

DOOMSDAY WING, by George H. Smith. Monarch, Derby, Conn. 388, 1963. 124 pp. 35¢

The "Doomsday Wing" is a small division of United States Government officials, who have in their control enough cobalt bombs to destroy not only the Soviet Union, but every living thing on Earth. When World War III is started by a Russian fanatic, this Wing has to decide whether or not to use the atomic bombs.

This story is very contemporary and realistic; however, it is not science fiction.

—Lawrence III

Do you know how many Analog readers are scientists? The results of Analog's recent reader questionnaire will soon be published in Analog. Watch for it.

THE RITES OF OHE, by John Brunner.

CASTAWAYS' WORLD, by John Brunner. Ace, N.Y. F-242, 1963. 129 & 127 pp. 40¢

THE RITES OF OHE and CASTAWAYS' WORLD both deal with heroes who have special abilities.

THE RITES OF OHE features a human, Karmesin, who has lived for a thousand years and was programmed to remember everything that happens during his lifetime. Karmesin is analyzing the Ohes, a strange people whose inability to reach the stars has warped their minds. Thanks to the interesting plot, several new scientific devices, and the main character, this story is worth buying.

NOVELLA - IV

CASTAWAYS' WORLD features a polymath, a man specially designed for planetary exploration. A group of people are forced to live on a planet barely fit for human life. The story tells how these people survive. The plot lacks originality but the main character makes the story worth reading.

NOVELLA - VI

—Glenn Keene

FEATURE SELECTION

THE OTHER WORLD, by J. Harvey Bond. Avalon, N.Y., 1963. 191 pp. \$2.95

THE OTHER WORLD is a novel about part-time sergeant major George Braderick of the National Guard. His main responsibility is a government armory and all it contains.

One day he is stopped and asked to go to the residence of a Dr. Taun, in an adjoining city. He consents, and thereby gets himself into a web of interdimensional intrigue, for when he arrives, Dr. Taun asks him for permission to borrow some weapons from his armory. When Braderick quite naturally refuses, he finds himself suddenly immobile. He discovers that Taun will take the weapons anyway, for use on his own world: one which is co-dimensional with ours, and where Braderick finds himself suddenly placed.

NOVEL - 4

—Bill Pond

ESCAPE TO EARTH, ed. by Ivan Howard. Belmont, N.Y. L92-571, 1963. 164 pp. 50¢

This is an anthology of six stories: three novelets, two "F's" and one "G"; and three short stories, all "e's."

One striking point discovered in reading this anthology was its similarity to the editor's last anthology—NOVELETS OF SCIENCE FICTION, in which all but one or two of the stories had down-beat endings. The review of the editor's other anthology may be found in the first issue of SFR.

—Robert Merryman

Reviewed in the next issue:

THEY WALKED LIKE MEN, by Clifford D. Simak

A LIFE FOR THE STARS, by James Blish

LORD OF THUNDER, by Andre Norton

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

Edited and
Published by
ROBERT W. FRANSON

DECEMBER 9, 1963

NUMBER 8

"THE GOOD OLD DAYS"

There is no such thing as "the good old days" of science fiction. Many fans who feel that the genre is deteriorating point nostalgically to "the good old days" for comparison.

First of all, what are "the good old days?" They are a period in the past, which, when viewed from the present, seems to be the high water mark of science fiction.

What period is considered to be "the good old days" of science fiction? Any period you care to name. The late 'twenties, the early 'forties, the mid-'fifties—all of these, as well as all the years before, after, and in between, are considered by somebody to be "the good old days."

Why do people pick a particular era and say that those days were "the good old days?" The most obvious reason is that the best stories were being published then. However, readers forget that when they first discovered science fiction, all of the stories were imbued with a special wonder for them. Now that they are a little older and a little more cynical, some of the freshness seems to have evaporated.

Another factor involved in evaluating different periods is the mood of the evaluator. As

another reviewer said concerning the Third Age of Middle-Earth, in his review of J.R.R. Tolkien's THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING, "...as with any very distant age, it seems especially sunlit..." Think about that for a while.

The fans who proclaim that the field is deteriorating take the grand total of the great stories of "the good old days" and compare it with the pitifully short list of the last year's outstanding stories.

This comparison is completely unfair!

1963 can not possibly compete with the previous forty years! This is what some people actually do: compare 1963 with all previous science fiction. This is almost as bad as condemning 1963 for having only one Hugo-winning novel, while many novels won Hugos in "the good old days." People forget that those outstanding stories that they remember were not all published within a period of time equivalent to the current year.

It must be acknowledged that there are a few peak periods, such as 1941, during which Robert A. Heinlein, for example, turned out an astounding quantity of excellent science fiction. These peaks, however, are not really significantly better than the average periods in the his-
(continued on page two)

SFR STORY RATINGS

Story category	NOVELLAS	NOVELETS ...	SHORT STORIES
Length in words	(19-39,000) ...	(10-18,000) ..	(up to 9,000)
Worth buying magazine for .	I-IV	A-C	a-b
Worth reading	V-VI	D-E	c-d
Read at your own risk ...	VII-IX	F-H	e-g

NOVELS

(40,000+ words)

Worth buying	1-5
Marginal	6-7
Buy at your own risk .	8-10

The ratings designate how well we liked the story. We do not rate collections or anthologies. Two stories "worth reading" usually make an issue worth buying.

