

# The Arkham Sampler

WINTER, 1949

ALL SCIENCE-FICTION ISSUE

Ray Bradbury, A. E. Van Vogt, Theodore Sturgeon,  
Jules Verne, C. A. Smith, F. J. Ackerman, Everett  
Bleiler, P. S. Miller, Donald Wandrei, A. L. Searles,  
Sam Moskowitz, Lewis Padgett, John B. Harris, Paul  
Payne, Sam Merwin Jr., Peter Viereck, Fritz Leiber, Jr.,  
Regis Messac, Edward Wagenknecht, Robert Bloch,  
Carl Jacobi, D. H. Keller, Vincent Starrett, Stephen  
Grendon, Leah B. Drake.

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Winter 1949

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# A BASIC SCIENCE-FICTION LIBRARY

## A SYMPOSIUM

When this all science-fiction issue of *The Arkham Sampler* was first conceived, it occurred to us that it might serve a very useful purpose if a cross-section of writers, editors, and readers in the field might contribute to a symposium designed to establish basic titles which ought to be found in any library of science-fiction. We applied, therefore, to six well-known authors of science-fiction stories—Dr. David H. Keller, Lewis Padgett, P. Schuyler Miller, Theodore Sturgeon, A. E. Van Vogt, and Donald Wandrei; to four professional magazine editors—Sam Merwin, Jr., of *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, John W. Campbell of *Astounding Science-Fiction*, Paul L. Payne of *Planet Stories*, and Raymond A. Palmer of *Amazing Stories*, to two rather special editors—Everett Bleiler, who compiled the exhaustive and excellent *Checklist of Fantastic Literature*, and A. Langley Searles, editor of one of the best of the so-called fan magazines, *Fantasy Commentator*, and to two well-known *aficionados* of science-fiction, Forrest J. Ackerman and Sam Moskowitz. Of this group all but editors Campbell and Palmer replied and took part.

The questions put were two in number 1) What books, to the number of twenty or less, do you believe essential in any basic library of science-fiction? 2) Why? The replies covered a surprisingly wide range, but in final analysis it was not difficult to arrive at seventeen titles which were preferred to all others. These seventeen titles actually established only six places, by count of votes or listings, and the books themselves ranged reasonably widely over the field. By consensus of the opinion of the participants to the symposium, whose replies are given below, the basic seventeen titles which ought to be in every library of science-fiction are as follows:

In first place, with 9 listings:

*Seven Famous Novels*, by H. G. Wells (*The Time Machine*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The First Men in the Moon*, *In the Days of the Comet*, *The Food of the Gods*)

In second place, with seven listings:

*Last and First Men*, by Olaf Stapledon

*Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley

In third place, with six listings:

*The Short Stories of H. G. Wells*



*Adventures in Time and Space*, edited by R. J. Healy and J. F. McComas

*Slan*, by A. E. Van Vogt

In fourth place, with five listings:

*The World Below*, by S. Fowler Wright

*Strange Ports of Call*, edited by August Derleth

In fifth place, with four listings:

*To Walk the Night*, by William Sloane

*The Lost World*, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

*Sirius*, by Olaf Stapledon

*Gladiator*, by Philip Wylie

In sixth place, with three listings:

*Before the Dawn*, by John Taine

*Who Goes There? and Other Stories*, by John W. Campbell, Jr

*The Best of Science Fiction*, edited by Groff Conklin

*Star Maker*, by Olaf Stapledon

*Out of the Silence*, by Earle Cox

These, then, constitute the most listed titles, and hence the basic science-fiction library. The complete replies follow. Data regarding publication of the titles can be found in *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature*, compiled by Everett Bleiler, and published by Shasta.

by FORREST J. ACKERMAN

*The World Below*, by S. Fowler Wright

*Last and First Men*, by Dr. W. Olaf Stapledon

*Star Maker*, by Dr. W. Olaf Stapledon

*Darkness and the Light*, by Dr. W. Olaf Stapledon

*Sirius*, by Dr. W. Olaf Stapledon

*Odd John*, by Dr. W. Olaf Stapledon

*Slan*, by A. E. Van Vogt

*The New Adam*, by Stanley Weinbaum

*Gladiator*, by Philip Wylie

*Who Goes There? and Other Stories*, by John W. Campbell, Jr.

*Star-Begotten*, by H. G. Wells

*Adventures in Time and Space*, edited by R. J. Healy and J. F. McComas

*The Mastermind of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs

*To Walk the Night*, by William Sloane

*The Time Stream*, by John Taine

*Summer in 3000*, by Peter Martin

*Out of the Silence*, by Erle Cox



*Ralph 124C41+*, by Hugo Gernsback

*The Moon Pool*, by A. Merritt

*When Worlds Collide* and *After Worlds Collide*, by Philip  
Wylie and Edwin Balmer

This list is not in order of decending favorites, except that *The World Below* definitely stands in first place. I have read science-fiction since *Amazing Stories* of 1926, and have a collection of over 1500 fantasy books, and I have never found a story that took me more out of this world and into a world of wonder than Wright's tour-de-force of our alien earth 500.000 years hence. This is the crown jewel on my diadem of science-fiction classics.

Some books on my list, incredible as it may seem, I have never read. How, then, dare I select them? As I select *The Moon Pool*. Heresy of heresies, I must confess that this book bored me stiff. However, realizing the respect, praise, worship, adulation, etc., accorded this particular novel, I feel it must have a place among the basic twenty books. *The Time Stream* and *Out of the Silence* are choices I never completed reading—though not out of failure to enjoy what I read. Events conspired to keep me from ever completing them, but I base my judgment on the acclaim of many others. I make one reservation on *Out of the Silence*; I condemn its portions of racial prejudice.

What I believe of Wright's *The World Below* pretty much applies to the selections by Stapledon. The first two are of gigantic stature, though *Darkness and the Light* even surpasses them as my favorite. Less pedestrian of pace than *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*, it is nevertheless profound, thought-provoking, stimulating. *Sirius*, the saga of the sapient canine, I will simply call *dog-gone* good literature.

It would be difficult to say which is my favorite of the three superman novels represented by *Slan*, *The New Adam*, and *Odd John*. Of these three, *Odd John* was the only one which dragged at any time, but its over all effect was excellent. *The New Adam* I read with racing eyes, regretting every page I turned because it inevitably brought me closer to the conclusion. *Slan* I have not re-read in book form, but recall the tense torture of waiting month after month for its increasingly exciting instalments.

I remember *Gladiator* with approbation for its adult treatment. It differs from other superman novels for its primary concern



with *physical* superiority rather than mental. *When Worlds Collide* and *After Worlds Collide* are really but one tremendous interplanetary epic. I combined these titles to make room for E. E. Smith's *Spacehounds of IPC*, then remembered *To Walk the Night* at the penultimate moment, and, spectacular as the Smith space opus is, my selection must ultimately be the Sloane, a fast-paced and utterly fascinating science-mysteryarn.

I have a nostalgic fondness for Burroughs—which I find shared by many—and I recall *The Mastermind of Mars* as the best of his Barsoomian books. Fantastic adventure, probably, rather than true science-fiction. I honestly don't know about the Gernsback novel, whether it would rate if re-read today. Perhaps I should have put A. E. Van Vogt's *The World of Null-A* in its place. Hugo Gernsback's novel is the oldest entry on the list, and time has a bad habit of making science-fiction anachronistic. Still, Hugo Gernsback, Father of Scientifiction, had a lively imagination, and his romance of 2660 may not be too passe today. The book also has Paul's masterful illustrations to recommend it.

*Summer in 3000* is the dark thoat on the list. Not too many readers are acquainted with this recent British novel. I eliminated several other books to include it—*World D*, *The Vicarion*, *Sugar in the Air*, *The Girl in the Golden Atom*, *Sarus*, *Tarrano the Conqueror*, other anthologies, *Darkness and Dawn*—but it has the best qualities of an *Astounding Science-Fiction* sociology novel, without being hindered in grownup treatment by the addlescent censor-snips of the pulps.

Selecting *one* Wells was some struggle, but I finally chose *Star-Begotten* because of its modernity, and because in a way it is *about* science-fiction enthusiasts. John W. Campbell's *Who Goes There? and Other Stories* is a selection of splendid science stories of atmosphere and suspenseful animation. Lastly: *Adventures in Time and Space*. My pick of the major anthologies, principally because half the stories are those I myself suggested when the opinion of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society was solicited, by proxy, by the book's compilers.

by EVERETT BLEILER

*Star Maker*, by Olaf Stapledon

*Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley

*The Green Child*, by Herbert Read

*A Crystal Age*, by W. H. Hudson



*Tom's A-Cold*, by John Collier  
*The World Below*, by S. Fowler Wright  
*The Adventure of Wyndham Smith*, by S. Fowler Wright  
*The Short Stories of H. G. Wells*  
*Seven Famous Novels*, by H. G. Wells  
*The Face in the Abyss*, by A. Merritt  
*Portable Novels of Science*, edited by Donald A. Wollheim  
*The Purple Cloud*, by M. P. Shiel  
*Out of the Silence*, by Erle Cox  
*To Walk the Night*, by William M. Sloane  
*Jimgrim*, by Talbot Mundy  
*Gladiator*, by Philip Wylie  
*Strange Ports of Call*, edited by August Derleth  
*The World of Null-A*, by A. E. Van Vogt  
*The Best of Science Fiction*, edited by Groff Conklin  
*Who Goes There? and Other Stories*, by John W. Campbell, Jr.

In compiling this list I hoped to be frankly irrational and subjective, and list good literature or good entertainment which I could honestly recommend to a friend not acquainted with science-fiction. This is, of course, another way of indicating the twenty books I like best; if any is historically important, it is purely accidental. The concept of science-fiction I decided to stretch to include several British satires, despite the fact that most of them are anti-scientific—William James once defined a religious fanatic as a person who took an abnormal interest in religion, whether for or against it. The titles have been arranged roughly in order of preference, but tomorrow an altered arrangement might be possible, though the general sequence would be retained.

Defense of each title is pointless, but I would like to make a few asides. I recommend the Avon edition, not the Liveright, of *The Face in the Abyss*. The Wollheim collection is included for *Odd John*, by Stapledon, and *The Shadow Out of Time*, by Lovecraft. I disagree with Mr. Cox's social theories, but recommend his book as pure adventure. *Strange Ports of Call* is the best of the science-fiction anthologies on a literary basis, while *The Best of Science Fiction* seems to me a shade better than its *Astounding* rivals. I preferred *The World of Null-A* in the magazine version, and *Who Goes There? and Other Stories* is included largely because of the title story, and for sentimental reasons.



by DR. DAVID H. KELLER

Many readers of the pulp magazines believe that science-fiction is a comparatively new form of literature conceived by Jules Verne, cared for in adolescence by A. Conan Doyle and H. G. Wells, and brought into vigorous maturity by the editorial ministrations of Messrs. Gernsback, Palmer, and Campbell. Such a concept will be entertained only by those who have not studied the relationship between story-telling and mankind.

Since earliest days, each generation has had its dreamers: men not content with the actualities of life, but capable of visioning adventures in time and space, thus travelling in fancy to faraway lands and the Spice Islands of the Indies. Dimly remembering the Garden of Eden, they told of future Utopias. Ancestral memories, oft-repeated folklore, fantastic dreams, became stories filled with giants held captives in bottles, birds carrying Sinbad to the Valley of Diamonds, Jonah's memorial sea-voyage in the whale, Dante's tour through Hades, escorted by Virgil, Milton's backward glance into a lost Paradise, and Bunyan's description of a pilgrimage to Heaven.

These dreamers explored the oceans, found lost continents, travelled backward and forward through time and sailed through the air in Elijah's chariot of fire. Every sociological problem was considered by men like Moore in his *Utopia* and Swift in *Gulliver's Travels*. Homer took the folklore of Greece and Asia Minor and gave the world the story of the Trojan War in which the superior race conquered. Then he brought Ulysses home in a series of wild, tumultuous tales. When faced with conditions unsolvable to their known science, these story-tellers dreamed of inventions capable of meeting the emergency. Even lobotomy was conceived by Swift and amply depicted by Dore.

There is nothing new in literature. Modern authors have simply taken the old tales and re-embellished them to please modern readers. Such tales are now called science-fiction, but the Greeks had another name for them. With such tales authors of the past entertained their little audiences in the valleys of India or on the Arabian sands long before the days of pulp magazines and the silver screen.

No one has given any short, comprehensive definition of science-fiction. By and large, it is simply fantasy written about some known or imagined scientific fact or sociological problem. If the



fantasy is omitted, the reactions of man ignored, then the tale becomes simply a scientific article. The perfect science-fiction story must stress the effect of the machine on the human race. The behavior pattern of man and his reaction to scientific discoveries are far more important than the so-called gadget. To survive, man must be the master and not the servant of science. Man is doomed when the machine conquers.

Few can afford a large library. Many of the younger generation lack the funds to purchase everything in science-fiction and even lack space to shelve such a collection if they could afford it; but all could buy a few carefully selected volumes. These need not be first editions in elegant bindings or expensive slip-covers, but every book should be worth a second reading, otherwise it ought not to be retained. The selection of a basic list is not an easy one. Such a list, however, may inspire the novice to form a library with these books as a nucleus.

*At the Mountains of Madness*, by H. P. Lovecraft (from *The Outsider and Others*, by H. P. Lovecraft; currently available in *Strange Ports of Call*, edited by August Derleth). One of the few science-fiction tales by Lovecraft. The Old Gods come from a distant planet to the earth and create new forms of life. These work for a while as slaves, but finally rebel and drive their former masters into the ocean. These Old Gods also create man and start him on his heroic, though hectic career. Here is the struggle between good and evil; it can be considered the beginning of Lovecraft's thesis that the forces of evil are very terrible and would destroy mankind if ever liberated. As this story tells of the creation of the human race, it is chronologically one of the earliest time-backward tales.

*Before the Dawn*, by John Taine. A tale of going backward in time, which recounts a prehistoric age filled with gigantic animals. Not a Garden of Eden type, yet it graphically depicts a lost age.

*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, by Mark Twain. A fine example of transposition in time, in which a nineteenth century inventor attempts to make life more comfortable for Englishmen of the sixth century. Its sociological implications exceed its scientific aspects in importance.

*Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley. A tale of life in the future that may not be too far distant. Test tube babies are so conditioned in childhood that they are content to remain ser-



vants to the superior types of man. Conduct is determined by mass propaganda through the use of radio and the movies. Ford, symbol of the machine, becomes the new God—but no one is really happy.

*The Food of the Gods*, by H. G. Wells. This novel portrays the inability of the little people to adapt themselves to new minorities, even when the giants show that they could, if permitted, make life more comfortable and happier for the masses. This book could have been written in many ways, substituting submerged minorities all over the world for the giants. Far and above the science of a growth food are the sociological implications.

*The Deluge*, by S. Fowler Wright. A typical world catastrophe novel, which in a way is simply a retelling of the universal flood story of all primitive peoples. Most of the human race is destroyed, but a few of the good and bad live on to battle for survival. Naturally, as this is fantasy and not reality, the good triumph.

*Last and First Men*, by Olaf Stapledon. Time reaches out for millions of years. Human types change until they are no longer recognizable by present standards. Each civilization is destroyed by warfare or disease with the few remaining forming new and more bizarre cultural patterns. Pure fantasy, but it leaves open the question as to whether such changes might occur some millions of years from our time.

*The Man Who Mastered Time*, by Ray Cummings. Time truly becomes twisted through the use of a time machine which moves the hero backward and forward and, at least so it seems, sidewise into fourth dimensional time. One of the earliest of the type.

*Nerves*, by Lester del Rey. A long story in the collection *And Some Were Human*. Located in an atomic laboratory, it is interesting because of the reaction of men to potential mass death and their struggle to make the new, accidentally liberated, atomic force powerless. This story illustrates vividly the danger of atom-splitting.

*Slan*, by A. E. Van Vogt. Mutation has become a favorite theme with the science-fiction writer. The mutations in *Slan* are most unusual and lack the touch of reality, but from anatomical studies of actual monstrosities, the scientist realizes that anything can happen to the human body.



*The Cadaver of Gideon Wyck*, by Alexander Laing. Planned mutations by a twisted mentality. A combination of science and sadism covered by the technique of the modern detective tale.

*When the Earth Screamed*, by A. Conan Doyle. From *The Maracot Deep*. Interesting in its concept that the earth is simply a large animal. A deep shaft, bored through the lower rocks, goes into the sensitive hide of this earth-animal; in retaliation, it spews out floods of putrid matter through volcanic shafts.

*When the Machine Stops*, by E. M. Forster. All the necessities of life are provided by machinery controlled by a master machine so perfect that contented men simply take the conveniences of life for granted and ultimately become entirely dependent on the machine. When the Master Machine ceases to direct the other machines, the necessities of life disappear, and man, having lost his inventive initiative, slowly dies.

*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, by Jules Verne. Contrary to general opinion, Verne was not the literary inventor of the submarine, since David Bushnell of Connecticut built a one-man submarine in 1775, causing the British fleet considerable annoyance. However, Verne was the first dreamer to prophesy in great detail the operation of underwater craft which did not see actuality until World War I.

*Life and Adventure of Peter Wilkins*, by Robert Paltuck. This travel novel written in 1751 is a very early air-travel tale, and interesting because it heralds the large number of air opera of the present.

*The War of the Worlds*, by H. G. Wells. One of the early novels with the theme of conflict between planetary civilizations. While not strongly stressed, there is the thought that earth man is far superior to the celestial civilizations and that ultimately he will triumph, no matter what terrors face him.

*Triplanetary*, by Edward E. Smith. In this novel, the struggle between good and evil forces reaches its height in a space opus of heroic dimensions. However, earth men win always, no matter how far they travel into space.

*The Horror on the Asteroid*, by Edmond Hamilton. Once more the world is saved in a space drama with imaginary science, X-ray eyes, terminal evolutions, and the destruction of distant worlds. Man finally triumphs.

*The Wandering Jew*, by Eugene Sue. One of the earliest novels dealing with the question of immortality so frequently



raised by primitives. A favorite theme with the science-fiction writer.

*Utopia*, by Sir Thomas More. Men have always dreamed of a better world. *Ideal Commonwealths* contains four Utopian visions: Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis*, Thomas Campanella's *The City of the Sun*; James Harrington's *Oceana*; and More's *Utopia*. These visions of a perfect world, first told in the folklore of the Garden, have been and will be told frequently. Despite science, invention and war, man has always turned in his dreams to the time when the sword will be turned into a ploughshare and every man will sit in peace under his vine and fig tree.

by SAM MERWIN, JR.

My suggestions for the essentials of a science-fiction library seem singularly un-novel. For a straight all-around bit of science-fiction with fantastic overtones, John Taine is my man with *The Time Stream*. Running in parallel channels is the late H. G. Wells, of course, with half a dozen novels, each of which pioneered a new field when written, and none of which has been bettered and seldom equalled since. His *The Time Machine* covered its field so completely that a certain element of triteness has of necessity pervaded all stories since written on this fascinating theme, even including Wells' own *When the Sleeper Wakes*, which is included in the list on two other counts—1) it is a thoroughly engrossing imaginative story; 2) it pioneered in presenting the pitfalls inherent in a capitalistic system then thought foolproof. *The War of the Worlds* is still the best recountal of interplanetary invasion and repulse; *The World Set Free* gives a remarkable foretaste of intraworld warfare and the atom bomb; *The Food of the Gods* is an outstanding early example of giantism; and *The Island of Dr Moreau* remains virtually the prototype of the anthrometamorphal tales loved by many readers of science-fiction.

Science-fiction adventures, the "opera", should have a place, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, with his *The Lost World*, and Jules Verne with *A Journey to the Center of the Earth* (to our way of thinking his very best work) belong on our two-foot shelf of books. Fantasy, at its most provocative and unabashed, is entered with G. K. Chesterton and *The Man Who Was Thursday* and *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*. Humor, from the ribald to the most delicately shaded civilized chuckle, should be present



with *Night Life of the Gods*, by Thorne Smith; *Gladiator*, by Philip Wylie; *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, by Mark Twain; and *Lady Into Fox*, by David Garnett.

The macabre, be it science-fiction or fantasy, belongs and is represented by Guy Endore and *The Werewolf of Paris*, Arthur Machen and *Strange Roads*, Bulwer-Lytton's *The Haunted and the Haunters*, and Alexander Laing's *The Cadaver of Gideon Wyck*. Finally, presupposing that our would-be collector has already studied the complete travels of Lemuel Gulliver, we include, for a classic oddity and a dash of verse, *The Ingoldsby Legends*, by Thomas Ingoldsby, otherwise Richard H. Barham.

If this list seems a trifle to the right of center, it is so deliberately. For it is upon these great models that modern science-fiction and fantasy are based. He who would have judgment of what he reads in the current magazines will find his path an uncertain one without having read these books as well as many others, the listings of which is not permitted by the limitations.

by P. SCHUYLER MILLER

Any basic collection of science-fiction must satisfy two criteria: it must include the "classics" which have endured because of their literary quality or unusual conception, and it must be representative of the principal trends and present status of the genre. It is, of course, impossible to do this within an arbitrary limit of twenty or even fifty volumes without making omissions difficult to justify on any objective basis. However, publication of representative anthologies makes it possible to extend the coverage without over-extending the length of the list.

Among the outstanding books frozen out of the following list are H. Rider Haggard's *She*, William Hope Hodgson's *The Night Land*, M. P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud*, Erle Cox's *Out of the Silence*, A. Merritt's *The Moon Pool*, S. Fowler Wright's *The World Below*, the Balmer-Wylie *When Worlds Collide* and *After Worlds Collide*, L. Ron Hubbard's *Final Blackout*, second titles by Jules Verne, John Taine, and Olaf Stapledon, and any book by Lovecraft, del Rey, and George O. Smith. The limiting the list to fiction left out such reference as J. O. Bailey's *Pilgrims Through Space and Time*, Eshbach's *Of Worlds Beyond*, and Everett Bleiler's *Checklist of Fantastic Literature*.

*Frankenstein*, by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Although there were earlier tales of wonderful voyages, strange discoveries,



and imaginary Utopias, this was the first novel to show a truly scientific theme and spirit in its departure from the Gothic formula.

