharaoh" has written a s-f novel entitled "A Million Years from Now" which will run as a 4-part serial in Weird Tales in the near future. We understand that this opus is 72,000 words in length (cut from 80,000) and is supposed to be the greatest ever. We will give date of appearance as soon as news is to hand.

April issue has "Armies from the Past" by Edmond Hamilton - a novelette of the future.

MAGAZINE SUPPLEMENT

MADE HUNDREDS OF WORLD'S BEST
MICROSCOPES

by

DEREK CHAPPLE

Antony van Leeuwenhoek was a humble Dutch draper, yet he became a famous scientist because he had two passions, grinding lenses and accuracy.

So much did he believe in accuracy that, having learned the art of lens grinding from the professionals, he set out to produce lenses even finer than their best. And he succeeded. Even then he was not satisfied, he went on making smaller and better lenses until he produced a perfect one less than an eighth of an inch in diameter.

That tiny piece of glass he put into a microscope and peering through it saw things man had never seen before. The objects he gazed at beneath that bit of glass became marvels. Everything became so huge the most minute detail was visible, hairs for example looked like tree trunks. Yet he did not believe what he saw. His passion for accuracy told him he could not trust his eyes, that even they could play tricks on him. So to make certain what he had seen was no fake he made himself still more and better microscopes until he had literally hundreds of them, and he used these masterpieces to check up in dozens of ways the marvels he had seen before, just to be sure he was accurate.

Those microscopes made him fam-

ous, not because of their quality but because of what he saw through them. For that humble draper saw more than hairs and insects in his instruments, he learned things man had never before known, and what is more he was the first man ever to gaze upon microbes.

Like many great discoveries it was due mainly to chance. One day Antony decided to examine a drop of rainwater. He peered through the lens at the apparently pure, clear water then shouted excitedly. The water was alive with minute creatures playing and swimming about in it. Microbes had been discovered!

Leeuwenhoek's passion for accuracy soon ousted his surprise for no sooner had he discovered microbes than he started to measure them. He found they were one thousand times smaller than a flea's eye and that you could get a million into a coarse grain of sand. Not content with that he found he could grow these little creatures in pepper water. Then, certain he was right, he wrote of his discovery to the Royal Society of England.

The scientists in London laughed at his assertions. Living creatures of such a minute size were impossible. They asked for proof, how did he measure them and how

MADE HUNDREDS OF MICROSCOPES (contd)

did he build his microscopes. He offered proof, gave details as to how he measured the animalcule, but refused obstinately to reveal the secret of his microscopes. The Royal Society, anxious to test his theory, had no option but to have a microscope of its own made and when it was prepared members squinted through the instrument at pepper water expecting to find Antony was wrong, but he was not.

Not only was he vindicated, he was made a fellow of the Royal Society and a learned doctor sent to persuade him to sell one of his microscopes. But although he possessed hundreds of wonderful instruments, he would not part with a single one. The doctor could look through some of them, but only the inferior ones, nobody in the world except himself would he let use his best microscopes. He would not even trust the members of his family with them.

Antony did, however, promise to report faithfully to the Society all he saw through his marvellous lenses and this he did, writing great long letters full of scandal about his neighbours mixed up with world shattering discoveries. For turning his microscopes upon anything he could get under the tiny pieces pieces of glass in his hunt for microbes he found them in the most unlikely places. Nor were even people safe from him.

One day out on a stroll he met an old man who had never cleaned his teeth in all his life. He had found that his own teeth still harboured germs even after cleaning, so he thought this man's mouth must be a paradise for them and he could no more let him escape than resist looking through his micro-

scopes. He fastened onto the old fellow and dragged him away to his study to examine his mouth, his victim's discomforture having not the least effect upon his joy when he discovered a new microbe he had not seen before.

Until he was ninety Leeuwenhoek lived in the world of microbes, searching for them everywhere, seeing literally billions of them, yet he never considered them as harmful to man. To him they were merely little animals to be viewed beneath his microscope and reported upon. If ever he thought otherwise, he was far too cautious to make any statement. He dare not even chance being inaccurate. Guessing would not do for him.

He became so famous that Peter the Great and the Queen of England were among the celebrities who visited him and his wonderful microscopes, still although he had the world's finest instruments, that he had seen thousands of things no other man had looked upon, yet he remained just the humble draper he was, his head unturned by the honours given him and all because, as he himself confessed, he was but a servant of truth.

So much a servant in fact was he that, as he lay dying, his chief concern was that his last reports should be sent to the Royal Society in order that he could fulfil the promise made fifty years before that he would serve the society faithfully to the end of his life.