"THE GOOD OLD DAYS"

(continued from page one)

tory of science fiction. The concept of "the good old days," when every other novel was a class three or above, is false. People remember only the good novels; they forget the bad ones. And then they wonder why there seems to be a higher proportion of bad novels nowadays!

—The Editor

A NEW SERIES:

"Fred Pohl bought, and has scheduled for publication in the May, 1964, issue of *If*, the first of a series of novellas laid in an entirely new universe; unconnected with anything I ever wrote before. My working title of this first story was 'The Family d'Alembert,' but the check I endorsed called it 'The Imperial Stars.'"

—Edward E. Smith, Ph.D.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Due to the time lag involved, SFR cannot accept reviews from non-local contributors. However, short 200-400 word articles are always welcome. For the type of articles we use, see the back issues of SFR. If you have a new idea, though, don't hesitate to query us. In any case, it is always safer to query before writing an article.

Science Fiction Review buys all rights. Payment is one cent per word and up, payable on acceptance.

—The Editor

WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES, by H.G. Wells. Ace, N.Y. F-240, 1963. 288 pp. 40¢

Finding the 19th century world intolerable, Mr. Graham falls into a deep sleep which lasts for 203 years. He wakes to find himself the puppet head of a plutocracy, due to the accumulation of his initially small fortune, and master of the world. In this highly mechanized society, Mr. Graham is introduced to innovations such as the airplane and television. This classic is a fairly good novel considering the fact that it was written in the 19th century.

NOVEL - 6
—Gene Rider

THE PERFECT PLANET, by Evelyn E. Smith. Lancer, N.Y. 72-679, 1963. 144 pp. 50¢

This novel was originally published by Avalon Books.

Evelyn E. Smith's picture of Utopia is Artemis, a world ruled by health addicts whose main purpose in life is the pursuit of physical beauty. The action in this book is generally fast-moving, complete with chase scene, gun fight between the good guys and the bad guys, and scene of departure.

Warning—if possible, the action in this book should be avoided by avoiding the book.

NOVEL - 9
—Marshall Hurlich

MAGAZINE REVIEWS by Dean M. Sandin

Serials are not rated until the review of the final installment.

Analog, December, 1963. 96 pp.
50¢, 5/-

"Dune World," the first part of a three-part serial by Frank Herbert, is quite good thus far and shows even greater promise. Overall, it concerns a conflict between two galactic trading Houses.

"The Right Time," by Walter Bupp, is one of his stories about a Lodge of psi-endowed people. A girl, with the power to heal telekinetically, also has precognition — and she predicts that the Grand Master of the Lodge will have a heart attack. NOVELET - D

Worlds of Tomorrow, December, 1963.
162 pp. 50¢ (3/6)

The third and final installment of "All We Marsmen," by Philip K. Dick, makes its appearance here. The first part of this poor novel was the least bad, being merely dull and pointless. The next part was the worst, with this last one not too far behind. The emphasis falls on sick characters; in particular, the revolting mind processes of a withdrawn, insane child are explored, with disastrous effects on the story's likeability. Set on Mars in 1994, "All We Marsmen" has two main characters, although plenty of others are followed intermittently. They are Jack Bohlen, a repairman with a history of mental illness; and Arnie Kott, a greedy, self-centered labor leader. NOVEL - 9

Fantastic, December, 1963. 130 pp.
50¢ (3/6)

"Witch of the Four Winds," a two-part serial by John Jakes, concludes in this issue. Standard sword-and-sorcery, it has a brawny barbarian, Brak, as hero. He joins forces with a king, who is threatened by a witch who has been luring his soldiers away. Captured rescuing the king's son, Brak goes through harrowing experiences to defeat her. NOVEL - 7

A Gray Mouser novel by Fritz Leiber begins in the next issue.

Gamma, Volume 1, Number 2. 128 pp.
50¢ (3/6)

Gamma No. 2 has improved 100% over Gamma No. 1: there are two stories rating better than poor in this issue (both e's); there was only one last time. The two are "The Undiscovered Country" by William F. Temple, about a deceptively dangerous prisoner from Pluto; and "Castaway" by Charles E. Fritch (one of the editors), a fantasy mood-piece telling of a marooned spaceman.

Once again the cover is by Morris Scott Dollens — "second in a series" — and it's even prettier than the first one. The cover promises to be the best thing about Gamma for a while to come.

Page one says, "Gamma is published quarterly..." But more like five months elapsed between the first two issues. Perhaps the tardiness is caused by an overly-heavy schedule: Gamma's editors are also putting out a crime magazine, Chase.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Subscription rates: 10 issues for \$1.00, 22 issues for \$2.00, 45 issues for \$4.00. Advertisements are five cents per word, minimum remittance \$1.00. Make all checks and money orders payable to the addressee:

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW
Box 1568
San Diego, California 92112
U.S.A.

Kenneth F. Slater
75 Norfolk Street
Wisbech, Cambs.
England

Graham Stone
Box 185, P.O.
Manuka, A.C.T.
Australia