*From the Earth to the Moon and Around the Moon*, by Jules Verne. Verne badly needs the omnibus treatment which makes it possible to combine seven of H. G. Wells' novels in a single title. Though not his best story, this is probably most representative of Verne's use of science as the *raison d'être* of plot and action.

*Looking Backward*, by Edward Bellamy. Probably the most influential of Utopian novels in arousing a storm of discussion and "answers" written in imitation. In contrast to Butler's *Erewhon*, it foresees man's mastery of the machine as well as of himself.

*Seven Famous Novels*, by H. G. Wells, and *The Short Stories of H. G. Wells*. These two collections make it possible to cover the best and most representative work of the acknowledged master of science-fiction. The novels are for the most part "firsts" in the adequate development of themes which are basic to present-day science-fiction. The final novel in the collection might well have been replaced by *When the Sleeper Wakes*, *The World Set Free*, or *Men Like Gods*.

*The Lost World*, by A. Conan Doyle. A master story-teller, another basic theme, and an unforgettable character. A Challenger omnibus is needed here, despite the good Professor's later brushes with the spirit world. After all, Doyle considered that survival had been scientifically demonstrated.

*R. U. R.*, by Karel Capek. The play which gave science-fiction and the world the robot.

*Last and First Men*, by W. Olaf Stapledon. One of the most amazing visions of the future ever conceived, this book would have to be on any basic list, however short.

*The Iron Star*, by John Taine. The finest work of a scientist-author who is outstanding for his ability to weave scientific fact and conjecture through ordinary plots.

*The Face in the Abyss*, by A. Merritt. The operation of an unknown, ancient body of scientific knowledge is perhaps more definitely suggested here than in *The Moon Pool* or the unpublished version of *The Metal Monster*.



*Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley. A master satirist has conceived an Utopia to end all Utopias. The 1946 edition, with Huxley's foreword, is recommended.

*Lest Darkness Fall*, by L. Sprague de Camp. The possibilities of the visit-to-the-past have not been so adroitly realized in any novel, not excepting Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

*Out of the Silent Planet*, by C. S. Lewis. The most beautifully written recent interplanetary novel, not spoiled by the ponderous mysticism of its sequel, *Perelandra*.

*Slan*, by A. E. Van Vogt. The best of the novels of human mutants. While it is difficult to choose between this and *The World of Null-A*, the latter loses a little by over-complication of plot.

*Spacehounds of IPC*, by Edward E. Smith. Smith's influence on the development of science-fiction cannot be minimized, and this yarn, "tame" in comparison to some of his other space operas, is the most credible of them all.

*The Key to the Great Gate*, by Hinko Gottlieb. Perhaps the finest example of the mature use to which a science-fiction theme can be put.

*Who Goes There? and Other Stories*, by John W. Campbell, Jr. Outstanding in itself, this collection represents some of the best work of the man who as both author and editor created the present mature school of science-fiction.

*Space Cadet*, by Robert A. Heinlein. This juvenile, which describes in detail the sensations and phenomena of space-flight, is the best of the modern descendants of Verne's *Around the Moon*, more expertly written, and more accurate in its science.

*The Best of Science-Fiction*, edited by Groff Conklin, and *Adventures in Time and Space*, edited by R. J. Healy and J. F. McComas. The first adequate collections of short science-fiction, representing most of the basic types and leading authors. To extend the coverage by including other anthologies would have made it necessary to omit other books which cannot be spared.

by SAM MOSKOWITZ

It is with considerable misgivings that I present my list of twenty basic books in science-fiction. The fact is that so little of the best science-fiction has obtained book publication, and so little of what has appeared is representative, that all one can do is



pick from those published those titles which most adequately give a cross-section of the field. In making my selection, I have used the following criteria: 1) the influence of the author on the development of science-fiction; 2) the importance of the theme in science-fiction; 3) the literary quality of the writing; 4) the entertainment value of the story

I have deliberately avoided listing such accepted literary classics as Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, ad infinitum, for, while they might look impressive to literary critics, they would certainly not serve as representative examples of what science-fiction has been in this generation and what it is today, and their influence is not a strong motivating factor in the science-fiction of today. On the other hand, the influence of H. G. Wells is powerfully evident, and so to a lesser extent is that of Jules Verne; so these two remain.

*Seven Famous Novels*, by H. G. Wells. Each novel serves as an excellent example of its type; here are the first, and probably the best, of the time machine stories, the invisible man, first interplanetary rocket flight, first interplanetary war, man into animal transmutation, uncontrolled growth and Utopian themes.

*The Short Stories of H. G. Wells*. This collection contains so many basic science-fiction plots, so eloquently related, that a treatise would be necessary to encompass them.

*A Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, by Jules Verne. Despite some excess description, still a superior tale of another world inside the earth.

*When Worlds Collide*, by Philip Wylie and Edwin Balmer. A fine description of the emotional reactions of the people of earth, about to have their planet torn asunder by cosmic catastrophe.

*The Second Deluge*, by Garrett P. Serviss. The world inundated. World catastrophe treated from the viewpoint of the scientist. Though written in 1911, it does not date.

*The Land That Time Forgot*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Deficient in literary quality, Burroughs' novel has some strikingly original evolutionary ideas. Burroughs remains the father of a particular type of scientific romance.



*The Girl in the Golden Atom*, by Ray Cummings. The first and possibly the best of the work on the theme of the dwindling atom.

*The World Below*, by S. Fowler Wright. As close to fantasy as science-fiction can logically go, in the Merritt vein.

*Darkness and Dawn*, by George Allan England. This trilogy is probably the finest literary example of the scientific adventure-romance theme.

*Sirius*, by Olaf Stapledon. Philosophy in science-fiction, this novel is superior in characterization, writing and entertainment value to any of Stapledon's more ambitious works.

*Slan*, by A. E. Van Vogt. An outstanding mutation-theme story, particularly forceful in its juxtaposition of the prejudices of normal to supernormal man.

*Final Blackout*, by L. Ron Hubbard. Emphasizes science-fiction's "warning" factor. A superior character study.

*Life Everlasting and Other Tales of Science, Fantasy and Horror*, by David H. Keller. Human psychology in science-fiction.

*"And Some Were Human"*, by Lester del Rey. Successful incorporation of sentiment in science-fiction.

*The Eye and the Finger*, by Donald Wandrei. The only book containing examples of the "thought variants" of the Tremaine *Astounding*, and well written super-science tales.

*Dawn of Flame*, by Stanley G. Weinbaum. A tale of strange animals by the most natural of science-fiction writers.

*Spacehounds of IPC*, by Edward E. Smith. From the perspective of literary value, no bargain, but it is virtually the only typical space opus available in book form.

*Adventures in Time and Space*, edited by R. J. Healy and J. F. McComas. An excellent collection of the modern type of science-fiction published by *Astounding Science Fiction*, featuring sociological and political stories originating in the future.

*The Best of Science Fiction*, edited by Groff Conklin. In addition to a good round of selections, this one has the best introduction of any published anthologies.

*Strange Ports of Call*, edited by August Derleth. This collection emphasizes the literary worth of science-fiction, notably with examples of work by H. P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith, not available in other such collections.

It should be emphasized that selections have been limited only



to science-fiction in book form, that books are not listed in the order of merit, and that, with the exception of H. G. Wells, I have avoided listing more than one book by any individual author.

by LEWIS PADGETT

One difference between fantasy and science-fiction is that in the latter a known method is used to arrive at an unknown solution, while in fantasy this is reversed. That is, in science-fiction (*The War of the Worlds*, for example) a mechanical method of nullifying gravity is accepted, whereas in fantasy (Lovecraft's *The Dunwich Horror* as a case in point) the reader is asked to accept a completely alien being, Yog-Sothoth, as the method. In the first case, the reader can extrapolate intellectually beyond his known frame of reference, while in fantasy the extension is an emotional one. It seems to me, too, that science-fiction basically implies an acceptance of a technological society, while fantasy is as basically a rejection of it. Conceivably both are flights from reality, in one case to Utopianism, in the other to archaism. My favorite books of each type are the ones in which the author has been able to extend himself as far as he likes, in either direction, while still realizing the existence of the opposing pull, and recognizing the validity of the norm, whether or not he is for or against it. There are few such books. I think Wells did this best.

I can't easily limit my list to pure science-fiction; the titles slide imperceptibly over into pure fantasy. But in good fantasy there is certainly a touch of "science", even though the story does not grow out of that science. Dr. James had antiquarianism, which slides from science over toward art, and I think fantasy and science-fiction are equally fluid. But there are more good fantasies than good science-fiction stories, though no Utopian-minded reader would agree with me.

*The Lost World*, by A. Conan Doyle

*Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley

*Seven Famous Novels*, by H. G. Wells

*The Short Stories of H. G. Wells*

These are the only pure-strain science-fiction stories I would want on hand. Those that follow I consider fantasy. But, then, I consider the four above listed fantasy, too.

*Figures of Earth*, by James Branch Cabell

*The Worm Ouroboros*, by E. R. Eddison



*To Walk the Night*, by William Sloane

*Titus Groan*, by Mervyn Peake

*The World Below*, by S. Fowler Wright

*The Virgin and the Swine*, by Evangeline Walton

*Dracula*, by Bram Stoker

*Frankenstein*, by Mary W. Shelley

And the works of Poe, Verne, Thorne Smith, Morgan Robertson, Arthur Machen, A. Merritt, H. P. Lovecraft, T. H. White, Edward Lucas White, William Hope Hodgson, M. R. James, and the omnibuses of Dorothy Sayers.

I like a cocktail before dinner and coffee afterwards, but I don't feel it necessary to shun coffee entirely and become an alcoholic, or to be a teetotaler and steep myself to the ears in caffeine. And I like the entree, too. However, I'm perfectly willing to admit the right of anybody who wants to, to live on an exclusive diet of either liquor or coffee. I have a friend who feels that nothing except abstruse works on philosophy is worth printing, while another friend of mine, somewhat younger, cannot understand why people read anything but comic books.

Of course, it cuts both ways. I remember what kicks Farnsworth Wright used to get sometimes when he ran a straight science-fiction yarn. A good story must be fantasy before it is science-fiction. And a science-fiction story without fantasy is too apt to be choked with science and fiction, but not a story, because the touching-point with reality is lost. I rather compare the two hemispheres of science-fiction and fantasy to the two hemispheres of the moon, one astronomically and spectroscopically charted and known, the other a field for speculation. The best writers have written about both sides of the moon while they had their feet firmly planted on the earth.

Fantasy can and does keep step with technological advances, and the reverse is true, too. Lovecraft's last stories certainly explained the mythos of his earlier yarns in the light of known sciences. Similarly, Wells' *Lord of the Dynamos* followed just the opposite line. As science extends itself, more and more pressure is applied to the keystone, which is the human mind and, through a familiar psychological process, the ego rejects what bears most heavily upon it and compensates in the opposite direction. So the basic emotional conflicts necessarily cause an encystment plus a flight or over-compensation, in one or another direction, and then you have the rabid science-fictionist who sees no



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possible virtues in fantasy, and the fan who reads fantasy exclusively and loathes science-fiction. A tip-off is that neither type likes "realistic" classics either. And since both small groups of extremists are evincing a symptom rather than a cause, the only cure is to strike to the emotional root of the difficulty. The well-balanced fantasy and science-fiction fan is the one who makes this field his avocation, not his vocation—unless he gets his living out of it.

by PAUL L. PAYNE

*When Worlds Collide* and *After Worlds Collide*, by Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie. A convincing picture of disaster. Add also, Philip Wylie's magnificent short story, *Blunder*, to be found in *Strange Ports of Call*.

*Adventures in Time and Space*, compiled by R. J. Healy and J. F. McComas. Presumably everyone has seen this very good short story anthology. The Wollheim anthology is much shorter and more selective; I simply happen to prefer this one.

*The First to Awaken*, by Granville Hicks. A political writer and novelist projects his hero via suspended animation to the world of 2039, a curiously calm and *solved* world, but interesting enough both from a technological and a sociological standpoint.

*Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley. Another excursion into the future, but with heavy irony.

*Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra*, by C. S. Lewis. Two extremely fine jobs by a noted English theologian (*The Screwtape Letters*, et al.) What they lack in gadgetry they more than make up for in style and content.

*Seven Famous Novels*, by H. G. Wells. These are the basic classics.

*The Next Hundred Years*, by C. C. Furnas. A Yale chemistry professor studies the achievements of science, circa 1930, and shows the kind of world we *might* have, if we were smart.

*Our Mysterious Universe*, by James Jeans. A charming and dramatic trip into space, with an expert pilot at the controls.

*The Nature of the Physical World*, by Arthur Eddington. But very tough reading! Matter, energy, and the laws by which they operate. Out of date, to be sure, but not enough so to dismiss.

*Life on Other Worlds*, by H. Spencer Jones. An astronomer



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sums up what is known, and what is reasonably conjecturable, of conditions on our neighboring planets.

*The Story of Utopia*, by Lewis Mumford. How man has dreamed of the future through the ages—More, Bellamy, etc. By an erudite architectural and social critic.

I would append also certain periodicals and reports—the *Journal of the American Philosophical Society*, where the latest papers on research and discovery in all fields are most often printed; the *Science News-Letter*, a one-syllable version of the above; and any reports to be issued by the new Hale Observatory of new material turned up by the world's own monster monocle.

by A. LANGLEY SEARLES

After choosing the outstanding science-fiction books published I was immediately struck with how easy a task it was. Easy not because of any particular abilities to me, I am convinced, but because of the relatively few outstanding efforts there are to choose from. (These days it isn't popular to mention that fact, much less harp on it; but perhaps harping might bring some corrective measures.) In any event, the titles of merit do come promptly to mind, rising waist-high above the mass of reading matter that makes up most of the rest of the genre.

One restriction used in compiling this list has already been mentioned: the title must have appeared in book form. Another perhaps equally arbitrary, involves a definition of science-fiction itself, a point on which few people wholly agree. To me it represents fiction treating unrealized scientific extrapolations which have positive probability of actually occurring, this probability judged insofar as possible on the basis of what people knew about science at the time of composition. (I specify "insofar as possible" because otherwise this rough definition would include stories about witchcraft, fairies, etc., once believed to be logically authentic, but which opinion now usually excludes from the field.) Finally, I have listed about two dozen titles rather than just twenty; this slight expansion virtually exhausts the cream of the genre, as far as I am concerned.

I do not say that the literary explorer who has read this cream will find no further science-fiction that will interest him; but I do say he has read the majority of stories that he can expect to interest him most. Newcomers who peruse them without particular enjoyment should forget about this type of literature al-



together, since in all probability it will never mean anything to them. For while my personal tastes have influenced the choices made, I feel the list below gives as wide a variety of subject-matter, style and treatment as the veteran connoisseur himself has encountered.

Time travel: *Lest Darkness Fall*, by L. Sprague de Camp; *The Time Machine*, by H. G. Wells; *Darkness and the Light*, by W. Olaf Stapledon.

Space travel: *The First Men on the Moon*, by H. G. Wells.

Future eras: *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley; *Last and First Men*, by W. Olaf Stapledon.

Alien races and life: *Out of the Silence*, by Erle Cox; *The Flames*, by W. Olaf Stapledon; *To Walk the Night*, by William Sloane.

Inventions: *The Peacemaker*, by C. S. Forester; *The Invisible Man*, by H. G. Wells.

World catastrophe: *The Second Deluge*, by Garrett P. Serviss.

Superbeings: *Odd John*, by W. Olaf Stapledon; *Gladiator*, by Philip Wylie; *Slan*, by A. E. Van Vogt; *Sirius*, by W. Olaf Stapledon; *The Wonder*, by J. D. Beresford.

Prehistoric eras: *Before the Dawn*, by John Taine; *The Shadow Out of Time*, by H. P. Lovecraft.

Lost races: *When the Birds Fly South*, by Stanton A. Coblentz.

Miscellaneous: *Starmaker*, by W. Olaf Stapledon; *Islandia*, by Austin T. Wright.

Anthologies: *Strange Ports of Call*, edited by August Derleth; *Adventures in Time and Space*, edited by Raymond J. Healy and J. Francis McComas; *Travellers in Time*, edited by Philip Van Doren Stern.

Titles have not been listed in order of quality, and the categories, admittedly rough and overlapping, were added after selection had been made.

More interesting to most readers than why each of the above was picked would be, I think, a brief discussion telling why some were not. No one will be surprised at the omission of juvenilia by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Otis A. Kline, Ray Cummings, et al.; but some may be disappointed not to find, say, Jules Verne, S. Fowler Wright, M. P. Shiel or Jack London represented. Verne's work, aside from dealing primarily with engineering and natural history, strikes me as being distinctly dated. His contributions to the field are of undeniable importance, but I do not



think they compare well with modern classics. Jack London's work seems to me capable, but not outstanding. As for the remaining duo—perhaps my aversion is based on sheer prejudice. My opinion is that the styles of both Shiel and Wright are liabilities rather than assets to their writings. Shiel is never half as interested in what he says as in showing how cleverly and obliquely he can say it; and Wright's ability to conceal narrative interest by overlaying it with a stodgy patina of British dullness has never been matched, in science-fiction or out. Both styles rob the authors' fiction of practically all entertainment.

Two titles, otherwise quite properly science-fiction, were left out because they are predominantly satire. I have reference to J. A. Mitchell's *The Last American*, and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Four more were regretfully excluded at the last moment: L. Ron Hubbard's *Final Blackout*, William Hope Hodgson's *The House on the Borderland*, Christian Lys's *Fortress of Yadasara*, and Josephine Young Case's *At Midnight on the 31st of March*. The last of this quartet, incidentally, is a beautiful little gem, all in blank verse, that remains undeservedly neglected by collectors.

by THEODORE STURGEON

The temptation, in listing a basic science-fiction library, to catalog one's own collection and add to it the books one has always wanted, alternates with the desire to divide the subject into various categories and give examples of each, a method which could result only in cataloging one's own collection and adding to it the books one has always wanted.

To break this hypnotic circle it is necessary to add a small emphasis, and call our subject science *fiction*—stressing not fiction at the expense of science, but judging the entire genre by standards which can apply to any fiction. Once this is done, rock-bottom shows itself, and we may discard millions of (still-beloved) words, and examine those works which support the structure. It must be noted that "basic" and "original" are two different things; it would be wasteful to cover the entire history of housing in a discussion of the aircraft hanger. It is for this reason, and not through a lack of respect or a minimization of their profound effects on science-fiction, that this list omits certain pioneerings, primitives, and outright curiosa as Poe's *Mel-lonta Tauta* and others; *Edison's Conquest of Mars*, by Garrett



P. Serviss; certain sections of the Old Testament; the Frank Reade Library; various political suggestions on atom control; and Soviet Darminism.

Let us confine ourselves, then, to a list of works with which an inquisitive and fastidious reader could make his initial acquaintance with science-fiction, and which would also serve as a guide and scale of comparison to the cognoscenti. These books are fiction—fine fiction; which means that they are stories about people as well as stories about ideas, works which demonstrate character-evolution as well as that extraordinary extrapolative factor that marks all science-fiction. This is not old wine in new bottles, but good wine in good bottles.

*Seven Famous Novels*, by H. G. Wells, and *The Short Stories of H. G. Wells*. There was science-fiction before Wells, as there was music before Bach and drama before Shakespeare. These parallels need not be drawn further, for all Dr. John Pierce's recent remark that Wells "ceased to be a science-fiction titan when he sold his birthright for a pot of message."

*Sirius and Last and First Men*, by Olaf Stapledon. This astonishing author not only combines literary deftness with a profound knowledge of the sciences, but also a sense of the subjective with an unparalleled detachment. The world of the dog Sirius is as vividly tragically limited as the series of worlds in the second book are boundless. Stories about people, indeed, indeed!

*War with the Newts*, by Karel Capek. Capek, a contemporary middle-European dramatist and the author of the robot play, *R. U. R.*, has apparently been born with the merciless detachment which some of Stapledon's characters demonstrate. One of his books, in an excellent translation, this stands as a colossal commentary on the ways of mankind. It is everything that sociological science-fiction should be; practically everything fiction should be; and in these times it stands as a shockingly amused warning about the path we have paved for ourselves.

*Mr. Tompkins*, by George Gamow. A renowned cosmogonist, the hypothecater of the Gamow Curve, and author of such books as *Birth of the Sun*, George Gamow has pushed his tongue far into his cheek and written a collection of stories describing worlds in which certain physical constants are changed—where acceleration, for example, is not 32 feet per second per second, but 15, and where light intensity varies according to the inverse *cube* of the distance from the source, instead of the inverse square. Ac-



curate, humorous, and eminently readable, this book demonstrates science-fiction's "if with logic" characteristic.

So much for a basic science *fiction* library. These books do not constitute a collection; they open a doorway, indicate a direction, and constitute an expression of quality. There are two groups of reading which should be represented in a basic library, in addition to the signpost and milestone items listed above. One is nonfiction, of a kind which indicates the methodology of investigation, showing how, in fact, what the science-fiction author does in fancy, and which repeatedly proves that science and science-fiction may outstrip each other. The other group is one of specialized magazines in the field.

*Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, by Alfred C. Kinsey and others. This book is recommended not because its subject is sex, nor for any reason relative to that appetizing subject, save that sex is a deeply important factor in civilization, and a recognized scientist has seen fit to investigate it. That the fact of his effort should be surprising is a frightening commentary on our social architecture. Dr. Kinsey's work is germane to this list because it does its part in a worthy cause, one in which every science-fiction author of worth has shared. namely, establishing and maintaining the freedom to investigate and report on any subject which affects human thought, action, aims, or endeavors.

*The Books of Charles Fort*, by Charles Fort. One of the most widely misunderstood and slandered writers who ever lived, and one with whom your correspondent disagrees violently, Fort saw fit to doubt the results of any logical process. As a champion of freedom of mind, however, and the howling tormentor of pedantry and prejudice, he is unsurpassed. His prose is very uneven, but when it is not dull, it is breathtaking. His professional iconoclasm is leavened by the same whimsey as that employed by a French philosopher who said, "All generalizations are wrong, including this one." His work is included in this list for the same reason as Dr. Kinsey's—not particularly for its content, but because its aims are consistent with factors always found in the best of science-fiction.

*Atomic Energy for Military Purposes*, by H. D. Smyth. The nature of atomic energy, the fact that it is the ultimate weapon and does not fall into the category of the torpedo, the submarine, the Big Bertha, which were supposed to be so potent that they would stop war, but were not—these are of prime importance



to everyone on earth. The reader of science-fiction lives with extrapolated ultimates; here is such a thing, a real live one, living like a man in the next apartment who keeps his door locked and his blinds down and who might be a murderer. It pays, then, to learn everything possible about him.