Leeuwenhoek's life is an example of what diligence and strict attention to detail can achieve and a brilliant illustration that truth does pay. The facts in his letters not the scandal, made him famous.

WAKE UPENGLAND!

by

Leslie V. Heald

England has an inferiority complex so far as s-f is concerned. This type of fiction has too long been regarded as juvenile entertainment and it is this fact alone which prevents its advance to its rightful position amongst the literature of this country. In America s-f is now as acknowledged a feature of most magazines as detective and western yarns, yet over here the majority of editors condemn it as the instant they scent it has an s-f slant.

Whilst it may be true that many of s-f's most ardent readers are young yet it must be acknowledged that a large percentage have reached what must be classed as mature and even ripe old ages. Proof of this can be found in the fan clubs and associations. The average age of members of such bodies is surprisingly high and I doubt whether any can be found where it is less than 21. Again the majority of authors who cannot be classed as infants, quite a few being on the wrong side of forty, were fans long before they ever conceived putting an s-f plot to paper, and still are.

Yet, according to English editorial opinions and the B.B.C. s-f stories and serials are fit mainly for juvenile papers and the children's hour and are put over in a manner which fully illustrates the attitude to this class of fiction. Both SCOOPS and MODERN WONDER, the weeklies devoted to science and s-f in England, appealed primarily to those who had not even thought

of leaving school. SCOOPS has suffered oblivion, most probably because of this fact. MODERN WONDER is apparently revising its policy and is aiming at interesting a more adult audience, a tendency which we hope will continue.

Because of this complex, the work of Messrs. W.H. Gillings and T. Stanhope Sprigg is to be commended. They, at any rate, have the courage of their convictions and are attempting to put s-f before the correct public in the U.K. Both TALES OF WONDER and FANTASY whatever faults the fan-critics may believe they have, are adult publications aiming at the general body of fiction readers in this country. Their appearance upon the bookstalls and news-stands means that English s-f is gradually advancing and bearing down the dead weight of that inferiority complex which has been impressed upon it by past history here.

For these reasons, the two magazines should be supported by all fans, even if they do not regard them as being upto the standard they require. Well aware as I am that criticism from fans is heavy and varied, yet I deprecate these efforts if this is the only action the readers are prepared to take.

Criticism that is constructive is in order, but panning for panning's sake is worse than all wrong. Both editors welcome opinions favourable and otherwise, (we must give them credit for that) but we must be fair and remember that, considering what they are up against, these two are

WAKE UP ENGLAND (contd.)

doing trojan work. Whilst it is admittedly the duty of the fan to agitate for better and more advanced stories, at the same time they have a moral responsibility to see that the fiction they like best of all is successful fiction and how can that be possible, if all they do is to cry to heaven the sins of the publications they have so long prayed for?

Nor should we try to set one magazine against the other. In this country there is ample room for both of them, and as monthlies. Moreover more frequent publication would give the editors greater scope for experiments and the inclusion of such stories as delight we fans of several years standing, but which are definitely beyond the mass of people whom it is hoped to attract to s-f. With only four issues per year each, the editors naturally have to attempt to please the great mass of readers first of all and leave the few rabid devourers to grumble if they wish. After all you can't expect professional magazines to be published to satisfy we fans alone

when the SFA after three years of effort has only achieved a membership of 150. No professional effort could exist on such a circulation.

My belief is that, given a fair chance, constructive criticism and constant support by the fans TALES OF WONDER AND FANTASY will achieve monthly publication and that our editors will do all in their power to satisfy all our desires. If when success comes, they refuse our demands, then we shall be justified in smiting them hip and thigh. Now they require our help.

After all, their success is our success, for with the establishment of two such magazines and their regular appearances before the reading public, s-f will have arrived in England. Other publications adult publications, will begin to feature our pet fiction and perhaps subsequently we fans will see as much of it as we constantly dream of.

At least that is my hope. What is yours?

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COMPETITION CORNER

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WHY DO YOU READ SCIENCE-FICTION?

Recently the Liverpool Branch SFA asked its members why they read sf and the answers given were surprisingly varied and interesting, so much so that we would like to know the reasons why our readers prefer this type of fiction.

To encourage you sending in your opinions we are offering a small prize. To the reader sending in the best article answering this

question we will present a copy of any of the latest current s-f mags (English or US) or a free subscription to SFR for 1/-. To enable US readers to enter the closing date will be Aug 16th and the result announced in the first issue after.

We hope everyone will enter. Best efforts will be published. Articles can be any length but not more than 1000 words. Won't you try?