*Science and Sanity*, by Alfred Korzybski. One cannot help wondering what Charles Fort would have had to say to and about Korzybski; for the latter, it would seem, is as preoccupied with non-truths and non-reality of established logical modes, though his methods and fields differ widely from Fort's. Be that as it may, this book has in common with science-fiction the establishment of new ways of thought, new methods, new philosophies.

The last group of literature which belongs in a basic science-fiction library is the magazines. There are a half dozen in the field. Some have more to recommend them than others. One for example, has a far higher score in good writing; it will be determined that this is by default; its editorial policy is such that the writers who dream up the most fascinating gadgets, gimmicks, and propositions are, by happy accident, the ones who write the most literate copy. Another is preoccupied with mysticism, a third with action for action's sake. There have been good stories in all, great stories in a few. It is recommended, then, that a copy of each, and a completely random selection of back numbers totalling, say, twenty copies covering four or five years, be culled for copy which will earn a place in the basic library. It would be simple indeed to recommend what issues of what magazines to procure; and yet, we would have little faith in science-fiction and its living outlts if we did not feel that they were capable of praising or damning themselves. Let the reader be prepared to plow through hundreds of thousands of words of sheer sludge—remembering that he would do the same in any other viable genre in his search for excellence. But magazines must be included in the basic library, for, by guess and by God, by example (horrible and good) and sometimes by dictum, they control most of the authorial thought which goes into the field.

So much for the basic library. It is a complete one only in the sense that it gives examples of almost every kind of science-fiction—adventure, sociological, mystical, psychological. Whether or not these are the best examples is, of course, an open question. There is not a single volume listed which could not be replaced by a better one—in your opinion, perhaps, or in his or hers.



*De gustibus . . .* The above, however, will undoubtedly serve to define science-fiction and to disprove any contention that it has no greatness and no standards.

by A. E. VAN VOGT

As a rule, the famous older writers of science-fiction do not grace the shelves of the science-fiction *aficionado*. Jules Verne is conspicuous by his absence. H. Rider Haggard is scantily represented at best, as is H. G. Wells. Where his reading is concerned, the science-fiction reader (unlike the fantasy and weird follower) is primarily interested in the excitement of the story. Such an attitude on the part of the majority of readers of science-fiction poses a problem to anyone making up a list. The problem is this: a basic science-fiction library should include representative works of older writers. But this has its dangers, for a new reader in search of an exciting story might pick up one of the older books, regard it as typical, and never read another science-fiction story. Some classification is therefore desirable. In my "historical" group, therefore, I list the following.

*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, by Jules Verne. Anyone interested may add my alternative, Verne's *The Mysterious Island*.

*The Short Stories of H. G. Wells*. The obvious alternative is his *Seven Famous Novels*, but in my opinion the short stories hold up better.

*The Lost World*, by A. Conan Doyle. Really lusty adventure.

*Station X*, by G. McLeod Winsor. I read it almost 25 times in the old *Amazing*, and was surprised to discover that it had been printed in book form in 1919.

*Before the Dawn*, by John Taine. I include this older published work of this famous gentleman because I prefer it to the two books by him recently published.

Of these five "historical" titles, two are almost as exciting as when first published. It occurs to me now that there is a distinct group of titles which ought to be classified as "exotics" in the field. I list them next:

*Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley. Strong men who blush when they see a girl had better leave this one alone.

*World D*, by Hal P. Trevarthton. If I had written this story I would have had a less naive beginning, and the love interest wouldn't have been quite so pure. But I'd have been proud of



the craftsmanship and imagination of the science sections of the book.

*The World Below*, by S. Fowler Wright. Half a million years in the future.

*The Mastermind of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs. In a sense Burroughs' stories are not science-fiction, but if he has written science-fiction, this is it.

*Last and First Men*, by Olaf Stapledon. Nearly every collector either has this one or hopes to own it.

The "modern" group turned out to be most difficult to choose from, perhaps because of arbitrary limitations and definitions. For instance, did Merritt write science-fiction or fantasy? Lovecraft? The few stories of science-fiction that he wrote have not been separately printed. Lester del Rey? Too many of the stories in "*. . . And Some Were Human*" came from *Unknown Worlds*.— Certain forthcoming titles, too, could not be listed since, actually, they are not in book form as I write this. I prefer *Skylark Three* to either *The Skylark of Space* or *Spacehounds of IPC*. I would tend to include both *Skylark Three* and *Galactic Patrol* in the basic twenty. Similarly, I consider John W. Campbell Jr.'s stories, *Who Goes There?* and *Forgetfulness* the best of their respective types that science-fiction has yet produced. But Campbell's *Who Goes There? and Other Stories* belongs on any basic list.

The problem of the anthologies was equally difficult to solve. I omitted Donald Wollheim's *Portable Novels of Science* because it has a paper cover. Both Conklin anthologies were omitted, the first because in my opinion it was too hastily got together, and the second because its stories are nearly all too recent. But here is the list:

*Slan*, by A. E. Van Vogt. In bringing out a revised version of this mutation story, August Derleth and Arkham House led the post-war science-fiction publishing parade. This story was accepted for book publication early in 1945, before anyone else was in the field.

*The World of Null-A*, by A. E. Van Vogt. Another "first", the first science-fiction novel by a major New York publisher, accepting the imaginative standards of the better magazines. It introduces the new science of general semantics to readers who might not otherwise become aware of it.



*Adventures in Time and Space*, edited by R. J. Healy and J. Francis McComas. The cream of *Astounding Science Fiction*.

*Strange Ports of Call*, edited by August Derleth. The yardstick was literary merit, but several fantasies slipped into what was meant to be all science-fiction. Otherwise it's magnificent.

*Venus Equilateral*, by George O. Smith. The best stories of their type. But bring along your biggest brain; these boys talk calculus over coffee. Very readable, however.

*The Moon Pool*, by A. Merritt. My preference, *Dwellers in the Mirage*, I don't think science-fiction. *Creep, Shadow!* stands next in Merritt fantasy, *The Snake Mother* in science-fiction.

*The Black Flame*, by Stanley Weinbaum. The late, great Weinbaum continues to hold his own against current opposition. This book, together with *Slan*, I regard as the two best stories in the field for woman readers.

*Final Blackout*, by L. Ron Hubbard. Prescience?

*The Atomic Story*, by John W. Campbell Jr. The most readable book on the development of the bomb.

*Rockets*, by Willy Ley. All the latest information and a fascinating history of rocket development.

by DONALD WANDREI

The great problem in choosing a basic science-fiction library is not to find titles, of which there are many, but to find any that have literary distinction, of which there are virtually none. It is an odd fact that the field of fantasy has a rich abundance of stories and novels of high literary achievement, while the field of science-fiction is virtually barren of them. I think good reasons exist why this is so. Fantasy is primarily an expression of the best imaginative release of the most adult civilized mind. Science-fiction is essentially juvenile since it too often concerns mere mechanical device or invention, and even when involved with space or time-travel is equally juvenile because it employs stock, wooden characters in stock plot formulas which are most frequently Cowboys-and-Indians in interplanetary tales and the Cops-and-Robbers in stories of time travel.

There is a second problem involved, in that no clear line of demarcation exists between fantasy and science-fiction, and that some writers have written tales in both fields as well as borderline stories that could be classified equally well among fantasy or



science-fiction. Still a third problem is that, while science-fiction may form the nucleus of a specialized library, at least three non-fictional works should be included because of their profound effect on all science-fiction.

Here then are the nine books which I would consider basic, listed in chronological order:

*From the Earth to the Moon*, by Jules Verne. Verne was the great pioneer of science-fiction, and this novel established the pattern for all interplanetary tales.

*The Time Machine* and *Thirty Strange Stories*, by H. G. Wells. Wells introduced the tale of time-travel in his novel, one of the best, and of great imaginative force. His book of short stories embodied nearly all categories of science-fiction.

*The Theory of Relativity*, by Albert Einstein. Einstein's work revolutionized concepts of time, space, matter, energy, and the structure of the universe, and by becoming basic to all modern scientific thought became basic to the growth and evolution of science-fiction.

*The Book of the Damned* and *Wild Talents*, by Charles Fort. Fort's immense compilation of natural curiosities and phenomena in the first book, and his oddities of human phenomena in the second, became the source for literally thousands of science-fiction tales that have been published since.

*Last and First Men*, by W. Olaf Stapledon. The mature, adult thought in Stapledon's novel, its cosmic scope, its abundant imaginative projection of scientific speculations, and its calm dignity of style makes it perhaps the best novel of science-fiction written.

*The Outsider and Others*, by H. P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft's tales are unique, in that while nearly all emphasize a mood of fantasy or horror, they are based on exact scientific fact or principle, the violation of which forms the story-theme. Lovecraft is the most distinguished literary name among the writers who could be classed equally well among science-fiction or fantasy. His short novel, *At the Mountains of Madness*, is the only work whose cosmic-mindedness rivals Stapledon's, and whose prose style is superior.

*Out of Space and Time*, by Clark Ashton Smith. Smith is the only living writer of science-fiction whose tales have literary value. While a large number of his stories have been pure fantasy, and while they are of uneven quality, he has written



so many tales grounded in scientific principle, like *The City of the Singing Flame*, with its incomparably poetic splendors, and *The Double Shadow*, with its haunting evocation of other dimensions, as to make him essential in either a library of science-fiction or fantasy. Smith's cosmic-mindedness is as great as Lovecraft's, and while fewer of his tales are grounded in science, they are of higher lyrical and poetically imaginative richness.

### AVOWAL

by CLARK ASHTON SMITH

Whatever alien fruits and changeling faces  
And pleasancess of mutable perfume  
The flambeaux of the senses shall illumine  
Amid the labyrinthine future spaces,  
In lives to be, in unestablished places,  
All, all were vain as the rock-ravined spume  
If no strange close restore the Paphian bloom,  
No path return the moon-shod maenad's paces.

Yea, for the lover of lost pagan things,  
No vintage grown in islands unascended  
Shall quite supplant the old Bacchantic urn,  
No mouth that new Canopic suns make splendid  
Content the mouth of sealed rememberings  
Where still the nymph's uncleaving kisses burn.



# THE SPRING NIGHT

by RAY BRADRURY

In the stone galleries the people were gathered in clusters and groups filtering up into shadows among the blue hills. A soft evening light shone over them from the stars and the luminous double moons of Mars. Beyond the marble amphitheatre, in darkneses and distances, lay little towns and villas, pools of silver water stood motionless and canals glittered from horizon to horizon. It was an evening in spring upon the placid and temperate planet Mars. Up and down red wine canals, boats as delicate as bronze flowers drifted. In the long and endless dwellings that curved like tranquil snakes across the hills, lovers lay idly whispering in cool night beds. The last children ran in torch-lit alleys, gold spiders in their hands throwing out films of web. Here or there a late supper was prepared in tables where lava bubbled silvery and hushed. In the amphitheatres of a hundred towns on the night side of Mars the brown Martian people with gold coin eyes were leisurely met to fix their attention upon stages where musicians made a tranquil symphony flow up like blossom-scent on the still air.

Upon a hundred stages, musicians played eloquently. Their fingers tapped over strung instruments, their lips blew soothingly into golden pipes and the symphony was blown on the night wind to the canals, and in the streets the children heard and danced, moving their shy hands gently to the music.

Upon one stage, now, a woman moved forward. She opened her mouth to sing a song that was ten thousand years old.

She sang.

The audience grew restive.

She sang on. Her mouth twitched. She put her hand to her throat. She stopped.

The musicians continued and then, they too, alarmed, gave pause.

The audience stirred and looked around.

The woman turned to the musicians. "We will start again," she whispered.

The musicians played and she sang, and this time the audience sighed and sat forward, and a few of the men stood up in surprise, and a winter chill moved through the marble amphitheatre. For it was an odd and a frightening and a strange song this woman sang, and it was an odd, frightening and strange music the orchestra behind her played. She tried to stop the words



from coming out of her lips. And the words were these:

“Drink to me only with thine eyes  
And I will pledge with mine;  
Or leave a kiss within the cup  
And I’ll not ask for wine.”

And the music was the same.

The singer clasped her hands to her mouth. She stood frozen and bewildered, her eyes staring wildly about. The musicians handled and turned over and peered at their instruments.

“What words are those?” asked someone.

“What song is that?”

“What *language* is that!”

The rustling grew to a dull roar. Once more the woman swayed, half-turned to those behind her and said, “Again.”

They hesitated, afraid to start again.

And when they blew upon their golden horns the strange music came forth and passed slowly over the audience which now talked aloud and stood up and moved around nervously, and again it was like a winter night. Finishing the odd words which fell from her lips like stones, the woman wept and ran from the stage.

“What’s wrong with you?” demanded one musician of another.

“What’s wrong with *you*?” cried the other, angrily.

“What tune is that you played?”

“What tune did *you* play?”

“I don’t know. It came into my head!”

“Did you hear her song? I don’t understand. Those *words*!”

“We will play something else. Come.”

They played a tune to quiet the audience.

But the audience leaped up and moved out of the amphitheatre, some of the women weeping for no reason. “What’s wrong?” asked their men bewilderedly.

“What have you done?” cried all the musicians of each other.

“You fool, you played it *again*!”

“Well, so did *you*!”

The amphitheatre was empty. And all around the nervous towns of Mars a similar thing had occurred. A coldness had come, like white snow falling on the air.

In the black alleys, under the torches, fingering their toy spiders, the children sang:

“—and when she got there, the cupboard was bare,  
And so her poor dog had none!”



Children!" voices cried. Mothers ran up.

"What was that rime? Where did you learn it?"

"We just *thought* of it, all of a sudden."

"Where did you hear such a language?"

"It's just words we don't understand."

Door slammed. The streets were deserted. On the serene canals the boats glided along in the wine waters. Above the blue hills a green star rose.

All over the night side of Mars the torches flickered out and the cool air moved veils at the sleeping windows. Lovers awoke in their comfortable beds to listen to their loved ones who lay humming and humming in the darkness.

"What is that tune?"

A long silence.

"I don't know. It just came to me."

And in a thousand houses, in the middle of the night, the women awoke, screaming, hysterical. They had to be petted and soothed while the tears ran down their faces. "There, there. Be quiet. Sleep. What's wrong? A dream? A *bad* dream?"

"A nightmare. Oh, hold me close!"

Whispering. "There, there."

"Something terrible will happen in the morning!"

"There, there. What could possibly happen?"

"I don't know."

Laughing quietly, holding tight. "You *see*? You don't know."

"A terrible thing threatens. I *feel* it. Tomorrow."

"Nothing can happen. All is well with us, with all of us."

A hysterical sobbing. "It is coming nearer and nearer and *nearer!*"

"Nothing can happen to us. What could? Silly woman. Sleep now Sleep."

The sobbing and the rustling fading away, the tender holding and caressing down into sleep. "There, there."

It was quiet in the deep morning of Mars, as quiet as a cool and black well, with stars shining in the canal waters, and breathing in every room, the children curled with their spiders in their closed hands, the lovers arm in arm together, the moons gone, the torches cold, the stone amphitheatre deserted.

The only sound, just before dawn, was a night watchman, far away down a lonely street, walking along in the darkness, humming a very strange song. . . .



# THE CASE FOR SCIENCE-FICTION

by SAM MOSKOWITZ

When a review of Groff Conklin's anthology *The Best of Science Fiction* appearing in *PM*, Roger Pippett, literary editor of that newspaper said:

"With rare exceptions such as the prophetic stories of H. G. Wells, science-fiction has not been accepted in the canon of reputable literature. For most of us, it helped lighten a passing hour, and that was that. But the coming of the atomic bomb, which has already upset many of our reading conventions and will upset many more, has blasted science-fiction to the fore."

Indeed, Roger Pippett scarcely exaggerated, for when Donald A. Wollheim, in a collection of science-fiction novels published prior to the atomic bomb, conservatively stated that his anthology served to introduce: "a branch of literature which has been curiously neglected by anthologists and other students of world literature"; this same gentry, evidently annoyed by the glib manner in which he rattled off titles they had never heard of, on subjects they scarcely suspected had been used in fiction, side-stepped any appraisal of his selections and proceeded to stomp Mr. Wollheim with the critical equivalent of caked boots; chaw vigorously on his left ear, and toss him unceremoniously into the cellar of the world of letters by dubbing him a "literary pretender".

A short time later the atomic bomb exploded, capping a sensational list of scientific advances in rocketry, radar and television, all of which tended to bring the accurate prophecies of science-fiction into bas-relief. Mr Pippett's implication, in the statement by him previously quoted, leads us to believe, that science-fiction, on the weight of the evidence, has been admitted as a legitimate facet to the literary world, at least at a freshman status.

As any field of literature, science-fiction has been constantly evolving through the years, and it has become difficult for the individual to point-blankly state that one phase is more worthwhile or significant than another. Science-fiction has been aptly characterized in the past, as being a field of literature rather than a path. Its practical limits are virtually boundless, when compared with any other category of fiction. All that the world recognizes of human strife and conflict; of comedy and drama,



may, by a skilled craftsman, be incorporated into stories which would fit even a narrow definition of the term science-fiction.

In earlier centuries, science-fiction was most closely identified with utopian concepts and themes, probably the greatest of which were developed in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. At a later date, under the literary trade marks of Jules Verne and Edgar Allan Poe, it became a vehicle for prophecy and future invention, influenced by the swiftly mechanizing world of the day. H. G. Wells adopted both of these major characteristics and added to them a note of romantic adventure, which, combined with his literary talents and keen, analytical mind, elevated him to top-stature in the world of letters as well as the field of science-fiction. At the turn of the century, writers for *Argosy*, *All-Story* and *Cavalier*, minimized the sociological and prophetic elements of science-fiction and placed heavy emphasis upon its entertainment possibilities by stressing the "scientific romance", with the accent on "romance", defined under its more adventurous interpretation.

It was at this time that Edgar Rice Burroughs sprang into prominence, surrounded by a group of similar writers, many of superior merit (but lacking his business acumen), who carried the torch for the field the earlier part of the century. They included such names as George Allan England, Charles B. Stilson, J. U. Geisy, Austin Hall, Homer Eon Flint, Victor Rousseau, Ray Cummings, A. Merritt and numerous others. Hugo Gernsback was the first to feature science fiction with the accent on science. He preferred stories based on ideas, stories which prophesied from an accredited scientific possibility, and demanded detailed explanation of all imaginary concepts. He first recruited stories from members of the old school, who had, on occasion, written stories of the type he favored; authors as well known as Garrett P. Serviss, Jules Verne, H. G. Wells, Austin Hall, Murray Leinster and Curt Siodmak. But gradually, he developed his own brood, Stanton A. Coblentz, A. Hyatt Verrill, David H. Keller, Miles J. Breuer, Harl Vincent and Fletcher Pratt.

Under Gernsback's original impetus the interplanetary story, featuring a balanced mixture of science and romance, gained the heights of popularity, and still later, with the advent of Edward E. Smith and John W. Campbell, Jr., the super-science story was a logical development of the interplanetary story. Street & Smith's acquisition of *Astounding Stories*, brought to the fore



F. Orlin Tremaine, who strove for hitherto unused, or seldom explored concepts with his "thought variants", and at the same time sought to make the old ideas more palatable by "humanizing" the machines and introducing a strong note of sentiment into science-fiction. John W. Campbell, Jr., upon inheriting the magazine, changed the title to *Astounding Science-Fiction* and encouraged stories that treated tremendous advances in science matter-of-factly; tales which originated in the future and portrayed the political and sociological changes of the world of tomorrow. Coming up to date he has been emphasizing fortetean themes, which, in fiction form, challenge the findings of science. In an effort to scientifically explain the "supernatural", his authors have at times actually dipped into mysticism and at the present time teeter on a precarious tight-rope drawn somewhere between science and superstition.

It has been the habit of disparagers of the genre, to attempt to judge the field by its worst products instead of its best. They are prone to pick up at random a copy of a science-fiction pulp; read it with fingers held delicately alongside of nostrils, and then go into a great monologue on why *The Green Ray Blasters of Planet X* does not deserve a place among the literature of the world. The science-fiction reader would be among the first to concede that it does not, as a story, belong among the world's immortal tales, but hasten to add that neither would most any other story picked up in such a haphazard manner. The chances of a literary researcher's discovering another A. Conan Doyle in the pages of *Ten Detective Mysteries* would be slim indeed, nor need he expect to find a tale comparable to *Smoky* in *Western Story Magazine*, and he would have to be an optimist in the extreme to hope to duplicate *Wuthering Heights* in *Thrilling Love Stories*. What prompts him then to look for literary gems among the pulp pages of the science fiction magazines? There are two major reasons: 1) He has heard from, or been told by science-fiction readers that their favorite magazines have produced material of top literary quality. 2) The amount of science-fiction published between hard covers has to date been so meagre and so unrepresentative as to make consultation there extremely difficult at best. In condescending to read the science-fiction pulps at all, the critic has tried to be fair, but in attempting to read them without a good guide he is being unforgiveably misguided. Science-fiction's most worthwhile gems lie buried amid



thousands of stories that are immature, bumbling, hack, incompetent and sometimes downright silly. In justice, these faults are typical, to a greater or lesser degree of all categories of magazine fiction. Only recently, have competent men in the science-fiction world begun to dredge through the trash and rescue the worthwhile between hard covers. These specialists and experts in the field of science-fiction know the location of those superior stories, and are among the few who even own or have access to publications containing them. As of today, this literary rescue work has barely begun and the uninitiate must either consult an authority or take his chances with the few examples readily at hand.

Reasons for the layman's previous contempt of science-fiction as a proper vehicle for literary expression are obvious.

1) Science fiction has always been lumped by the careless observer into the same category as the ghost tale, the cheap horror story or the blood-and-thunder adventure yarn. Its essential ingredient of scientific accuracy, which served as a sturdy anchor for its most fantastic gropings of imagination has been overlooked.

2) In the science-fiction story, the *idea* is the thing. In order to spotlight this essential, characterization has, often unnecessarily, been shunted into the background. This made identification by the reader with a lead character difficult. Then, too, the sex element is generally missing from science fiction, and everyone knows that contemporary literature, to be truly great, must provide a generous offering to the reader of titilating episodes.

3) It requires a more developed imagination to read science-fiction. Other forms of assembly-line entertainment do not call on the individual to make that strain.

4) The writing of science-fiction requires a reasonable scientific education in addition to imagination and rhetorical ability. Many otherwise excellent authors, cannot successfully write science-fiction for lack of scientific knowledge. The job of getting a man who is both a good scientist and a good writer is a difficult one, therefore, many early science-fiction stories discouraged readers by either dishing out great gobs of detailed scientific explanation or conversely overlooking the inclusion of same. The passing years have brought writers to the fore who are up to their jobs.



5) The fantastically erroneous impression that comic strips, moving pictures, and improvident pulp publishers have given that science-fiction is for juvenile consumption.

It took something as violent as an atomic explosion to change the public view of science-fiction. By giving it unbiased examination, they have discovered that it already occupies a far from inconsequential place in the world's literature. H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, seems almost certainly destined to remain an imperishable part of our literary heritage. Even his out-dated novel, *The War of the Worlds*, touched up a bit, can still scare the pants off the populace. A good number of Edgar Allan Poe's masterpieces, such as *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*, *Mesmeric Revelation*, *Mellonta Tauta* and others fall squarely into the category of science-fiction, as does the work of the recognized scientific prophet Jules Verne. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* is a science-fiction novel that attaches allegory to the old utopian theme. E. M. Forester's masterpiece, *The Machine Stops*, is more widely heralded by the general public than the average scientifictionists' dreams. We could cite endlessly from the works of Mark Twain, Guy de Maupassant, Rudyard Kipling, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and other unquestionably great authors who have worked in the medium. The foregoing resolves into the fact that science-fiction, like any other branch of fiction, can be only as good as the authors who write it. There is nothing wrong with science-fiction as a field. When professional hacks write it, it becomes just that, but when H. G. Wells tries his hand, it rises to a level at the very top of modern contemporary literature. H. G. Wells is regarded by many as one of the leading, if not the leading author of the past fifty years. This reputation derives in a large measure from his writings in the field of science-fiction, and substantiates, beyond the power of reasonable rebuttal, that science-fiction in the hands of a fine literary craftsman, not only can, but incontrovertibly has become literature.

Science-fiction has much to offer the modern society. Granting a reasonable amount of imagination to the reader it is a top-rank entertainer. In the hands of a competent scientific man, it can become a capsule of sugar-coated science; safe to feed the high school student as an aid to his education. Through its great prophetic vision, it becomes a medium to properly acquaint the public with the blessings of correctly used scientific achievement



or with the terrors attending its misuse. No other form could as accurately, dramatically or significantly tell the world of the blessings or devastations that the release of atomic energy foregathers. To the youth it can be an inspiration to pursue a scientific career. To the scientist, it can point out new goals for achievement or new ideas for exploitation. And to the literary world it can contribute masterpieces that the future will identify with this generation.

Science-fiction, as a form of expression, is a living thing that offers great advantages to those who will utilize it. Its past triumphs, its new-found respectability, its future potentialities, make for it an unique literary place today, and perhaps a significant literary place tomorrow

## DEAR PEN PAL

by A. E. VAN VOGT

Planet Aurigae II

Dear Pen Pal:

When I first received your letter from the interstellar correspondence club, my impulse was to ignore it. The mood of one who has spent the last seventy planetary periods—years I suppose you would call them—in an Aurigaen prison, does not make for a pleasant exchange of letters. However, life is very boring, and so I finally settled myself to the task of writing you.

Your description of Earth sounds exciting. I would like to live there for a while, and I have a suggestion in this connection, but I won't mention it till I have developed it further.

You will have noticed the material on which this letter is written. It is a highly sensitive metal, very thin, very flexible, and I have inclosed several sheets of it for your use. Tungsten dipped in any strong acid makes an excellent mark on it. It is important to me that you do write on it, as my fingers are too hot—literally—to hold your paper without damaging it.

I'll say no more just now. It is possible you will not care to correspond with a convicted criminal, and therefore I shall leave



the next move up to you. Thank you for your letter. Though you did not know its destination, it brought a moment of cheer into my drab life.

Skader

Aurigat II

Dear Pen Pal:

Your prompt reply to my letter made me happy. I am sorry your doctor thought it excited you too much, and sorry, also, if I have described my predicament in such a way as to make you feel badly. I welcome your many questions, and I shall try to answer them all.

You say the international correspondence club has no record of having sent any letters to Aurigae. That, according to them, the temperature on the second planet of the Aurigae sun is more than 500 degrees Fahrenheit. And that life is not known to exist there. Your club is right about the temperature and the letters. We have what your people would call a hot climate, but then we are not a hydro-carbon form of life, and find 500 degrees very pleasant.

I must apologize for deceiving you about the way your first letter was sent to me. I didn't want to frighten you away by telling you too much at once. After all, I could not be expected to know that you would be enthusiastic to hear from me.

The truth is that I am a scientist, and, along with the other members of my race, I have known for some centuries that there were other inhabited systems in the galaxy. Since I am allowed to experiment in my spare hours, I amused myself in attempts at communication. I developed several simple systems for breaking in on galactic communication operations, but it was not until I developed a sub-space wave control that I was able to draw your letter (along with several others, which I did not answer) into a cold chamber.

I use the cold chamber as both a sending and receiving center, and since you were kind enough to use the material which I sent you, it was easy for me to locate your second letter among the mass of mail that accumulated at the nearest headquarters of the interstellar correspondence club.

How did I learn your language? After all, it is a simple one, particularly the written language seems easy. I had no difficulty with it. If you are still interested in writing me, I shall be happy to continue the correspondence.

Skander



Dear Pen Pal:

Aurigae II

Your enthusiasm is refreshing. You say that I failed to answer your question about how I expected to visit Earth. I confess I deliberately ignored the question, as my experiment had not yet proceeded far enough. I want you to bear with me a short time longer, and then I will be able to give you the details. You are right in saying that it would be difficult for a being who lives at a temperature of 500 degrees Fahrenheit to mingle freely with the people of Earth. This was never my intention, so please relieve your mind. However, let us drop that subject for the time being.

I appreciate the delicate way in which you approach the subject of my imprisonment. But it is quite unnecessary I performed forbidden experiments upon my body in a way that was deemed to be dangerous to the public welfare. For instance, among other things, I once lowered my surface temperature to 150 degrees Fahrenheit, and so shortened the radioactive cycle-time of my surroundings. This caused an unexpected break in the normal person to person energy flow in the city where I lived, and so charges were laid against me. I have thirty more years to serve. It would be pleasant to leave my body behind and tour the universe—but as I said I'll discuss that later

I wouldn't say that we're a superior race. We have certain qualities which apparently your people do not have. We live longer, not because of any discoveries we've made about ourselves, but because our bodies are built of a more enduring element—I don't know your name for it, but the atomic weight is 52.9# \* Our scientific discoveries are of the kind that would normally be made by a race with our kind of physical structure. The fact that we can work with temperatures of as high as—I don't know just how to put that—has been very helpful in the development of the sub-space energies which are extremely hot, and require delicate adjustments. In the later stages these adjustments can be made by machinery, but in the development the work must be done by "hand"—I put that word in quotes, because we have no hands in the same way that you have.

I am enclosing a photographic plate, properly cooled and chemicalized for your climate. I wonder if you would set it up and take a picture of yourself. All you have to do is arrange it properly on the basis of the laws of light—that is, light travels in straight lines, so stand in front of it—and when you are ready *think* "Ready!" The picture will be automatically taken.

\* A radioactive isotope of chromium.—Author's Note.



Would you do this for me? If you are interested, I will also send you a picture of myself, though I must warn you. My appearance will probably shock you.

Sincerely,  
Skander

Planet Aurigae

Dear Pen Pal:

Just a brief note in answer to your question. It is not necessary to put the plate into a camera. You describe this as a dark box. The plate will take the picture when you think, "Ready!" I assure you it will not be flooded with light.

Skander

Aurigae II

Dear Pen Pal:

You say that while you were waiting for the answer to my last letter you showed the photographic plate to one of the doctors at the hospital—I cannot picture what you mean by doctor or hospital, but let that pass—and he took the problem up with government authorities. Problem? I don't understand. I thought we were having a pleasant correspondence, private and personal.

I shall certainly appreciate your sending that picture of yourself.

Skander

Aurigae II

Dear Pen Pal:

I assure you I am not annoyed at your action. It merely puzzled me, and I am sorry the plate has not been returned to you. Knowing what governments are, I can imagine that it will not be returned to you for some time, so I am taking the liberty of inclosing another plate.

I cannot imagine why you should have been warned against continuing this correspondence. What do they expect me to do?—eat you up at long distance? I'm sorry but I don't like hydrogen in my diet.

In any event, I would like your picture as a memento of our friendship, and I will send mine as soon as I have received yours. You may keep it or throw it away, or give it to your governmental



authorities—but at least I will have the knowledge that I've given a fair exchange.

With all best wishes  
Skander

Aurigae II

Dear Pen Pal:

Your last letter was so slow in coming that I thought you had decided to break off the correspondence. I was sorry to notice that you failed to inclose the photograph, puzzled by your reference to having had a relapse, and cheered by your statement that you would send it along as soon as you felt better—what ever that means. However, the important thing is that you did write, and I respect the philosophy of your club which asks its members not to write of pessimistic matters. We all have our own problems which we regard as over-shadowing the problems of others. Here I am in prison, doomed to spend the next 30 years tucked away from the main stream of life. Even the thought is hard on my restless spirit, though I know I have a long life ahead of me after my release.

In spite of your friendly letter, I won't feel that you have completely re-established contact with me until you send the photograph.

Yours in expectation  
Skander

Aurigae II

Dear Pen Pal:

The photograph arrived. As you suggest, your appearance startled me. From your description I thought I had mentally reconstructed your body. It just goes to show that words cannot really describe an object which has never been seen.

You'll notice that I've inclosed a photograph of myself, as I promised I would. Chunky metallic looking chap, am I not, very different, I'll wager, than you expected? The various races with whom we have communicated become wary of us when they discover we are highly radioactive, and that literally we are a radioactive form of life, the only such (that we know of) in the universe. It's been very trying to be so isolated and, as you know, I have occasionally mentioned that I had hopes of escaping not only the deadly imprisonment to which I am being subjected but also the body which cannot escape.



Perhaps you'll be interested in hearing how far this idea has developed. The problem involved is one of exchange of personalities with someone else. Actually, it is not really an exchange in the accepted meaning of the word. It is necessary to get an impress of both individuals, of their mind and of their thoughts as well as their bodies. Since this phase is purely mechanical, it is simply a matter of taking complete photographs and of exchanging them. By complete I mean of course every vibration must be registered. The next step is to make sure the two photographs are exchanged, that is, that each party has somewhere near him a complete photograph of the other. (It is already too late, Pen Pal. I have set in motion the sub-space energy interflow between the two plates, so you might as well read on.) As I have said it is not exactly an exchange of personalities. The original personality in each individual is suppressed, literally pushed back out of the consciousness, and the image personality from the "photographic" plate replaces it.

You will take with you a complete memory of your life on Earth, and I will take along memory of my life on Aurigae. Simultaneously, the memory of the receiving body will be blurrily at our disposal. A part of us will always be pushing up, striving to regain consciousness, but always lacking the strength to succeed.

As soon as I grow tired of Earth, I will exchange bodies in the same way with a member of some other race. Thirty years hence, I will be happy to reclaim my body, and you can then have whatever body I last happened to occupy.

This should be a very happy arrangement for us both. You with your short life expectancy will have out-lived all your contemporaries and will have had an interesting experience. I admit I expect to have the better of the exchange—but now, enough of explanation. By the time you reach this part of the letter it will be me reading it, not you. But if any part of you is still aware, so long for now, Pen Pal. It's been nice having all those letters from you. I shall write you from time to time to let you know how things are going with my tour.

Skander

Aurigae II

Dear Pen Pal:

Thanks a lot for forcing the issue. For a long time I hesitated about letting you play such a trick on yourself. You see, the



government scientists analyzed the nature of that first photographic plate you sent me, and so the final decision was really up to me. I decided that anyone as eager as you were to put one over should be allowed to succeed.

Now I know I didn't have to feel sorry for you. Your plan to conquer Earth wouldn't have gotten anywhere, but the fact that you had the idea ends the need for sympathy.

By this time you will have realized for yourself that a man who has been paralyzed since birth, and is subject to heart attacks, cannot expect a long life span. I am happy to tell you that your once lonely pen pal is enjoying himself, and I am happy to sign myself with a name to which I expect to become accustomed.

With best wishes  
Skander

## *THE POOL IN THE WOOD*

by AUGUST DERLETH

The pool in the wood was as dark as night—  
trees crowding close to shut out the light.  
The man went along it, around and around,  
where the dark water met the dark ground;  
he looked close and he peered deep  
to discover what it was lying asleep  
in the dark water where he passed by.

Something there was that met his eye—  
something familiar, something long known,  
something out of his own dusk grown,  
something that cradled doubts, failures and fears  
he had stored up through all his years,  
something that wore his own familiar face,  
and lay in an equally hidden place;  
something unpleasant, inescapable, unkind  
from between the landmarks of his mind.

He turned, and turning, cried, and crying, fled  
as from the face of one long dead,  
and the bones of his skull shut out the light  
from the pool of his mind that was dark as night.



# THREE REPRINTS

by JULES VERNE, PETER VIERECK, REGIS MESSAC

*The Arkham Sampler* takes pleasure in presenting herewith three reprints of relatively little-known pieces certain to be of interest to the science-fiction devotee. Jules Verne's *Solution of Mind Problems by the Imagination* was discovered two decades ago by the late Bruno Lessing, who had bought it as an editor years before, and came upon it quite by accident when he was searching for some comic originals for a hospitalized lad who had asked for them. It was published in *Hearst's International-Cosmopolitan* for October, 1928, and is reprinted here by kind permission of the editors of *Cosmopolitan*. Mr. Peter Viereck's little burlesque, *The Swallower of Universes*, is more recent; it appeared in the issue of *The Saturday Review of Literature*, for May 22, 1948, in William Rose Benet's column, *The Phoenix Nest*, and is reprinted here by permission of Mr. Viereck and Mr. Benet. The late Regis Messac's *David Henry Keller and the Scientific Novel in the United States* is somewhat better known; it first appeared in the May-June, 1939 issue of *Les Primaires* in French, was subsequently translated by Dr. Messac, and is here reprinted through the courtesy of Sam Moskowitz.

## *Solution of Mind Problems by the Imagination*

by JULES VERNE\*

No form of mental exercise is more entrancing than that of allowing one's mind to run upon the possible outcome of inventions which, while all unfinished and impracticable now, may in some years come within the domain of ordinary life.

The imagination is the greatest inventor in the world, for, unlike the scientist, it knows no bar to the completion and to the success of any plan it has conceived. I have been called—and I think wrongly called—the father of the submarine, the airship and the automobile. I did, it is true, many years ago, describe these things as actually existent, but my doing so was, you must understand, a tribute to the superiority of the imagination as a solver of mental problems, rather than any tribute to my own personal ingenuity of knowledge of science.

The first thing an inventor by imagination does, is to reflect upon what has been accomplished on the special lines which he

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intends to traverse. The imagination then comes to his assistance, and the inventor upon paper reflects what his invention must be able to accomplish in order to fulfill the purposes of his story.

It is easy, as the whole world knows, for a novelist to create men of enormous wealth, and it is not much more difficult to solve problems of locomotion, chemistry and physics by similar methods. In solving mental problems by imagination, though, the careful writer should remember one thing, and that thing is plausibility. He should study carefully all that is known along the lines of the invention which he means to perfect in his story, and he will then have every reason to anticipate a plausible result which some day even may actually come true in real life, as well as in a novel.

The writer of books of imagination in which problems of science and mind problems generally find a solution, must, to be successful, be a voracious reader, and take copious and voluminous notes of all he reads and all that is likely to have a bearing upon the problems which he wants to solve. In this way he acquires such scientific facts as will prevent the ordinary reader from exclaiming against the wild impossibility of what the author advances.

In my own case, I may say that in each of the hundred novels I have written there has been a definite scientific basis. It has been my object to wrap a scientific fact in an imaginary covering, which, while inducing minds of my youthful readers to exercise themselves with pleasure upon the adventures in the story shall also lead them to ponder on the scientific kernel, and in this way perhaps bring about the ultimate invention of the apparently impossible marvel which my book describes.

In one story for instance, a story which was called *Topsy-Turvy* in French (I do not recollect the English title in the translation which was made), the novel was based upon the events that would ensue on the displacement of the earth's magnetic pole. Before writing my story, I had an exact calculation made as to the size and other details of the cannon whose shock should so displace the pole, and then purposely made the hero of my story commit an error in the calculations which I caused him to make. Had he not done so, I should have found it difficult to explain why France was not a lake and why New York was not a mountain, or perhaps a glacier.



I am inclined to think that in the future the world will not have many more novels in which mind problems will be solved by the imagination. It may be the natural feeling of an old man with a hundred books behind him, who feels that he has written out his subject, but I really feel as though the writers of the present day and of past time who have allowed their imaginations to play upon mind problems, have, to use a colloquialism, nearly filled the bill.

The writer of my day, or I should perhaps say, of my own afternoon, who has done more in this way than any other man, is the young Englishman, Mr H. G. Wells, in whose works I have taken the greatest interest since they appeared in French translation. Nothing, for instance, can read more conclusively than the extraordinary time-machine in one of Mr. Wells' books. I do not think that such a machine as he describes will ever be a real fact, of course, and yet, as one reads the book, the author seems to have proved conclusively that such an apparatus is absolutely within the bounds of possibility. This is so because of the ingenious manner in which the author has availed himself of such known scientific data as exist, and herein lies the secret.

It does not do to dress up human beings in carnival attire, and call them Martians, or Moon Men, and it is this mistake, which Mr. Wells so wonderfully and so successfully avoids. He invents his Moon Men and his Martians, and he gives them attributes which actual science really may permit them.

But put in a few words, the solution of mind problems by the imagination consists of this—a wish that some invention may be achieved, and then the detailed description of its achievement as though it had actually taken place. The wish is father of the thought, says the old proverb.

The solution of all problems of the mind undoubtedly may claim imagination for its mother.

*The Swallower of Universes*

or, Two Yanks in the Hell of the Fifth Dimension

by PETER VIERECK\*

"No, no, not that!" gasped the eight-headed Martian in frenzied terror. "Anything except that!"

"Too late! The whole cosmic system of all you petty Martians

\* Copyright 1948 by *The Saturday Review of Literature*.



and Earthlings is about to explode," rasped the unknown Space Thing with a savage oath, as it gloatingly caressed Its sinister dimension-transformer machine. "In three counts, my fine three-dimensional upstart, I shall by telepathic biochemisty magnetize the secret supercrystal which releases the deadly switch."

This was the scene that met the dare-devil eyes of "Butch" and "Slim," that famous pair of Yankee space-vagabonds to whom the Earth government's interdimensional G-men had appealed as a last resort. It was still a split second before that count of three, which would dissolve our entire galactic system of sun and planets into the Fate Worse Than Nothingness, the Blackness blacker than black. Back in his octillion-acre den in the fifth dimension, the Swallower of Universes was waiting hungrily for his daily meal. Having now swallowed all appetizing universes in the first, second, and fourth dimensions, he would today begin on the third. He smacked his infra-protoplasmic lips in greedy anticipation. His time-reflex told him that his three-dimensional materialized thought-projection, the Space Thing, was about to release the transformer switch.

At that split-second, the Yankee rocket dove to the rescue at a faster-than-light speed, spewing atomic energy in its wake. Steered by Butch and Slim and their two loyal robot sweethearts, the rocket's unbreakable super-nose dove unerringly into the infernal dimension-transformer machine, smashing it irreparably and forever.

Simultaneously, in the nick of time, Butch's trusty electric ray-gun disintegrated every electron of the startled space-friend's ectoplasmic body into helpless, quivering neutrons. Slim, not to be outdone by his friendly rival, pulled out his Woolworth magnifying glass to demonstrate once more that ingenious originality which made his name a by-word of superscience among even the Master Minds of the Moon. By subtle scientific principles derived from immense mathematical charts, Slim held his magnifying glass in front of the sun so as to set aflame the pile of alien, subversive, un-Earthly literature which the Martian has been hypnotized to distribute through all discontented planets.

"Ho hum, saving our three-dimensional way of life from cosmic supergangsters and rescuing universes in distress is all in the day's work, Butch," yawned the slimmer of the interdimensional G-men casually. Suddenly their heroic cleanshaven faces became diffused with a softer light of manly tenderness.



For their two beautiful robot sweethearts—suddenly expanding into superbuxomness by a Pneumatic mechanism—were swooning with relief into the arms of the dare-devil Yankees.

"Ho hum, if we four dash off from this hick planet of Mars," drawled back Butch with equal casulness, "we can still arrive in time for radium-cocktails at Venus, in the—er—privacy of that charming invisible Venus cloud-villa which we rented from the Mad Scientist of Saturn. Surely my robot lady will be interested in my collection of ultra-violet, electrodynamic, fourth-dimensional etchings. That's still the best way in any universe for whiling away an uneventful day like this."

*David Henry Keller and the Scientific Novel in the United States*  
by REGIS MESSAC

Very few French people, no doubt, have read the short, imaginative article of Jules Verne titled *The Day of an American Journalist in 2889*. These few pages first appeared, in English, in the February (1889) issue of an American magazine, *The Forum*. Later, when the same pages were included in the works of Jules Verne, they were scarcely noticed, in France. But not so in America. It seems indisputable, for instance, that Hugo Gernsback drew his inspiration from them in his strange novel of anticipation called, *Ralph 124C41+*.

Mr. Gernsback is a rather peculiar man. He was 42 when, in 1926, he published a magazine devoted entirely and exclusively to what he called, with an original word of his own, "scientifiction". The magazine in question, *Amazing Stories*, contained at first only a limited previously unpublished part. He often reprinted old scientific stories, and among these reprints, the works of Jules Verne composed a large part. In each issue a picture placed above the summary reproduced the funeral monument of Jules Verne which can be seen at Amiens. However, very soon, an almost overwhelming success came to change the character and the contents of the new magazine. Not only did new authors who intended to devote their works exclusively to the "scientifiction" emerge but new magazines very quickly, in the years which followed, came to take their place on the stands beside *Amazing Stories*. And the authors' fancy knew no limit: some carried their readers to the end of the perceptible world, others did not hesitate to write in the smallest details the future history of man up to and beyond fifty thousand centuries A. D.



It was observed that there was a large public, young and enthusiastic, composed mainly of secondary school pupils and college students, to read eagerly stories of that kind. These young people not only read whatever they were offered but they also wrote letters, asking for information and eagerly discussing appropriate topics. The correspondence is not the least interesting part of the magazine devoted to scientifiction. In order to discuss their favorite authors, the fans formed and reproduced small magazines, some of which reached the dignified stage of being printed and succeeding to prosper, such as, *Science Fantasy Correspondent*, *Quarterly Cavalcade*, and *Tomorrow*. This last periodical will be particularly interesting to anyone who would like to write the story of life. It is published in Leeds, as the desire for "scientifiction" has spread as far as England.

However, success, itself, or rather the easiness of success, was to bring about a crisis. *Amazing Stories* declined, passed into many hands, and almost failed before it could continue its shaky existence. In one letter published in *Tomorrow*, Hugo Gernsback, himself, defined the causes of the decline of "scientifiction"

"The chief reason of this decline was that the young readers were tired of the stories that were contrary to their liking and their desires. At the time I published my magazines, I intended to provide purely scientific stories, simple enough to be understood without difficulty by readers whose mental age would not be over twelve years. I ordered my editors to reject any manuscript whose author would not have as the main object, essentially scientific facts. Unfortunately, other periodicals started to publish, in great numbers, stories that were nothing but fairy tales. On the other hand many very well informed authors proved unable to forget part of that which they knew—their productions passed far over the heads of their young readers."

We are tempted to add, a thing which Mr Gernsback did not mention, that too many authors, on their editors' suggestion, composed their work in a deliberately childish manner, much too childish. If, we add, the pure American mentality exclude entirely from its publications everything which has to do with sex and social problems, that is to say almost anything which may interest an adult, one will find that three-fourths, not to say nine-tenths of the *Amazing Stories* type were, and still are, made up of the same tiresome childish repetition.



It is here that the personality of the author, or authors, plays its part. A small number of the new writers, roused by the magazines of "scientifiction", had a personality strong enough to free themselves, at least in part, of the hindrances imposed upon them either by the illiterate public or the demands of the publishers.

Among the first rank of these writers is a man who is not unknown to the readers of *Les Primaires*—Dr. David Henry Keller.

There is, we know, a Keller in the pantheon of writers. He is a German writer, Gottfried Keller, the author of *Das Fahnlein der Sieben Aufrechten* and *Kleider Machen Leute*. Dr. Keller could not tell us whether there is some relationship between his family and that of Gottfried Keller. If there is, it would be a strange phenomenon and one to be remembered, because there is no lack of points of resemblance between the two talented writers, and the vocation of writer was felt very early by the American Dr. Keller. He always had the ambition to be an author but the necessities of life first compelled him to practice medicine. Perhaps it was a good thing from the point of view of his literary career, for thus he had the opportunity to observe the different samples of humanity, and to store up in his mind many strange incidents, the trace of which is to be found in his writings. Every time it occurs to him to describe an invalid, an insane person, or a degenerate, one sees behind the freeness and the lightness of the story the solid documentation of the psychiatrist and the physician. It is very clearly seen, for example, in one of his best short stories, *The Dead Woman*, which would be worthy of placing in the selection of short stories that tend to give one gooseflesh along with the best stories of Edgar Allan Poe and Maurice Renard.

However, it was not until some time later, when about forty years old, and particularly for expedient reasons, in order to make a little money, that David Keller thought of publishing. The first of his short stories to be accepted was, if we are not mistaken, *The Revolt of the Pedestrians*, which appeared in *Amazing Stories*. It is a narrative about the future, which takes place in a world where, as a result of the development of mechanical transportation, men of the future have become incapable of walking. They all travel in small carriages like invalids. And they pursue with their hate the last pedestrians, because a few still remain. These monstrous and deformed beings, which



have still kept their lower limbs and the ability to use them, have become an inferior race, a game which is permitted to be hunted and killed. But they revolt, as you can imagine.

That story was a great success, and it was the beginning of a brilliant career. David Henry Keller has contributed to all the magazines of "scientifiction" which have appeared either in America or England and in all of them he has captured the favor of his public. It can be seen easily that he often averted the strict regulations imposed by the editors-in-chief of the magazines. His stories are always full of meaning. Even when they, at first sight, fascinate or impress one by their strangeness or unexpected aspects, one realizes very soon after reading them that that strange character is not needless, that it conceals a new or profound idea, or, at the least, it attracts out attention to a series of facts which we are induced to reflect upon. In other words, Dr. Keller writes for adults, much more so than for "readers whose mental age does not go beyond twelve years". It may be possible that his method brought him the disapproval of some American magazines; but it is, indeed, that merit—for it is merit—which first attracted the attention of the author of this article and decided him to choose David H. Keller, from among many other American story-tellers, in order to introduce him to the French public.

Besides, our author, himself, is a man of too great intelligence not to be conscious of what he is doing, and wishing to do still better. He does appreciate indeed, the welcome he received from our readers, and in spite of the financial success that his short stories brought to him, he hopes to engage himself in another field, less lucrative, perhaps, but better suited to his ideals. He already is the author of novels like *The Metal Doom*, *The Sign of the Burning Hart*, and *Waters of Lethe*, all extremely interesting and original. But he hopes to do still more and better work in which he can express himself more fully; perhaps the one in which he was more able to demonstrate all his talents, is a novel named *The Eternal Conflict*. It is not, truly speaking, a scientific novel; it is something quite different, nevertheless, all the knowledge of the physician and the hoard of accumulated observation by him is added to the profound insight of the moralist and to the unbridled imagination of the modern poet, truly American. It is a masterpiece, unique in its kind. Our readers will be grateful to us for having reserved the best. It will be up to them to see it published and soon entirely translated into French.



# TIME TO REST

by JOHN BEYNON HARRIS

In the gentle warmth of noon Bert let his boat carry him along. It was a queer boat for he had built it himself, and without knowing anything of the building of boats. There had been a kind of plan—well, a rough idea, in his head, at first, but he had to modify that so many times that most of it had grown empirically from the plates and materials he had been able to find. The result had something of sampan, punt and rain-water tank in its ancestry, but it satisfied Bert.

He sprawled in comfortable indolence at the stern of his craft. One arm in tattered sleeve hung over the tiller, the other lay across his chest. Long legs in patchwork trousers sprawled out to end in strange boots with canvas uppers and soles contrived of woven fibers; he had made those himself, too. The reddish beard on his thin face was trimmed to a point; above it his dark eyes looked ahead with little interest from under the torn, strained brim of a felt hat.

The view was not much. In front and to his left smooth water spread like a silk sheet to the horizon. A mile or so to the right was a low embankment with yellow-red sand showing through rush-like tufts and skimpy bushes. Behind him a fan of ripples spread softly and then faded back into placidity; further back the immense silence closed in again, and nothing remained to show that he had passed that way. It had been his view for several days and for several hundred miles of gentle, chugging progress.

He listened to the phut-phutting of the old engine as he might to the purr of a friendly cat; indeed, he thought of it as an old friend, bestowing upon it a kindly care to which it responded with grunts of liesurely goodwill as it bore him along. There were times when he talked to it encouragingly or told it the things he thought: it was a habit he did not approve of and which he curbed when he noticed it, but quite often he did not notice. He felt an affection for the wheezy old thing, not only for carrying him along thousands of miles of water, but because it kept the silence at bay.

Bert disliked the silence which brooded over the desert and water like a symptom of mortification, but he did not fear it.



It did not drive him, as it did most, to live in the settlements where there was neighbourliness, noise and the illusion of hope. His restlessness was stronger than his dislike of the empty lands; it carried him along when the adventurous, finding no adventure, had turned back or given in to despair. He wanted little but, like a gipsy, to keep moving.

Bert Tasser he had been years ago, but it was so long since he had heard the surname that he had almost forgotten it: everybody else had. He was just Bert—for all he knew he was the only Bert.

"Ought to be showing up soon," he murmured, either to the patient engine or himself, and sat up in order to see better.

A slight change was beginning to show on the bank; a weed was becoming more frequent among the scrawny bushes, a slender stalked growth with polished, metallic looking leaves, sensitive to the lightest breath of wind. He could see them shivering with little flashes in increasing numbers ahead, and he knew that if he were to stop the engine now he would hear not the dead envelope of silence, but the ringing clash of myriads of small hard leaves.

"Tinkerbells," he said. "Yes, it won't be far now."

From a locker beside him he pulled a much-worn, hand-drawn map, and consulted it, from it he referred to an equally well-used notebook, and read over the list of names written on one of the pages. He was still muttering them as he returned the papers to the locker and his attention to the way ahead. Half an hour passed before a dark object became visible to break the monotonous line of the bank.

"There it is now," he said, as if to encourage the engine over the last few miles.

The building which had appeared oddly shaped even from a distance revealed itself as a ruin on closer approach. The base was square and decorated on the sides with formal patterns in which had once been high relief, but now was so smoothed that the finer details were lost. Once it had supported some kind of tower; though exactly what kind had to be guessed, for no more than the first twenty feet of the upper structure remained. It, too bore remnants of worn carving, and, like the base, was built of a dusky red rock. Standing a hundred yards or so back from the bank, it was deceptive in its isolation. The size and the degree of misadventure which time and adaptation had



brought it only became appreciable as one approached more closely.

Bert held on his course until he was opposite before he turned his clumsy craft. Then he swung over and headed ashore at low speed until he grounded gently on the shelving shore. He switched off the engine, and the indigenous sounds took charge; the tinny chime of the tinkerbells, a complaining creak from a ramshackle wheel turning slowly and unevenly a little to his left along the bank, and an intermittent thudding from the direction of the ruin.

Bert went forward to the cabin. It was snug enough to keep him warm in the cold nights, but ill lit, for glass was hard to come by. Groping in the dimness he found a bag of tools and an empty sack, and slung them over one shoulder. He waded ashore through the few inches of water, drove in a hook to hold his boat against the unlikely chance of disturbance in the placid water, and turned with a long easy stride toward the building.

To either side of the place and beyond it clustered a few small fields where neatly lined crops stood fresh and green among narrow irrigation ditches. Against one wall of the stone cube was an inclosure and a shed roughly built of irregular fragments which might have been part of the vanished tower. Despite its inexpert appearance it was neatly kept, and from beyond it came occasionally, the grunt of small animals. In the near face of the cube was a doorway, and to either side of it unsquare holes which, though glassless, appeared to be windows. Outside the door a woman was at work, pounding grain on a shallow worn rock with a kind of stone club which she held in both hands. Her skin was a reddish brown, her dark hair rolled high on her head, and her only garment a skirt of coarse russet cloth stencilled with a complex yellow pattern. She was middle-aged, but there was no slackening of muscles or deterioration of poise. She looked up as Bert approached, and spoke in the local patois:

"Hullo, Earthman," she said, "we were expecting you, but you're been a long time."

Bert replied in the same language.

"Late am I, Annika? I never know the date, but it seemed about time I was this way again."

He dropped the bags, and instantly a dozen little bannikuks scampered to investigate them. Disappointed, they clustered round his feet mewing inquisitively, and turning their little mar-



moset-like faces up to him. He scattered a handful of nuts from his pockets for them, and sat down on a convenient stone. Recalling the list of names in the notebook he asked after the rest of the family

They were well, it seemed. Yanff, her eldest son, was away, but Tannack, the younger was here, so were the girls Guika and Zaylo; Guika's husband, too, and the children, and there was a new baby since he last came. Except for the baby they were all down in the far field: they would be back soon.

He looked where she pointed, and saw the dark dots moving in the distance among the neat rows.

"Your second crops are coming along nicely," he said.

"The Great Ones remember," she said in a matter of fact way.

He sat watching her as she worked. Her colouring and that of the setting made him think of pictures he had seen years ago,—by Gauguin, was it?—though she was not the kind of woman the Gauguin had painted. Possibly he would not have seen beauty there, as Bert himself had failed to at first. Martians, with their lighter build and delicate bones had looked frail and skinny to him when he first saw them, but he had grown used to the difference: an Earth woman would look queer and dumpy now, he guessed—if he were ever to see one.

Aware of his gaze upon her Annika stopped pounding and turned to look at him; she did not smile but there was a kindness and understanding in her dark eyes.

"You're tired, Earthman," she said.

"I've been tired a long time," said Bert.

She nodded comprehendingly, and returned to her work.

Bert understood, and he knew that in her quiet way she understood. They were a gentle, sympathetic people, and sincere. It was a tragedy, one of a string of similar tragedies that the first Earthmen to ground on Mars had seen them as a weak effete race; the "natives", inferiors, to be kicked about and exploited whenever convenient. It had stopped now; either they had got to know the Martian people better, as he had, or they lived in the settlements and seldom saw them, but he still felt ashamed for his own people when he thought of it.

After some minutes she said, "How long is it you've been going round now?"

"About seven of your years: that's nearly fourteen of ours."



"That's a long time." She shook her head. "A long time to be roaming, all by yourself. But then you Earthmen aren't like us." She gazed at him again as though trying to see the differences beyond his eyes. "Yet not so very different," she added, and shook her head slowly again.

"I'm all right," Bert told her briefly. He pulled the conversation on to another course. "What have you got for me this time?" he asked, and sat half-listening while she told him of the pans that wanted mending, the new ones she was needing, how the wheel wasn't delivering as much water as usual; how Yanff had tried to rehang the door when it came off its hinges and what a poor job he had made of it. The other half of his attention went wandering—perhaps that was one of the things that happened when you were so much alone.

The "I'm all right" had been a bluff; he knew it and he knew she knew it. None of the Earthmen was "all right". Some of them put up a show, others did not, but there was the same trouble underneath. A number wandered restlessly as he did; most of them preferred to rot slowly and alcohically in the settlements. A few, grasping at shadows while they dreamed, had taken Martian girls and tried to go native. Bert felt sorry for them. He was used to seeing their faces light up and he knew their eagerness to talk when he met them; and always of reminiscences, nostalgic rememberings.

Bert had chosen the wandering life. The stagnation had shown its effect in the settlement quite soon, and it took no great power of perception to see what was going to happen there. He had spent a whole Martian year in building his boat, equipping her, making pots and pans for trade purposes, and stocking her with tools and supplies; and once he had set out upon a tinker's life restlessness kept him moving. The settlements saw little of him save when he called in for fuel for his engine or stayed awhile in the winter working on pans and other useful trade goods, and at the end of it he was glad to leave. Each time he called the deterioration seemed more noticeable, and a few more of those he had known had sought relief by drinking themselves to death.

But recently he had felt a change in himself. The restlessness still kept him from lingering longer than necessary in the settlements, but it did not drive him as it used to, nor was there the old satisfaction in the rounds and journeys that he planned for himself. He felt no temptation to join the men in the set-



lements, but he had begun to understand the gregariousness which held them there, and to understand, too, why they found it necessary to drink so much. It made him uneasy at times to realize that he had changed enough to be able to sympathize with them.

Mostly it was age, he supposed. He had been barely twenty-one when he had completed his first and last rocket flight; most of the others had been ten, fifteen, twenty years older: he was catching up now with the feelings they had had years ago, aimlessness, hopelessness and a longing for things that had vanished forever.

Exactly what had taken place on Earth, none of them knew, nor ever would know. His ship had been four days out of the Lunar Station, bound for Mars, when it happened. One of his mates, a man little older than himself had roused him from his bunk and dragged him to the porthole. Together they had gazed at a sight which was printed forever on his memory: the Earth split open, with white-hot fire pouring from the widening cracks.

Some had said that one of the atomic piles must have gone over the critical mass and touched off a chain reaction; others objected that if that were so the Earth would not have split, but have flared into something like a nebula followed by non-existence. Much ill-informed argument regarding the possibility of a chain reaction limited to certain elements had followed, and occasionally recurred. The truth was that nobody knew. All that was certain was that it had broken up, disintegrating into a belt of innumerable astroids which continued to scurry round the sun like a shower of cosmic pebbles.

Some of the men had taken a long time to believe what they had actually seen; they were the worst affected when they did understand. Some found that their minds would not grasp and hold it as a fact; for them the Earth went on, ever unattainable, yet somewhere existent. Demoralisation had spread through the ship, a few were for turning back, unreasonably convinced that they should be there, and in some way giving help. afterwards it had continually been their grudge that they had not been allowed to, even if it were useless. The skipper had decided that there was nothing to be done but hold on their course for Mars.

The navigators had looked more and more worried as their tables became increasingly inaccurate with orbits changing about them; they had watched with wonder the freed moon leave her



path and sail through space guided by incalculable forces until she came eventually within the clutch of the giant Jupiter; but long before that happened the ship had, by a combination of calculation and guesswork, made her successful drop to Mars.

Other ships, too, had come in; research vessels from the Asteroid Belt and beyond, traders from the Jovian moons diverted from the homeward course. Some that were expected never arrived, but in the end there were a couple of dozen lying idle on Mars with no home port to seek. Several hundreds of men idled with them. As well as crews, there were miners, drillers, refiners, prospectors, explorers, station maintenance men, settlement staff and the rest, all thrown together on an alien world to make the best of it.

There had also been two women, hostesses or stewardesses. Good enough girls, amiable at first, though no great beauties. But circumstances were against them, and the pressure was great. They had gone quickly to the astonishing depths of badness good women can reach once they start. It was reckoned they had caused a score of murders each before they were found to be susceptible to the same methods of disposal. Things were quieter after that; with drinking as the main amusement.

It might, Bert told himself, have been worse. It *was* worse for those who had had wives and families. He had less personal loss: his mother had died some years before, his father had been an old man, there had been a girl, a sweetly pretty girl with hair like red gold and who grew prettier in his memory as time went by: Elsa her name was, but there had not really been a lot to it; and though it was pleasant to recall that she might have married him, he had never in point of fact seriously tried to find out whether she would or would not. Then, too, there was a slender consolation that he was on Mars and at least better off than those who must have been trapped in the steamy heat of Venus, or on the cold Jovian moons. Life offered something beyond perpetual battle to survive, and though it might not be very much, it had been better to go out and see what there was rather than soak away youth and strength with the rest. So he had started to build his boat.

Bert still thought that the best and wisest thing he had ever done. The work had kept him too busy to mope, and then when he had set off it had been as an explorer, a pioneer along many of the thousands of miles of canals that he travelled. There had



been the business of getting to know the Martians, and of finding them quite unlike what he had been told. That had involved learning languages completely different in structure from his own, and the local variations of them, and he had kept at it until he spoke four patois better than any other Earthman he knew, and could get along comfortably in several more. He found that he usually thought in one of them nowadays. Along canals which were sometimes like calm seas sixty or eighty miles wide, and sometimes less than a single mile he chugged slowly from one cultivated site to another. The more he saw of the huge waterways and their multiplicity, the greater had grown his first amazement at them; nor after years of travelling them was he nearer an understanding of how they had been built than when he first set out. The Martians could tell him nothing when he asked: it was something which had been done by the Great Ones long, long ago. He came to accept the canals with the rest and was grateful to the Great Ones, whoever they might have been, for providing the smooth lanes all over their planet.

He grew fond of the Martian people. Their quietness, their lack of hurry and their calm, philosophic ways were a soothing antidote to his sense of drive and thrust. He found out quite soon that what his companions had called their laziness and effeteness was a misunderstanding of minds that worked differently in some ways, and certainly saw life differently; whose conception of the virtues was altogether alien, and he found out how his abilities could help their deficiencies in exchange for the foods they knew how to grow

Thus he had wandered back and forth mending and making in exchange for his keep, never staying long anywhere. It had only been recently that he had gradually become aware that the restlessness which still possessed him was no longer to be assuaged by wandering alone—if by wandering at all.

Bert had not noticed that Annika had ceased to talk when his thoughts went astray. He had no idea how much time passed before she ceased pounding to look up and say, "They're coming now "

The two men came first, heads down and deep in conversation. They were lightly, almost weakly, built to Earth judgment, but Bert had long ceased to apply alien standards; he saw them as well set up and capable. The women followed. Guika was carrying the smallest of three children while the others held on



to the hands of her sister who laughed down at them. Guika was now, he thought, about twenty-five by Earth reckoning, her sister Zaylo about four years younger. Like their mother they wore roughly woven bright patterned skirts and their hair was held in its high dressing by silver pins; like her too,, they were smoothly rhythmic in their movements. He scarcely recognized Zaylo at first; she had not been at home on his last two visits and there was change enough for him to be uncertain.

Tannack, the son, saw him and came hurrying forward. His greeting was glad and kindly. The others came up and surrounded him as they always did, looking rather as if they were reassuring their memories about the appearance of an Earthman.

Annika gathered up her flour, and disappeared into the stone pediment of the tower which was their home. The rest of them followed chattering and laughing with Bert, plainly pleased to see him again.

During the meal Tannack told him all over again of all the things that had worn out, got broken and gone wrong. They didn't sound very serious, nothing that the ordinarily handy man could not soon have put right, yet that was one of the directions where his value lay; a fault and its remedy which took him five minutes to perceive and could cost them many weeks of careful cogitation and then, as likely as not, they would fail in its application. The utterly unmechanical quality in them astonished him yet. It was something they had never developed beyond absolute necessity. He had wondered if it and the passiveness which was also so different a characteristic from the nature of Earthmen might be due to their never having been the dominant race on the planet until there was little left to dominate. The mysterious Great Ones who had built the canals, the now fallen buildings and cities, and who had in some way vanished centuries or perhaps thousands of years ago, had been the rulers: it seemed as if under them the idea of warring and fighting had had no chance to develop, and the mechanical sense no need. If so, it was a tradition planted firmly enough never to be lost. At times he felt that there was a lingering subconscious sense of taboo about such things. They still looked for their blessings to the Great Ones who "remembered". Bert would have very much liked to know what those Great Ones were and even how they had looked, but no one could tell him.



After they had eaten he went outside to build himself a little fire and lay out his tools. They brought him pans, hoes and other things to mend, and then disappeared about various jobs. The three children stayed to watch, sitting on the ground playing with the scampering little bannikuks and chattering to him as he worked. They wanted to know why he was different from Tannack and the others, why he wore a jacket and trousers, what use his beard was. Bert began to tell them about Earth; about great forests and soft green hills, of the huge clouds which floated in summer in skies that were bright blue, of great green waves with white tops, of mountain streams, of countries where there were no deserts, and flowers grew wild everywhere in the Spring, of old towns and little villages. They did not understand most of what he said, and perhaps they believed less, but they went on listening and he went on talking, forgetting they were there until Annika interrupted to send them off to their mother. She sat down near him when they had gone.

The sun would soon be down, and he could feel the chill already in the thin air. She seemed not to notice it.

"It is not good to be lonely, Earthman," she said. "For a time, when one is young and there is much to see, it seems so, though it is better shared. Later it is not good."

Bert grunted. He did not look up from the iron pot he was mending.

"It suits me to be on my own. I ought to know," he told her.

She sat looking far away; beyond the twinkling tinkerbells, and beyond the smooth water behind them.

"When Guika and Zaylo were children you used to tell them tales of the Earth—but they weren't the tales you were telling just now. In those days you talked about huge cities where millions of your people lived, of great ships that were like lighted castles by night, of machines travelling on the ground at unbelievable speeds and others that flew above, even faster; of voices that could speak through the air to the whole Earth, and many other marvellous things. And sometimes you sang queer, jerky Earth songs to make them laugh. You did not talk of any of those things tonight."

"There are plenty of things to talk about. I don't need to go on telling of the same things each time," he said. "Why should I?"



"What you should say matters less than what you do say, but why you say it matters more than either," she murmured.

Bert blew on his glowing little fire and turned the iron in it. He made no reply.

"Yesterday was never the future. One cannot live backwards," she told him.

"Future! What future has Mars? It is senile, dying. One just waits with it for death," he said, with impatience.

"Was not Earth, too, beginning to die from the moment it started to cool?" she asked. "Yet it was worth building upon, worth raising civilizations there, wasn't it?"

"Well—was it?" he inquired bitterly. "For what?"

"If it were not, it would be better if we had never been."

"Well?" he said again, challengingly.

She turned to look at him.

"You don't think that."

"What else am I to think?" he asked.

The light was growing poor. He covered the fire with a stone and began to pack up his tools.

Annika said, "Why don't you stay here with us, Earthman? It's time for you to rest."

He looked up at her in astonishment, and started to shake his head automatically, without consideration. He had planted it in his mind that he was a wanderer, and he had no wish to examine the strength of the setting.

But Annika went on: "You could help a lot here," she said. "You find things easy that are difficult for us. You are strong—with the strength of two of our men." She looked beyond the ruin at the neat small fields. "This is a good place. With your help it could be better. There could be more fields and more stock. You like us, don't you?"

He sat looking into the twilight, so still that an inquisitive bannikuk climbed up to explore his pocket. He brushed the little creature away.

"Yes," he said. "I've always liked coming here, but—"

"But what, Earthman?"

"That's just it—'Earthman'. I don't belong here with you. I don't belong anywhere. So I just keep visiting, and moving on."

"You could belong here—if you would. If Earth were re-created now, it would be stranger to you than Mars."

That he could not believe. He shook his head.



"You feel it would be disloyal to think that—but it is true, nevertheless," Annika said.

"It can't be." He shook his head again. "Anyway, what does it matter?"

"It matters this much," Annika told him, "that you are on the verge of finding out that life is not something which can be stopped just because you don't like it. You are not apart from life: you are a part of it."

"What has all that to do with it?" Bert asked.

"Just that mere existence is not enough. One exists by barter. One lives by giving—and taking."

"I see," said Bert, but doubtfully.

"I don't think you do—yet. But it would be better for you to, and better for us if you were to stay. And there is Zaylo."

"Zaylo?" Bert repeated, wonderingly.

Zaylo came to the bank while he was repairing the wheel the next morning. She settled down a few feet away on the slope, and sat with her chin on her knees watching. He looked up and their eyes met. Something entirely unexpected happened to Bert. Yesterday he had seen her as a child grown up, today it was different. There was a pain in his chest and a hammering, the skin on his temples felt oddly tight, his hand trembled so that he almost dropped the bar he was holding. He leant back against the wheel, staring at her but unable to speak. A long time seemed to pass before he could say anything, and the words sounded clumsy in his own ears.

What they talked about he could never afterwards remember. He could only recall the sight of her: her expression, the depth of her dark eyes, the gentle movements of her mouth, the way the sun shone on her skin as though there were a mist over polished copper, the lovely line of her breasts, the slim feet in the sand beneath the brightly patterned skirt. There were a host of things he had never noticed before; the modelling of her ears, the way her hair grew, and the ingenuity of coils which could be held firmly on top of her head by the three silver pins, the slenderness of her hands and fingers, the pearly translucence of her teeth, and on through a catalog of wonders hitherto incredibly unobserved.

It was a day of which Bert recalled very little else but that there seemed to be sections of him being torn slowly and pain-



fully apart, yet still so close that sometimes he looked out from one section, and sometimes from the other. He would see himself in his boat, sliding along the endless canals in the sunlight with vastnesses of desert stretching out on either side, sitting out the sudden duststorms in his small cabin where the throat-drying sand managed still to penetrate every ingenuity, and then going on as usual to do tinker's work at the next inhabited area. That was the life he had got used to, the life he had chosen—he could go on with it as before and forget Zaylo—yet he knew it would not be quite as before because it was not going to be easy to forget her. There were pictures which he would not be able to leave behind; Zaylo smiling as she played with her sister's babies, Zaylo walking, sitting, standing; Zaylo herself. There were dreams rising inadvertent and beneath his guard, imaginings which swam into his mind in spite of his intention to keep them out; the warmth of Zaylo lying beside him, the light weight of her on his arm, the firmness, the lovely colour of her, the relaxation there would be in having a place to lay one's heart, and a hand to cherish it. It all hurt like a hardened dressing drawing from a wound.

After the evening meal he went away from the rest, and hid himself in his boat. Looking across the table at her it had seemed to him that she saw all that was going on inside him, and knew more about it than he did himself. She made no gesture, no sign, but she was aware of everything with a calmness somehow alarming. He did not know whether he hoped or feared that she might follow him to the boat—but she did not come.

The sun set while he sat unconscious that he had begun to shiver with the chill of the Martian night. After a time he moved stiffly, and roused himself. He paddled through the few inches of water and climbed the bank. Phobos was shedding a dim light across the fields and the arid land beyond. The ruined tower was a misshapen black shadow.

Bert stood looking out into the great darkness where his home had been. Mars was a trap to hold him alive, but he would not let it pet and tame him. He was not to be wheedled by softness from the harsh grudge he owed Providence. His allegiance was to Earth, the things of Earth, the memory of Earth. It would have been better to have died when the mountains and oceans of Earth were burst open; to have become one more mote among the millions memorially circling in the dark. Existence



now was not life to be lived; it was a token of protest against the ways of fate.

He peered along into the sky hoping to see one of the asteroids which once was some corner of the loved, maternal Earth: perhaps, among the myriad points that shone, he did.

A wave of desolation swept through him; a hungry abyss of loneliness opened inside him. Bert raised his clenched fists high above his head. He shook them at the uncaring stars, and cursed them while the tears ran down his cheeks.

As the far off chugging of the engine faded into silence there was only the clinking of the tinkerbells to disturb the night. Zaylo looked at her mother with misty eyes.

"He has gone," she whispered, forlornly.

Annika took her hand, and pressed it comfortingly. "He is strong, but strength comes from life—he cannot be stronger than life. He will be back soon, I think." She put up her hand and stroked her daughter's hair. After a pause she added, "When he comes, my Zaylo, be gentle with him. These Earthmen have big bodies, but inside, they are lost children."



# OPEN, SESAME!

by STEPHEN GRENDON

In the morning he went thoughtfully out into the woods to seek the source of the explosion he had heard in the night. He walked leisurely; at sixty-seven, he was more than ever inclined to take his time. The morning was bright with October, but the leaves were still predominantly green.

The explosion had taken place after midnight. He could not truthfully say that it had been an explosion—a low, rumbling roar had briefly awakened him. It had come from the direction of the woods behind the house, and very probably whatever it was had occurred in the vicinity of the ancient haven for gods and sprites. He had made a study of superstitions and strange religious beliefs for a seminar he had once taught at Indiana. The vagaries of faith were strange and wonderful.

Just beyond the oak he came upon a curious sight. There was manifest evidence that this was the place of the explosion—but strangely ominous evidence; it was not that the cedars were twisted and torn, as one might expect—no, they were simply not there. For a distance of over a hundred feet beyond the oak tree, the cedar trees had simply vanished. The earth was oddly wounded; it lay as if it had boiled and churned and bubbled, and then dried; and over it in the rough shape of a gigantic lozenge lay a film of grey that was neither liquid nor dust, but something grained and metallic, like a sand made of millions of grains of metal.

He estimated that more than forty trees of various heights had simply vanished; there was not even a fragment of stump left to show where they had stood. He stood looking at the scene with puzzled eyes. Being a methodical man, he groped for some basis from which to explore what he saw. He found none. Presently he took an envelope out of his pocket and scooped up some of the metallic grains, together with the earth beneath.

He took this carefully back to the house and returned to the spot with a shovel.

He dug.

No roots.

No stones.



The soil was peculiarly pulverized.

He went down three feet and found nothing before he abandoned digging.

Coming around the oak tree he saw on the ground quite close to it, on the side away from the place of the explosion, a metallic object. Something roughly octagonal, about six inches or less in diameter. It looked like platinum. He picked it up.

Someone said, "Good morning, Professor Septimus Quince."

Somewhat startled, he looked around.

There was no one within range of his vision.

"Possibly it may seem strange to you that a tree should address you so familiarly," pursued the voice. "If so, I shall be glad to address myself to you from some other point of vantage.

Amazed as he was, he was yet aware that the octagonal piece of metal he had picked up had grown unbearably hot in his hand. He slipped it into a coat pocket, and, still looking around him, he waited for the voice to resume.

Nothing happened except a small sound of irritation that might have been wind in the oak tree.

Professor Quince made his way back to his home in unseemly haste.

"I assure you, Royde, it might have been an unnerving experience if it were not that I am fully aware of the tricks the human mind is capable of playing on one," he said that afternoon to his colleague, Professor Darrell Royde, who was in nuclear physics and extremely practical.

"Yes, of course," said Royde casually. "But the metal piece interests me. I can't tell you what it is. It resembles platinum, but it isn't that. I'd better take a sample of that dust along."

"Do, by all means."

"And if I can manage the time, I'll have a look at that place in your woods."

There was something Professor Quince was trying in vain to remember. He could not seem to bring his thoughts into focus. He sat there for a puzzled moment before he managed to ask, "What is the most recent theory about the possibility of interplanetary travel, Royde?"

"Newspaper supplement stuff," said Royde tersely.

"It does not occur to anyone that the possibility of such travel exists?" persisted Quince.



Royde shrugged. "Only the impractical and imaginative."

"I see. They are conceiving of all else as akin to us, and not considering an alteration in basic elements."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean a being not constructed like us."

"Ghosts? My dear fellow—I warned you about interesting yourself in all that rigamarole about primitive superstitions and religions."

"What is a ghost?"

Royde leaned forward and gazed intently at his companion.

"Quince!" he said sharply.

"Oh, yes!" said Quince, blinking his eyes rapidly.

"You just now asked me in all seriousness what a ghost was," said Royde dryly

"How extraordinary!"

And indeed, it was extraordinary, reflected Quince. On reflection, however, quite a number of things about this day were extraordinary. There was that troubled moment when the mirror's image had startled him; what was it he had expected to see but the image of an amiable professor of anthropology? Quite clearly he had expected to see someone else; he had never expected to see his own image there and to think for one intense moment that it was an alien who looked back at him from the glass.

"This thing appears to have the peculiar property of growing warm in the hand," said Royde.

"Yes, I noticed it. Just put it down."

"Not an alloy, I feel certain."

"No." There was a moment of silence before Quince said, with no alteration in the tone of his voice, "But, on the other hand, you did mention something about the unpredictability of static on your radio. Have you ever thought of interplanetary communication?"

Royde's jaw dropped. "My dear Quince—you *have* been unnerved!"

"Oh, yes, I have—profoundly," agreed Quince amiably.

What in the world had got into him? he asked himself after Royde had gone. He had no more interest in such fantastic subjects as interplanetary travel and communication than he had in the atonality of Schoenberg. He was vaguely troubled, but he could not quite decide whether he was troubled because of his



lack of interest in these subjects or because of some more obscure reason.

Approaching the mantel on his way to return the octagonal metal to that stone ledge, he was once again sharply aware of seeing himself in the mirror there as someone incredibly alien and far away. He winked his eyes shut. The mild-mannered gentleman in the glass was actually repellent to him; his appearance was so foreign that he could hardly bear to look at it. That lasted but a moment.

He put down the metal octagon and stood examining it anew. It resembled, absurdly, a very large compact, save that there appeared to be no opening in it. It was twice as thick in the middle as along its rim, though its rim was not tapered off, being blunt as a compact's.

He put one hand on the metal, to wait for it to warm under his touch, as it always did. At the same time he raised his eyes to the mirror. A kind of shimmering was there, like heat waves rising, like a transparent flame separating object from reflection. It faded, and the face he knew came to the fore from behind it. He was aware of a beading of perspiration on his forehead.

"I am Professor Septimus Quince," he said to the glass, "ex-instructor in anthropology at Princeton. B. S. from Purdue, M. A. from Chicago, D. S. from Princeton. Single, white, aged sixty-seven. Resident at Princeton, New Jersey, United States of America, Earth. Author: *Ancient Man in the Southwestern United States, The Mayan Culture*. Member: International Anthropologists' Society . . ."

In his daybook late that night he wrote:

"The feeling which I have experienced ever since returning from the wood today has been one of profound *dislocation*. The illusion of being spoken to by the oak tree, the extraordinary solution of the explosion of last night—which may indeed have been another illusion, the incredible conversation with Royde, the metal object which is in any case real enough, the experiences at the mirror—these are all patently a part of the affliction. Doubtless a symptom of some mental lapse which will bear inquiry. Peculiarly, I feel dislocated not only from my customary daily routine, but also from something else which does not come at all clear, though there are moments of terrifying vision when I appear to see an utterly alien landscape suggestive of Egypt of the Lower Nile, though abounding in vegetation with which I am completely unfamiliar. As were it a struggle of two per-



sonalities, each striving for mastery. (Inquire of Dr. Mason relative to this symptom.) Presumably the feeling of dislocation commenced with the problem of what happened to the cedar trees, which would seem to have been reduced to powder or ashes in the same way that the soil was affected. The subjects of interplanetary travel and communication apparently do not present a problem. It would seem quite clear that the inhabitants of Earth do not look upon either as practicable, and it may be that for them interplanetary travel would afford insurmountable difficulties. The Earthling in the focus is a creature of routine habits; someone younger would have been preferable, but it was he who completed the contact which automatically released the controls. From such observations as have been practical, it would seem inescapable that the planet has none but the most elementary defenses, atomic research having only begun, though the Earthling in the focus is convinced that the present elementary status of atomic weapons foreshadows the doom of his civilization. Earthlings would appear to be possessed of few facilities warranting their survival . . ."

He stood up and went over to the mirror.

The face looking out at him was detestably alien. It was not the face to which he was accustomed. It was the face of the Earthling, Professor Septimus Quince, which was henceforth to be his own.

He put his hand on the metal octagon and waited for it to warm beneath his fingers.

In the house of Professor Darrel Royde half a mile down the road, the radio began to chatter with static. For a few moments Royde paid no attention to it. He had just received an extraordinary laboratory report on the peculiar metal grains Quince had given him. "Metal unknown. Not an alloy. Further examination will be made. Material radio-active."

Before he turned the knob he reflected absently that the incessant static came in a pattern, like speech, like atonal sounds which might have meaning if one had a way of interpreting them.

On Alpha Orionis a sentient being like a shimmering flame methodically read the static:

"Geth to the Members of the Supreme Council: Mission accomplished.

"Geth to the Interplanetary Legion: Contact made. Focus open."



*TRAVEL TALK*

by VINCENT STARRETT

In Borneo the natives' wish  
Is for a single tasty dish:  
A clergyman or an explorer  
Is quite a popular restorer.  
Stewed sailor is a special treat;  
And how those happy rascals eat!

No knives or forks, you understand;  
They help themselves with either hand,  
and are quite natural at table:  
They eat as long as they are able.  
Their artlessness is very funny;  
They use the polished bones for money.

I spent a week with these brave fellows.  
Their women run to reds and yellows  
And are so scantily appareled  
One feels their beauty should be barreled.  
Our friend outside the hut is wooing:  
Note his posterior tattooing.

Let us remember, friends, the rabbits  
We eat and like. If others' habits  
Seem strange to us and lacking breeding,  
They look askance at our queer feeding.  
Next week in pictures we shall visit  
The great Carpathian What-is-it.



# BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

## THE MOON AS GOAL

VOYAGES TO THE MOON, by Marjorie Nicolson. Macmillan, New York. xvii, 297 pp., \$4.00.

*Voyages to the Moon* is a study of 17th and 18th century cosmic voyages (interplanetaries). Its purpose is two-fold: to show the close interrelations between the science and science-fiction of each age (less a truism than it might seem), and to demonstrate a more or less independent tradition of lunar voyages from the 17th century to the present.

After an introductory section explaining, among other things, her class in "Science and Imagination" at Smith College—a course in the early history of science-fiction—Miss Nicolson explains the origin of the moon voyage in the 17th century as a result of the impact of the exciting astronomical discoveries of Galileo and Kepler upon a favorable classical background. She then proceeds to a discussion of the voyages, classifying them according to the four-fold division first proposed by Wilkins: supernatural voyages (dreams, visions, angelic tours, etc.), bird-aided voyages, artificial wings, and flying chariots. This division, she shows, is not only typological, but also roughly indicates a chronological evolution. In each chapter she gives short snippets of background science, exceedingly good short resumes of the romances themselves, and examples of the influence of the moon-voyage tradition upon the general literature of each period. High spots of these sections are Goodwin's *Man in the Moon*, Ben Jonson's *News from the New World*, Brunt's *Voyage to Cacklogallinia*, Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyages*. The portions dealing with Lana's vacuum-globe ship are also very well handled. Then a chapter called *Variations on a Theme* discusses the influence of the lunar tradition upon other material, such as subterranean voyages, long distance flights; and in an epilogue Miss Nicolson ventures out beyond the 18th century and mentions Poe, Locke, Verne, Lewis Carroll, Wells, and C. S. Lewis, with a few comments about each. She very wisely avoids the modern American science-fiction field.

Miss Nicolson's book, on the whole, is extremely well-done. I am amazed at the wealth of corroborative data she has gathered, much of which, such as the manuscript material in the British



Museum, is not easily available apart from her book. And she has been successful in establishing the lunar tradition among her major authors, although I sometimes feel that the connection among the minor authors is more casual than Miss Nicolson believes. I wish, however, that she had not stopped so abruptly with Montgolfier's balloon experiments, and that she had continued into the rich crop of moon voyages via balloon that followed,—Humphrey Repton's little satire on moon-travels, Baron Munchausen's trip, Fowler's *Flight to the Moon*, and Tucker's *Voyage to the Moon*, among others.

There are, however, several minor criticisms that I would like to make. The section on classical, medieval, and renaissance influences and background, while admittedly not a point of major emphasis in the book, strikes me as somewhat weak. In Plutarch, for example, Miss Nicolson mentions only *On the Face in the Moon* (presumably because of its connection with Kepler's *Somnium*) while she might just as well have mentioned *On the Cessation of Oracles*, *Concerning the Soul*, *On the Delay of Divine Justice*, which offer celestial voyages, geographical information about the planets, and much about the concept of the planets as way-stations in the progress of the soul, an aspect of classical influence upon the moon voyages which Miss Nicolson has almost completely neglected. This concept entered some of the earlier voyages, largely dropped out when social or economic satire became the chief purpose of the voyage, but appeared very strongly again in the 19th century, particularly toward the close, as in Gratacap's *Certainty of a Future Life in Mars* (1903), Windsor's *Loma* (1897), Astor's *Journey in Other Worlds* (1894), and others, where I strongly suspect the influence of Neoplatonic ideas contained in the contemporary occultism. A religious or metaphysical element is often important to this day, in interplanetary or cosmic flights not too closely connected with the more purely scientific American development.

Also, although Miss Nicolson probably would not agree, I feel that the present American development of science-fiction is connected but remotely and casually with her lunar tradition, for most modern authors have not gone farther back in time than Wells and Verne for inspiration, and Wells and Verne offer but tenuous contact with the earlier voyages.

Methodologically, Miss Nicolson seems to be the literary equivalent of a radical diffusionist in the social science. That is,



she has a tendency to accept all resemblances, no matter how slight, as evidence of genetic relationship, without considering that historical contact must be demonstrated. Thus, while her earlier tradition is undoubtedly valid—direct quotes and contact can be demonstrated—in her major authors, the minor authors are but loosely tied in, and her efforts to link Wells and C. S. Lewis to the tradition fail because of the vagueness of her material. In the field of general literature, in addition, many of her suggestions of influence, such as Milton's structure of Hell, or Satan's cosmic flight, or the general sequence of events in *Alice in Wonderland*, or some of Lewis Carroll's puns, seem at best ingenious, and not at all conclusive.

Miss Nicolson has discussed the dynamics of her stories as the interplay of three vectors. contemporary science, the evolutionary and genetic moon-voyage tradition, and contemporary literary forms. Several others, it seems to me, might have been considered: the personality of the artist, who must have a certain amount of originality; structural needs within the story itself; limited possibilities for invention; and archetypal thought.

If history moved in the automatic evolution-plus-diffusion mechanism that Miss Nicolson infers, very little change would be possible. In her implied equation science-plus-background-equals-story Miss Nicolson does not pay enough attention to the fact that an H. G. Wells remains an H. G. Wells, no matter how much environment is evoked.

My objection is not to the principal of diffusion itself, but to what seems an excessive use of it on Miss Nicolson's part. Take Poe's *Adventures of Hans Pfaal* as an example. Pfaal loaded his vehicle with scientific instruments; so did many of the earlier voyagers. Pfaal used gunpowder as a propellant; so did Murtagh McDermot. Pfaal experienced respiratory difficulties at high altitudes; so did Captain Brunt in *A Voyage to Cacklogallinia*. Therefore, since these traits are known elsewhere, Poe was not original, and the tradition must be credited. I don't agree. I find it almost unbelievable that the keen logical mind that could solve any cryptogram submitted to it would find it necessary to seek sources, whether consciously, for such obvious motifs; I see no necessity to invoke a tradition, especially when Poe thought himself original. On the whole Miss Nicolson lacks J. O. Bailey's insight into Poe. Yet, to be fair, I must mention that Miss Nicolson does restrain herself in another situ-



ation, where she lists some resemblance between *Pfaal* and an unprinted manuscript in the British Museum, and admits that Poe could not have seen the manuscript, and that the resemblances must be "chance"

I also believe that there is much more archetypal thought (in Jung's sense) in fantasy than Miss Bailey would probably admit. Bodiless cosmic flight, for example, is a well-known psychological phenomenon. Almost every primitive people believes in some sort of a sleep-soul which wanders the earth or sometimes the lands of the gods or the heavens while the body is asleep; and civilized people often have much the same psychological experience. Jack London's *Star Rover* is said to be based upon such a vision. Miss Nicolson does, it is true, mention C. S. Lewis as a beautiful example of mythical thought, but it seems to me that C. S. Lewis's work is far too much a *conscious* application of a fairly wide knowledge of religion to be truly mythical, if it be compared with the work of David Lindsay, for example, where true mythic elements almost obscure the story. Also, I don't consider it at all necessary to evaluate the combination of rugged landscape, direction down, and monsters as sure evidence of contact with Kepler's *Somnium*. I'm tempted to mention dragon and descent myths.

Nevertheless, despite Miss Nicolson's diffusionist bias in methodology—admittedly an arguable point—I would recommend *Voyages to the Moon* most highly. It's an indispensable book.

EVERETT BLEILER

### CHARLES WILLIAMS' NOVEL

ALL HALLOWS' EVE, by Charles Williams. Introduction by T. S. Eliot. Pellegrini and Cudahy, New York. 273 pp., \$2.75.

When Charles Williams died prematurely in 1945, he left behind him, in addition to a number of other books, seven novels in which mystical, occult and supernatural motivations play a considerable part. These works have already won the homage of such discriminating judges as C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, and T. S. Eliot, and the attempt is now being made to win a fresh public for their author upon this side of the Atlantic. *All Hallows Eve*, handsomely and appropriately printed and bound, is the first item in the campaign.



It has, I may as well admit frankly, quite baffled its present reviewer. I do not question the richness of Mr. Williams' mind; that is apparent upon every page. Neither can there be any question that he was just in his assessment of life. This is a novel of Good and Evil which, like the supernatural stories of Arthur Machen, Henry James, and Walter de la Mare, could only have been written by a man who has found the way. For Charles Williams did not write of occult matters to make the flesh creep; he was seeking to find and to express the meanings of life, and he needed a wider stage than the theatre of this world could give him.

My difficulty is simply that when Mr. Eliot tells me that this is a thrilling story, which may be read for its entertainment values even by those indifferent to its philosophy, I find it altogether impossible to follow him. To me the tale as a tale is turgid, desperately wearisome, and at times nearly unreadable. I quite realize that this may be autobiography rather than criticism. One may argue in behalf of many propositions where literary criticism is concerned, but one can hardly convince any other reader that a book is either fascinating or dull. For that there can be no other test than the test of reading.

Two of the characters in the book are ghosts: they associate with each other and with the living as freely as did the ghost in Edith Pargeter's fine novel, *The City Lies Foursquare*. I have no difficulty with that; neither does my imagination balk at the evil magician, Simon the Clerk, who has been living since before the French Revolution, and who is now aiming, apparently, at world domination. To achieve this purpose he seeks to employ the unwilling agency of his daughter Betty, who, it seems, can project herself into the future in a state of trance, though her complete usefulness to him, like Merlin's usefulness to Satan, was frustrated by the fact that, unbeknownst to her father, she was baptized in infancy by a faithful old nurse. The relationship of these people to each other, to the magician's evil mistress, who is the girl's mother, to the dead women who were killed in the streets of London by a falling plane, to the living husband of one of these ghosts, and to the painter who loves Betty—all this adds up to a situation of strange complexity, culminating in a great scene of self-sacrifice in which Evil is routed and Goodness left victorious. Mr Williams makes it all quite convincing for me on the plane of literary art; all I can add to that state-



ment is that he completely fails to make it interesting. By the goose-pimple test the book fails altogether. I am sorry, for all my principles and prejudices are on the author's side, and I hope that I may be suffering from a merely temporary mental blindness.

—EDWARD WAGENKNECHT

*FROM THE FAN PRESS*

THE TORCH, by Jack Bechdolt. Prime Press, Philadelphia. 299 pp., \$2.50.

SKYLARK THREE, by Edward E. Smith, Ph.D. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pa. 247 pp., \$3.00.

SLAVES OF SLEEP, by L. Ron Hubbard. Shasta Publishers, Chicago. 206 pp., \$3.00.

Fantasy and her bustling little brother, Science-Fiction, cover a very wide range of territory in their ramblings, as these novels certainly demonstrate (Smith ends his with a duel conducted at a distance of "better than two hundred thousand light-years"). Yet since even the best imaginings can only re-arrange known facts and impressions, fantasy and science-fiction lean as heavily on the past as any other fiction, and often more obviously. They are linked to the past in another way, by their natural appeal to the youthful mind: both the fresh and adventurous spirit, which may occur in a person of any age, and also, sometimes unfortunately, the juvenile gallery to which many writers and most magazine editors play. Dependence on the past and accent on youth can help to make the fantasy author a naive, conventional fellow (he's apt to be a shy day-dreamer to start with.) Constantly playing with novel combinations of ideas, juggling bizarre notions dexterously, he can dodge the tougher, more immediate problems. He finds it a good deal easier to solve the difficulties of 5000 A. D. and a Martian beetle-man than those of 1949 and himself. It is good fun to play with novel combinations of ideas, but it is the sort of fun that is apt to seem rather trifling afterwards, like a game invented by a child, or a fad that sweeps the country, or an intellectual and alcoholic bull-session. Looking back, we find we were attracted by superficial glamor and that our imaginations were so stirred that we invented as much as we read (in the case of a book) and felt profundity where there was none. It is as if we had seen a marvelous conjurer, and next day seen through his tricks. So, to create



a vivid and vivifying impression, and then be forgotten, is the fate of all fantasy, except that which is based deeply on the torments, joys, and questings of the human heart.

First published in *The Argosy* in 1920, *The Torch* belongs to the primitive era of American magazine science-fiction. It is also the author's first serial-length effort and from this gains some excitement and strength. (A fantasy author's first effort, skimming the cream of his youthful imagination, is, I believe, more often apt to be his best than the first efforts of fiction writers in other fields.) Set in 2078 A. D. and in a New York riven by astronomic and atomic catastrophe, Mr. Bechdolt's book pictures the revolt of a slave population who dwell in the old subways, but are inspired by the battered figure of the Statue of Liberty, which looms over a shattered Manhattan overgrown by jungle. Save for its wanly-visualized setting, the science element in the book is negligible. Mr. Bechdolt has transposed into the future a story of intrigue and revolt in a medieval principality. Learning, lost in the catastrophe, is being rediscovered—a pleasant game. Mr. Bechdolt's hero is torn between self-interest and sympathy for the underdog, which is something of a surprise in a literary realm densely inhabited by morally flawless supermen.

On the other hand, *Skylark Three* has both a morally flawless hero and a vigorous and fascinating science element. Dr. Smith's science-fiction is real, rousing science-fiction, the sort that devours the latest discoveries in physics and chemistry, says, "Let's speculate (no limits!)" and then works hard at the job. Dr. Smith really thinks. His speculations about future science are no hack-writer's faking, no mere toying with paradoxes and clever-sounding but unexplained technical jargon of tomorrow; though developed by analogy from past scientific discoveries, as such speculations must be, they are lively and ingenious. Science discovers that the supposedly indivisible atom contains electrons; Dr. Smith speculates as to whether the electron in turn may not be made up of tinier particles. On the basis of the nerve-trace theory of learning, he imagines a machine that might in an instant convey the massed knowledge of one mind to another. Radar and atomic energy are commonplace in his tale. And there is an anticipation, astonishing in a story first published in 1930, of the murky mental atmosphere of World War II—in particular its concepts of wholly evil races and justified racial ex-



termination. Such stimulating imaginative fare compensates the reader of *Skylark Three* for its parringly juvenile hero, who springs straight from the boys' adventure books, yet can also be felt as symbolizing the boyish enthusiasm of the early Twentieth Century science.

The plot-skeleton of *Skylark Three* has its source deep in childhood and mankind's past. It is essentially the tale of the evil magician thwarted by the youthful hero. As in a fairy tale, the hero must first go on a lengthy quest (in a spaceship) to obtain various powers from good magicians (friendly and sometimes pacifist galactic races) before he can blast out of existence the evil sorcerer (a wholly evil galactic race). The ship *Skylark Three* in which he makes the last stage of his journey is the swift and invincible dream-boat in which all of us have gone on imaginary ventures.

Mr. Hubbard's *Slaves of Sleep* bases itself more consciously on the past. The dream portion of the story is set in a kingdom of the jinns who were banished from the real world by Solomon, or Sulayman, and who now rule a kingdom of dream where they enslave human sleepers. The jinns have developed up to the present day in a parallel time-stream and their history is handled lightly. The hero releases a jinn from a bottle during his waking life and for this service is doomed never to sleep—that is, always to remember his dreams. He is a timid and timorous youth who in dream becomes a swashbuckling madcap sailor. Remembering his dream self in his waking existence, he gradually gains self-assurance and courage and in the end defeats both his waking-world and sleep-world enemies, wins the unattainable girl in both realms, and is able to look forward to a life-time with her both awake and asleep—surely a perfect daydream conclusion, even if a rather terrifying one. This story, first published in *Unknown* in 1939, belongs to a type much favored in that magazine: a frank and humorous "Let's pretend" approach, with no attempt to be really convincing, rather than a serious effort, by careful building of atmosphere, to produce in the reader a momentary suspension of belief. The adventure is lively, there is a melange of historic eras, and some descriptions of tatterdemalion minor characters are prose Edd Cartiers. The book itself has a colorful and attractive dust jacket by Hannes Bok.

—FRITZ LEIBER, JR.



## FRANK MERRIWELL ON VENUS

SPACE CADET, by Robert Heinlein. Scribner's, New York. 242 pp., \$2.50.

The publishers of Mr. Heinlein's book have craftily refrained from labelling it as a "juvenile"; apparently it was their intention to capture the adolescent market and at the same time sell the book to adult science-fiction fans. It is therefore necessary to review the volume on three levels; on the basis of its appeal to juveniles, to science-fiction addicts, and to the general reading public.

As a "juvenile", *Space Cadet* is definitely reminiscent of the early Frank Merriwell books—when Frank prepared for his career at Yale by spending several years in a military academy in the company of a comic Dutchman, a comic Irishman, and a comic Yankee. Our cleancut, manly young hero also encountered several unpleasant characters, including a cynical rich man's son and a lisping degenerate with a secret vice (he smoked cigarettes). But Frank was the kind of a chap who responded to the academy tradition and ideals; the rigid discipline moulded his character.

Heinlein's Merriwell is named Matt Dodson. He spends his time in the rocket ship training school of the Solar Patrol, during the year 2075. His chief sidekick is a comic Texan, and his chief source of unpleasantness is a cynical rich man's son, but Matt is the kind of chap who responds to the Solar Patrol tradition and ideals; the rigid discipline moulds his character.

Merriwell went out for athletics; Dodson is similarly interested and receives a thorough course of physical conditioning as a Patrol cadet. Of course, times have changed since Burt L. Standish wrote about cadet hazing; Heinlein's hero is not hazed—instead he encounters psychological tests.

Merriwell's companions, despite minor vices, were all primarily decent; they eschewed alcohol and loose females. Heinlein takes a more daring modern view in permitting the comic Texan to take three drinks (whereupon he gets sick and gives up, in every sense of the word) and there is even one scene where the boys daringly say "hello" to a real live woman (whereupon she gives them a dressing-down and a card inviting them to a social gathering at the Baptist Church). But in the main, Heinlein has done a job here that will keep Merriwell's creator resting easily in his grave. If there are any adolescent boys



who prefer reading to the practices ascribed to them in the Kinsey report, they will probably find the combination of Merriwell-plus-science quite satisfactory

The science-fiction fan will, no doubt, strive to ignore the characters and concentrate on Mr. Heinlein's generous use of mathematical theorization; the book is crammed with technological exposition in an effort, apparently, to extenuate the sketchy plot. The framework of the story is quite simple, involving as it does the conditioning of cadets in rocket training ships and the relentless weeding-out process whereby the unfit are eliminated. The Patrol acts as a sort of galactic police; its atomic weapons are used to prevent war in the now colonized solar system. There is no real excitement until towards the end of the book when hero Matt and his chums encounter some Venerians. The Venerians constitute an amphibious matriachy and speak with the stately Biblical simplicity of Mr. Kipling's Mowgli, and Mrs. Buck's Chinese (viz: "*thou stinketh, wise and gracious one*"). Here even the ardent science-fiction fan may boggle a bit; the stock situations and characters come into play with a vengeance, and we find the usual gimmick—hero and pals stranded with useless machinery and coming up with quick mechanical improvisation to save the day and return home in triumph.

What remains in *Space Cadet* to interest general readers is the basic ideology implicit in the work. For if Heinlein writes Kipling dialogue in spots, he writes Kipling's imperialistic philosophy into his account of the Solar Patrol. He paints a clear picture of a military caste gallantly carrying the White Man's Burden (atomic destruction, of course) to the Lesser Breeds of Space. In justice to Mr. Heinlein, let it be said that he makes prodigious efforts to convince the reader (and probably, himself) that he has created fair-minded, scientifically-grounded concepts of authority. But the shibboleths of rigid discipline and meaningless uniformity come straight out of the Navy and West Point ("Cadets will at all times be smooth-shaven and will not wear their hair longer than two inches") When Heinlein's superior officers relax to play chess with cadets, the reader is immediately reminded of General Cummings in *The Naked and the Dead*; the paternalism, the cat-and-mouse game, are identical.

Heinlein's is a sad new world in this effort; a world of scientific freedom containing the same old slaves. He does allow his cynical villain to voice doubts concerning the standards of the



Patrol; but then the villain leaves the Service and becomes a blubbing weakling, to be rescued by his former companions. So one has no choice but to believe that Heinlein is sincere in his belief that the scientific approach, the psychiatric approach, is still only the process of providing additional weapons for the Mighty White Race in its God-given mission to colonize the earth, surrounding planets, and the universe. Money and organized religion play their familiar roles against a background of interstellar space, and good clean manly young chaps snap to attention when the *Oberleutenant* cracks the whip. Heinlein, as always, writes well—but his characterization and subject-matter is to be regretted in this instance.

—ROBERT BLOCH

### FACTUAL FANTASIES

OUT OF THE SILENCE, by Patrick Mahony. With an introduction by Maurice Maeterlinck. Storm Publishers, New York. 180 pp., \$2.50.

This definitely is not a book to be read at one sitting. Like Charles Fort's *Lo!*, which is a comparison not quite fair to the author, it is a volume the fantasy or occult enthusiast will want to take in small portions and digest at leisure. Simply and directly written in an unassuming style, free from any interpretive asides, it consists of a series of short incidents or sketches, each involving some supernormal event, with settings cheek by jowl from Latvia and India to California and New Jersey.

Typical of the episodes is the one which relates the odd occurrence which befell a musician in the Transvaal. A small party traveling in that part of South Africa was caught in a violent storm and sought refuge in a deserted farm house. Upon entering, they discovered the building had not been disturbed for many years. Cobwebs and dust lay everywhere and the furnishings were of a bygone age. There was, however, a piano in one corner and the member of the party who was a musician was prompted to sit down and play. All during the storm he played, first doing a group of favorite selections, then improvising. As he improvised, an unusual melody came out of the rusted piano strings which so impressed the rest of the party that he was urged to play it several times. The storm passed, and the party returned to Capetown. Days later the musician was listening to an open-air concert when suddenly the band struck up a melody that seemed strangely familiar. Gradually it dawned upon him



that it was the same piece he had improvised on the abandoned piano in the farmhouse. The musician queried the band leader and learned that it had been composed in 1881 by a Dutch farmer who had been killed in the Boer war. The music manuscript only recently had been discovered hidden away in a trunk in a deserted farm house and was being played for the first time.

Included in the book is an account of *The Vacant Vault*, with which this writer was familiar, it having taken place in the West Indies. This is a simple incident—though not so simply explained—notable in occult annals because it attracted to the site Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It concerns a very curious vault in a churchyard on the island of Barbados where three women were buried in the early nineteenth century. Opened at intervals over a period of years, the lids of the lead coffins each time were found to have been torn off and the bodies scattered about. This though the most elaborate means were taken to both detect and prevent possible intruders. Research of the local records by the creator of Sherlock Holmes revealed that two of the occupants of the vault had committed suicide.

The brevity of the sketches and the almost unfailing appearance of the "leave it to the reader what actually happened" passage is apt to become a bit tiresome with sustained reading. But taken at intervals, it is a pleasant book which may be enjoyed over a long time. We say "pleasant", for although all of the fantasies deal with mystic occurrences after death, they are treated objectively quite without a horror atmosphere.

Mr. Mahony, a naturalized Irish American, born in London, states in his introduction that his material was drawn from many sources and that he has not seen fit to burden the book with a learned bibliography. Undoubtedly many lovers of the genre will thank him for that, but there may be some who will miss the factual authorities. Certainly the addition of source material would not have detracted from the work, and some of the episodes, like Sir Oliver Lodge's Raymond, seem to cry out for the bulwark of mundane explanation.

This is not a book of ghost stories, but the field of psychic phenomena has been fairly well cross sectioned. Mr. Mahony states that he has never seen a ghost although he believes in their inherent probability. Whether he does or not is beside the point. He has written with restraint, and he has gathered a salmagundi of weirdisms that will stand well on anyone's shelf.

—CARL JACOBI



## DR. KELLER AGAIN

THE SOLITARY HUNTERS and THE ABYSS, by David H. Keller. New Era Publishers, Philadelphia. 265 pp., \$3.00.

"The first to forge ahead of Lovecraft and Quinn" enthused an admirer of Dr. Keller fifteen years ago after reading the original publication of *The Solitary Hunters* in *Weird Tales*. And the first installment of the serial polled higher in reader appeal than the perennially popular *Woman of the Wood* by A. Merritt. Now, a decade and a lustrum later, Keller's novella of entymology, penology, psychology and mystery has been put between hard covers for fresh judgment. The wraiths of Lovecraft and Merritt need scarcely fear that their earthly laurels will be trampled in the mad rush to acclaim this story today, but it is a good one just the same.

The story was laid in the future at the time (1934). Unfortunately, somebody slipped up and forgot to change 1943 to sometime in the 50's, so that it suffers anachronistic incompatibilities. But Dr. Keller's abilities as spinner of an outrageous, Collieresque tale minimize such temporal faults.

Keller spoke, as a child, in an unknown tongue, and learned English as a foreign language, and he has always used it in its simplest form with extreme effectiveness. The appeal of *The Solitary Hunters* is heightened by the straight-forward, straight-faced manner in which its wildly improbable plot is unfolded.

Even wilder and more improbable is *The Abyss*, which we are told is of more recent creation; a previously unpublished, somewhat longer novella which comprises the second half of the book. Here we are treated to the unlikely spectacle of eight million New Yorkers simultaneously descending into the hidden recesses of their subconscious minds and uninhibitedly reacting as their ancestors did one to five thousand years ago. Through the shambles this situation creates, Dr. Keller moves with pad, pencil and a third eye of psychological insight, recording the revolting revelations of human nature with the beast barriers down.

There is little of literary value in this book, but lotus lovers seeking escape from this mad world of today may lose themselves in these two even madder ones of this mental magician's imaginings.

—WEAVER WRIGHT



## WHIMSY AND WHAMSY

"... AND SOME WERE HUMAN", by Lester del Rey. The Prime Press, Philadelphia. 331 pp., \$3.00.

MOONFOAM AND SORCERIES, by Stanley Mullen. The Gorgon Press, Denver, Col. 364 pp., \$3.00.

Lester del Rey's first collection, *... And Some Were Human*, will interest those readers who, like this reviewer, prefer their fantasy with more whimsy than terror. Dealing with dryads, gnomes, the Great God Pan (in his gentler aspect), and kind-hearted ape-men rather oftener than with rockets to Venus and such usual props of the science-fictioner, the author has culled, he says, the best of his publishing in *Unknown* and *Astounding Science-Fiction*. While slight of plot and too often falling flat at the very last, these tales have tenderness and a respect for moral values too often lacking in this sort of literature. His unhuman creatures are far from being hideous or inimical to man,—too often it is man who is the villain. Pure villainy, however, is not too much in evidence in del Rey's kindly-disposed universe, his imagination being a fresh, happy and amiable one. With more application to his plot-development and the rounding-out of a more mature style this young man may some day offer serious competition to H. F. Heard, the writer with whom his attitude of mind has the most in common. Someday—but not yet. Sol Levin has drawn appropriate chapter-headings for the volume.

The handsomely gotten-up collection of Stanley Mullen's stories has two strikes on it from the first,—a title, *Moonfoam and Sorceries*, that is on the lavender-and-old-lace side, and a scattering of very long poems in very free verse bridging the hiatus between each tale. Unlike the book just reviewed above, this one goes in a little more for the terrible and the malign, but its author, too, prefers good to evil, and his horrendous creatures always get their come-uppance at the hands of the forces of light. Some of these stories, too, fail to come off, but in *The Queen Bee*, *The Ophidians*, and *The Gods of Shipapu*, Mr. Mullen has combined original conception with really powerful description. But his imagination, while able to conceive grand, even lofty images, is not equalled by a technique able to present them quite adequately to the reader. Too often he seems to be hurrying to get his story finished and over with. This is a pity, for he has a real talent for this kind of fiction. Full-page illustrations by Roy Hunt are striking and add a great deal to the appearance of this volume.

—LEAH BODINE DRAKE



## SHORT NOTICES

**DIVIDE AND RULE**, by L. Sprague de Camp. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pennsylvania. 231 pages, \$3.00. Together with *The Stolen Dormouse*, this duo of novelettes is excellent entertainment in that particular division of fantasy which seems designed especially for those who like their fantasy whacky. Both stories are of the world to come, when things are happily mixed up into a bizarre combination of ancient and ultra-modern aspects. With absolutely no pretensions to anything but entertainment on the lighter side of fantasy, L. Sprague de Camp's work in this volume will give pleasure to all but the sourest readers. While this one is not up to the classic *Lest Darkness Fall*, the same creative hand is evident. But those readers who insist on a certain amount of logic and have a tendency to dislike whacky comedy had better skip this one. Everyone else is likely to thoroughly enjoy the saga of Sir Howard Van Slyck's living up to the family motto, "Give 'Em the Works", and the tale of the feud between the Crosleys and the Strombergs over a stolen semi-corpse.

**THE INVISIBLE MAN**, by H. G. Wells. Dell Publishing Company, \$.25. This Wellsian classic is now available in pocketbook form, and thus within the reach of every potential reader's purse. By all means add to your shelves this handy edition of one of the "basic" books selected in this issue of *The Arkham Sampler*.

**FEAR AND TREMBLING**, edited by Alfred Hitchcock. Dell Publishing Company, \$.25. Another anthology of strange tales which is well worth the asking price. Here are the following tales: *Cassius*, by Henry S. Whitehead; *The Tarn*, by Hugh Walpole; *Little Memento*, by John Collier; *Oh Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad*, by M. R. James; *One Summer Night*, by Ambrose Bierce; *Telling*, by Elizabeth Bowen; *The Jar*, by Ray Bradbury; *The Bad Lands*, by John Metcalf; *Ghost Hunt*, by H. R. Wakefield; *Skule Skerry*, by John Buchan; *The Red Room*, by H. G. Wells; *The Sack of Emeralds*, by Lord Dunsany; and *The Night Reveals*, by Cornell Woolrich. A far better than average anthology in the field.



THE CHIPS ARE DOWN, by Pean-Paul Satre. Lear, New York, 187 pages, \$2.75. This so-called "novel" is rather a scenario for a film made in France. Satre's concern here is within the boundaries of his existentialism philosophy, but in the world of fantasy, for his story is of living and the dead seeking to fulfill their existence. A story of love after death which is interesting, though definitely a minor Satre performance, and likely to annoy many readers because of its clipped and spare form. On the other hand, its movement is just as likely to please others. Try it.

ANGEL IN THE WORDROBE, by Robert Tallant. Doubleday and Company, New York. 271 pages, \$3.00. A delicate, sensitive novel, told with humor and insight, about old Mattie Lou Wycliff, head of an old Louisiana family striving to adjust itself to modern times, who believes she has an angel in her armoire in whom she can confide her troubles. The element of fantasy is slight, but the novel is well written, its characters are well realized, and readers who like something not reeking with horror may well enjoy it very much.

THE ATLANTIS MYTH, by H. S. Bellamy. Faber and Faber, London. 10/6. Almost on the heels of an announcement that an American author is exploding such "superstitions" as the Atlantis story comes Prof. Bellamy with an exhaustive analysis of the legend which is designed to show that, far from being a legend, it is based on fact. The tale: about 12,000 B. C., the minor planet Luna, which moved in an erratic orbit near Earth's orbit, was turned into a satellite of Earth, resulting in titanic upheavals on this planet and raising the level of the sea over what was then Atlantis, save for the Azores. Some Atlanteans escaped—among them the Cro Magnon men of Europe. From among those who fled to Africa, the story of Atlantis and its civilization reached the ears of Solon, and from Solon, to the family of Plato the secret moved, and thence to the world at large. Prof. Bellamy presents a cogent and skillfully woven argument, and no devotee of the fantastic will want to miss it.



**ART AND THE UNCONSCIOUS**, by Lionel Goitein. United Book Guild, New York. \$3.75. "Art has many of the characteristics of a dream," writes the analyst in this book. "Out of life's gestalt two types of art form emerges, extravertive and intravertive, and two types of artists, those concentrating on the foreground of living (the actors), and those concentrating on the background of life (the reflectors)." What artists have unconsciously put into their pictures about their own repressions, compulsions, complexes, and phobias is made into a fascinating, illustrated text by Mr. Goitein, who reproduces, explores, and explains pictures by artists demonstrating animism, subjective experience, nuclear complexes, transference manifestations, primitiveness and relevancy, escapism, exhibitionism, sublimation, and more in pictures and other art forms by Milles, Rodin, Calder, Picasso, Daumier, Redon, Charlot, Dali, Durer, Castellon, Brueghel, Goya, Rubens, Blake, Miro, Watts, Velasquez, Corot, Gauguin, Matisse, El Greco, Burne-Jones, Rembrandt, Chevanes, Moses, Klee, and others. For those who would be informed about the readily definable connection between works of art and the unconscious, this is an excellent book indeed.

**THE MADRONE TREE**, by David Duncan. The Macmillan Company, New York. 230 pages, \$3.00. Despite the fact that this apparently supernatural tale has a perfectly explicable denouement, readers will enjoy the fine atmosphere of supernatural suspense which author Duncan manages to create. What was the evil that lurked in the heart of Bull Woods near the madrone tree, a growth the bark of which resembled human flesh? Two murders had already taken place there to the accompaniment of mad laughter and the Reverend Manley Foxx looked upon the tree as a symbol of evil. There were others in the village of Jonesville who put the superstitious fears of the natives to their own uses. The story, skillfully told, depicts the battle between the superstitious Foxx and the psychologist, Bleeker Twist, for a solution to the mystery, and mounts to an exciting climax, which, though it dispels the supernatural fog, is nevertheless not of the much-despised fraudulent variety which deceives the reader into belief in the supernatural only to disabuse him unsentimentally in the end. Mr. Duncan is to be congratulated on the authenticity of his novel's terror and the subtlety of its horror.



## BOOKS RECEIVED

THE WORKS OF M. P. SHIEL, a bibliography by A. Reynolds Morse. Fantasy Publishing Company, Inc., Los Angeles, California. 170 pages, \$6.00.

THE ROOM BEYOND, by Robert Spencer Carr. Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York. 427 pages, \$3.00.

WITHOUT SORCERY, by Theodore Sturgeon. Introduction by Ray Bradbury Prime Press, Philadelphia. 355 pages, \$3.00.

DARKER THAN YOU THINK, by Jack Williamson. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pa. 310 pages, \$3.00.



# EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

## *This Science-Fiction Issue*

If this special issue of *The Arkham Sampler* devoted to science-fiction indicates nothing else, it demonstrates again what we have always maintained—that it is not possible to draw a hard and fast line between fantasy and science-fiction. We have consistently held that science-fiction is a development of fantasy; it differs from horror tales, supernatural fiction, the *conte cruel*, for instance, but it is no less fantasy than all of them or than the fantasy of Lord Dunsany or the terror of M. R. James. It stands by itself, perhaps, but it does not stand apart from fantasy, regardless of the fact that some of our contributors write as if it does. Perhaps nothing demonstrates the validity of our contention more firmly than the wide range of titles selected as “basic” for a science-fiction library by our contributors—among the titles which earn a place in the basic list no less than six titles are rather more representative of other branches of fantasy than science-fiction, yet devotees of the latter have listed them repeatedly among the basically necessary books in the science-fiction library.

The general list, quite apart from those titles which placed in the primary group, indicates an even wider disparity of selection. The contributors to our symposium, moreover, are fully representative of the field today, and they represent it from every perspective; they are the people who read it, edit it, and write it; they are, in short, the representatives of the people who in fact make science-fiction the successful development of fantasy it is today. Yet one of the principal reasons for being of this particular issue was the attempt to achieve a standard in definitions. It would seem, as a result of this symposium, that the problem is rather more one of semantics than of definitions, and a further examination of labels would seem necessary in the light of the conclusive finding in this issue.

A secondary reason for being of this issue was to lay the ghost of the canard that Arkham House and its editor-owner are fundamentally antipathetic to science-fiction. This is so far from the truth, that we are actually hard put to it to conceive of anyone apart from the field of the magazines, who has done more to further the field of fantasy, inclusive of science-fiction. Arkham



House was founded with the intention of publishing a select library of the best in fantasy, beginning with Lovecraft, Smith, Whitehead and the acknowledged leaders of fantasy in British writing; we invaded the science-fiction field directly with A. E. Von Vogt's *Slan*, and we are going on with publications in the science-fiction genre in 1949 with collections of short stories by A. E. Van Vogt—*Away and Beyond*, and S. Fowler Wright, *The Throne of Saturn*, and the novel, *Gather, Darkness!*, by Fritz Leiber, Jr. Other books in the genre will follow.

But it is true that for the adventure tale disguised as science-fiction we have comparatively little use. We have no use, either, for the adventure tale or romance passing as weird fiction, as apart from science-fiction, and we are not likely to publish either. Arkham House has set up a standard of publishing the best in the field, and we intend to retain that standard, despite criticism and all the malice which can be dreamed up and flung at us. We will never permit ourselves to publish and circulate a work in any development of fantasy which seems to us markedly inferior; we shall try always to publish the best in every branch of fantasy. Nor will we permit ourselves to support the circulation by false praise of any inferior book in the field.

Our work on behalf of science-fiction is not limited to publication. No other author, no other critic, no other editor commands the audience that we do in our reviews for *The Chicago Tribune*, whose book-review section has the largest circulation of its kind in America. In that newspaper we have striven to further the cause of science-fiction with discrimination and at the same time without jeopardizing our standards. In the pages of that book section we have written in praise of science fiction repeatedly—of A. E. Van Vogt's *The World of Null-A*, at one time scheduled for our own list but released to Simon & Schuster: "A skillfully integrated novel. Among modern tellers of science-fiction tales, A. E. Van Vogt ranks high . . . and this publishing experiment ought to encourage further novels in the genre."—of H. F. Heard's *The Lost Cavern*: "The man who approaches this book with the patience and intelligence to be entertained will find in it a very high quality of prose on a level distinctly above that of mere entertainment alone."—of J. O. Bailey's *Pilgrims Through Space and Time*: "A study meriting the attention of serious scholars of this fascinating trend of fantasy."—of *A Treasury of Science Fiction*, edited by Groff Conklin: "The gen-



eral reader, no less than the devotee of science-fiction, will find hitherto unknown avenues of delightful escape from the mundane world opened to him in this anthology "

But there is no need to go on. The same kind of reviewing has been done for *The Chicago Sun*, *The Milwaukee Journal*, Madison's *Capital Times*, and other media, so that it may safely be said that these reviews reach well over two and a half million readers, which, we maintain, exceeds the audience of any other connoisseur of fantasy in all its forms. Yet we have been assailed as hating all science-fiction, and so on. It is true that we have permitted the publication of attacks on certain juvenila in the field and that we ourselves dislike fraudulent tales which are only masquerading as science-fiction and are aimed at the same mental level as comic-book science-fiction pictures. We shall continue to follow this course without deviation.

At the same time we have edited two science-fiction anthologies—*Strange Ports of Call*, published last year; and *The Other Side of the Moon*, coming this year. We edited these books specifically to present the best literary science-fiction tales, and by so doing, to attract the attention of readers new to the field, readers who would only be justly repelled by the blood-and-thunder interplanetary of the old-time standard school of science-fiction. The result has been that no other science-fiction anthology commanded the attention of such serious critics or so many reviewing media apart from the "fan" outlets. And the attention paid to *Strange Ports of Call* indicated the degree of the success which the venture had. Anthony Boucher's comment was typical of the notices: "Excellent though the anthologies of more typical science-fiction have been, this is the ideal introduction to lure the hitherto blase into a new and absorbing field of speculation and pleasure."

Mr. Boucher's comment was echoed by James Sandoe—"This anthology has a contenting diversity and level of literacy which scorners of science-fiction ought to examine before they sneer again."—and others, and we are persuaded that our anthology fulfilled its purpose. We hope that our second anthology in the field will underscore our first. We have put together anthologies with this purpose because we realize that the writer of fantasy—whether science-fiction or horror, supernatural fiction or whimsy—is a writer who exists in and writes for a comparatively limited world, even if many readers and writers in that world tend to



think it the center of all creative writing, and often become hysterically enraged at the slightest criticism, no matter how just or how capable of proof, aimed at some of the puerilities which have been palmed off on undeveloped minds as science-fiction.

But this issue of *The Arkham Sampler* is not aimed at readers who are mentally scarcely out of their diapers, no matter how loudly the diaper-brigade in science-fiction may squall. We cannot retrogress to the level of that puerile mind which reacts to every criticism of science-fiction like a small boy whose pet dog has been kicked; we can hope only that these diaper-boys will eventually mature and learn to exercise judgment, but there is nothing we can do to help them if they prefer to close their minds against maturity and remain steadfastly in the milieu of Tom Swift.

### *Coming Collections*

We want to direct the attention of our readers to two anthologies of science-fiction, both of which are scheduled to appear in the Spring. The first of them is our own second anthology, *The Other Side of the Moon* (Pellegrini & Cudahy). It will contain the following stories: *The Appearance of Man*, by J. D. Beresford; *The Star*, by H. G. Wells; *The Thing On Outer Shoal*, by P. Schuyler Miller; *The Strange Drug of Dr. Caber*, by Lord Dunsany; *The World of Wulkins*, by Frank Belknap Long; *The City of the Singing Flame*, by Clark Ashton Smith; *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*, by Howard P. Lovecraft; *The Devil of East Lupton*, by Murray Leinster; *Conquerors' Isle*, by Nelson Bond; *Something from Above*, by Donald Wandrei; *Pillar of Fire*, by Ray Bradbury; *The Monster*, by Gerald Kersh; *Symbiosis*, by Will F. Jenkins; *The Cure*, by Lewis Padgett; *Vault of the Beast*, by A. E. Van Vogt; *The Earth Men*, by Ray Bradbury; *Original Sin*, by S. Fowler Wright; *Spiro*, by Eric Frank Russell; *Memorial*, by Theodore Sturgeon; and *Resurrection*, by A. E. Van Vogt. The selections for the most part have never been anthologized previously; they are taken from books and from such magazines as *Astounding Science Fiction*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, *Weird Tales*, *Blue Book Magazine*, *Planet Stories*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Collier's*, thus once again assuring readers the diversity which they have come to expect in our anthologies.

The second science-fiction collection is a pocketbook scheduled for release in May. It will be published by Dell at \$.25, and



seems to us a must in the field, for it will contain, among others, such pieces as the famed radio-script version of *The War of the Worlds*, which Orson Wells and his company did over the air and almost panicked the countryside—this piece, *Invasion from Mars*, gives the collection its title; *Zero Hour*, by Ray Bradbury; *The Green Hills of Earth*, by Robert A. Heinlein; *Expedition*, by Anthony Boucher; *The Star Mouse*, by Frederic Brown; *Incident on Calypso*, by Murray Leinster; *The Castaway*, by Nelson Bond; *Victory Unintentional*, by Isaac Asimov; and *The Million Year Picnic*, by Ray Bradbury.

### *The Arkham Program*

With publication last month of *Not Long for This World*, by August Derleth, Arkham House has completed its 1948 program. The 1949 program of books will not begin until autumn of this year, when books by H. P. Lovecraft, S. Fowler Wright, A. E. Van Vogt, and Fritz Leiber, Jr., will come from press. Arkham House has prepared a new, illustrated stocklist, which began to go out to new patrons and the trade in late November, and in March a new catalog of forthcoming books will go out to all our patrons who have been accustomed to buying books from us. Any reader who wishes to own the stocklist may write for a free copy, but it contains nothing most of our patrons do not already have in previous catalog issues.

Our coming catalog will list such books as we hope to publish not only this year and next, but for some time to come, so that our patrons may know our plans for coming years. The first four titles on the new program, however, will be these:

*Something About Cats and Other Pieces*, by H. P. Lovecraft

*The Throne of Saturn*, by S. Fowler Wright

*Away and Beyond*, by A. E. Van Vogt

*Gather Darkness!*, by Fritz Leiber, Jr

These will be followed by H. P. Lovecraft's *Selected Letters*, delayed because of the impressive detail of the work entailed in their editing, Arthur Machen's *The Green Round*, M. P. Shiel's *Xelucha and Others*, and certain titles for which negotiations are still in progress. All our patrons will automatically receive the new catalog when it is ready in March, and will thus learn further details of the books to come this year and thereafter.



*Our Contributors*

Most of the contributors of this issue are well-known to all devotees of science-fiction. . . Readers of the early days of *Weird Tales* will remember Forrest J. Ackerman as one of the first—and most vociferous—of science-fiction fans. He was an inveterate letter-writer to that magazine, and today he is no less a champion of science-fiction, and is associated with its publication through the Fantasy Publishing Company, Inc. of Los Angeles. . . Everett Bleiler is a serious student of fantasy, as well as of other subjects. He is best known to the world of fantasy for his admirable *Checklist of Fantastic Literature*. . . Dr. David H. Keller is one of the most esteemed of science-fiction writers, whose work has appeared widely in most of the magazines devoted to fantasy. He is the author of *Life Everlasting and Other Stories*, *The Solitary Hunters*, and several forthcoming books. Arkham House will soon announce a collection of his best stories, entitled *Tales from Underwood*.

Sam Merwin, Jr., is the editor of *Thrilling Wonder Stories*. . . P. Schuyler Miller has contributed to most of the professional magazines devoted to fantasy, and his stories have appeared in such anthologies as *Strange Ports of Call*, *Adventures in Time and Space*, *The Best of Science Fiction*, and *The Other Side of the Moon*. . . Sam Moskowitz is the publisher of the first David Keller collection in book form, but he is even better known as an ardent admirer and defender of science-fiction. The article in this issue is an outgrowth of a long controversy with the editor on the subject. . . Lewis Padgett is the pen-name of Henry Kuttner, who is the author of some of the very best science-fiction of our time. . . Paul L. Payne is the editor of *Planet Stories*. . . A. Langley Searles is an avid collector of all things fantastic, and the editor of the *Fantasy Commentator*, one of the better non-professional magazines devoted to the subject.

Theodore Sturgeon's first collection, *Without Sorcery*, was recently published by the Prime Press. His work has appeared widely in both magazines and anthologies of the weird and fantastic, ranging from *Weird Tales* to *The Other Side of the Moon*. . . A. E. Van Vogt is the author of such modern classics of science-fiction as *Slan*, *The World of Null-A*, *The Weapon Shops*, *The Players of Null-A*, and others. He is at present preparing *Away and Beyond*, a collection of his best short science-



fiction stories for publication by Arkham House later this year. . . Donald Wandrei's most recent work is a new novel, *The Web of Easter Island*. He is preparing a second collection of his stories for publication by Arkham House, and has been working on the tremendous task of editing the letters of H. P. Lovecraft for publication late this year or early next.

Ray Bradbury's distinguished first collection, *Dark Carnival*, remains one of the highlights on the Arkham House list. Mr. Bradbury has won recognition in both the annual anthologies of "best" short stories of the year, and his work has appeared not only in the fantasy magazines and anthologies, but in such magazines as *Mademoiselle*, *Collier's*, *The American Mercury*, and *Harper's*. He is completing a new novel. . . . Clark Ashton Smith is at work on more new stories, and is putting together *The Abominations of Yondo*, a fourth short-story collection to follow *Genius Loci and Other Tales*, which was published last autumn by Arkham House.

August Derleth's next book will be his fifty-sixth; it will be his second anthology of science-fiction. Pellegrini & Cudahy will publish *The Other Side of the Moon* in Spring. He is at present putting together a new collection of his fantastic and macabre tales under the title of *Lonesome Places*. . . Jules Verne needs no introduction to our readers; nor does Regis Messac, the late widely-known French author whose interest in science-fiction was adequately publicized during his lifetime. . . . Peter Viereck is the young author of *Terror and Decorum*, which many critics voted the most distinguished collection of poems published in 1948.

John Beynon Harris is a British author of fantasy whose fiction is just beginning to achieve American publication. . . Stephen Grendon's first collection of short stories, *Mr. George and Other Odd Persons*, is slated for publication by Arkham House. . . . Vincent Starrett is one of the most prolific and most readable of American authors and poets. His books include *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, *221B: Studies in Sherlock Holmes*, *Books Alive*, *Bookman's Holiday*, *The Adventures of Jimmy Lavender*, and many others. He is preparing a collection of his short detective tales for publication by Mycroft & Moran. . . . Edward Wagenknecht is the well-known anthologist whose books include *The Fireside Book of Yuletide Stories*, *The Fireside Book of Ghost Stories*, and *Six Novels of the Supernatural*. . . .



Fritz Leiber, Jr.'s first collection, *Night's Black Agents*, will be followed late this year with his science-fiction novel, *Gather, Darkness!* He has contributed to most of the magazines and anthologies in the field, but maintains a healthy interest in the legitimate stage. . . . Robert Bloch's new collection of macabre tales will be entitled *Pleasant Dreams*. . . . Carl Jacobi, who has also contributed to many weird tales markets as well as to adventure story magazines, will presently follow his initial collection, *Revelations in Black*, with another. His work has appeared in such anthologies as *Sleep No More* and *Strange Ports of Call*. . . Weaver Wright is the pen-name of a well-known science-fiction fan. . . . Leah Bodine Drake's first collection of poems, which Arkham House will publish sometime in the near future, is to be entitled *A Hornbook for Witches*.

#### *Mr. Gehman on Science-and-Fantasy*

Devotees of fantastic fiction in all its branches may be interested in an article—four pages, no less, with drawings by Robert Joyce—entitled *Imagination Runs Wild*, by Richard B. Gehman, which was published in *The New Republic* for January 17, 1949. Mr. Gehman makes some interesting observations, though for most of the *aficionados*, there is nothing new in the facts he presents. Someone slipped up, however—and we suspect it was Mr. Gehman himself—in bestowing the middle name of "Phelps" upon Howard Phillips Lovecraft.





# Arkham House *Announces*

just published

NOT LONG FOR THIS WORLD  
by AUGUST DERLETH, \$3.00

\* \* \* \*

in the next issue of  
THE ARKHAM SAMPLER

THE LAST AMERICAN  
a science-fiction novella by J. A. Mitchell

THE ROOT OF AMPOI  
a new story by CLARK ASHTON SMITH

"THE MUMMY!"  
an article by EVERETT BLEILER







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