



FANTASY REVIEW

Vol. III, No. 13

ONE SHILLING

FEB.-MAR. '49

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ARTHUR C. CLARKE defends 'THE LACKEYS of WALL STREET'



The Soviet accusation, made in an article in the 'Literaturnaya Gazyeta' reprinted in the last issue of FANTASY REVIEW, that American science fiction is no more than ill-disguised capitalist propaganda—with decided Fascist leanings—has caused a veritable sensation among fantasy readers here and abroad. One of our best-known authors now takes up the cudgels on behalf of science fiction writers in general, and shows that they are not half as black as they are painted.

The all-out attack on American science fiction by Messrs. Viktor Bolkhovitnov and Vassilij Zakhartchenko will, if we know them, have filled fantasy readers with a mixture of indignation, incredulous amazement and hysterical laughter, in proportions varying according to their political outlooks. It is couched in the elegant language developed by the late Herr Goebbels for the castigation of the decadent democracies; and the writers would appear to have read widely before firing their broadside, their quotations ranging from Russell to Shaver, from Binder to del Rey. From this miscellaneous col-

lection they have attempted to show that "the lackey of Wall Street, in the livery of a science fiction writer, carries out the order of his bosses: to persuade the reader of the invulnerability of the capitalist system." This will certainly come as a great surprise to readers of **Astounding**, who have long grown accustomed to seeing the capitalist system, and frequently the Solar System, destroyed at least once per issue—and often two or three times for good measure.

That science-fantasy has a political bias is quite true; but most of us, in our ignorance, had thought it was a bias to the left, and we have come across dark references to "pinkie science fiction" in certain mid-Western circles not a V2's throw from the **Chicago Tribune**.

Indeed, in a recent issue of the American Rocket Society's **Journal** it was hinted that the s-f magazines have been toeing the party (i.e., left wing) line, and for some time we have been expecting the Committee on Un-American Activities to come rampaging up 42nd Street.

This just shows how our bourgeois prejudices have blinded us to the truth. We never suspected, for instance, that Raymond F. Jones' "Rebirth" was, as Comrades B. and Z. maintain, "monstrous in its openly fascist tendency." Nor had we imagined, Trotskyite deviationists that we are, that our "shameless" authors had revealed capitalism's innermost secret, which serious literature only dares to hint at; though we always thought frankness was a good thing in literature—can it be that Mrs. Grundy has taken refuge in Russia?

As one of Wall Street's long-distance lackeys, our views on the matter may, of course, be suspect. But we had

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been foolish enough to suppose (to take a recent example) that no one of goodwill could possibly object to Theodore Sturgeon's "Thunder and Roses," in which an American survivor of an atomic war deliberately refrains from launching the retribution intended for his country's attackers, since if he does there will be none left to rebuild human civilisation. We had thought that such stories—and there have been several of the kind recently—were above party and above nationality; yet we are told that "American science fiction in its unbridled racial propaganda reaches heights which might have made Goebbels envious." It looks, after all, as if Mr. Sturgeon is one of the more cunning of Wall Street's minions; so cunning, in fact, that he had us completely fooled. Or perhaps he is one of capitalism's famous inherent contradictions?

But let us see if we can get a clearer picture of the party line, before we discuss any further examples. According to the Comrades, there are numerous instances of "fascist revelations" in American s-f, but unfortunately they do not quote a single convincing case. We cannot for the life of us see why a story by Russell containing "an ecstatic description of the adventures of a spy from Mars" should be particularly fascist. Rather, in view of recent Canadian revelations, it seems positively communistic. Then: "To fortify the power of the imperialist war machine, the science fantasists of America unrestrainedly threaten with the atomic bomb." They did—but in a rather different way. We seem to remember that it was usually their own country they blew up first in the bomb-happy post-Hiroshima period. Even poor Adam Link appears a sinister reactionary from the other side of the Iron Curtain; and although we go ninety per cent of the way with the critics as far as Mr. Shaver is concerned, we still think his stories are as innocent of politics as of good writing.

The concluding paragraph of their article, which in its substitution of invective for reasoning is indistinguishable from the sort of thing that Streicher was hanged for printing, gives us cause to wonder at the standard of literary criticism in modern Russia, let alone anything else. What is one to make of this paranoid rubbish? Is it worth bothering about at all? We think it is; for it fits so perfectly into the pattern of current Russian behaviour.

All too clearly, it is Comrades B. and Z., not the readers of science fiction, who live in "a fearful world . . . a world of nightmare fantasies." To such "sick minds," even L. Ron Hubbard's fine "The End is Not Yet," which had an American big business man as villain, would be merely one of the subtler wiles of a capitalist dupe.

We have no particular love of American capitalism, which we do not suppose is any more permanent than any other social system; nor do we wish to defend the vast amount of rubbish which appears disguised as science fiction, some of which undoubtedly merits the description of a "screamingly shameless mess." We will grant that in the whole of their tirade the Russians make one valid criticism: that far too many stories of the future "describe worlds constructed according to the American system." But the reason for this, as should be obvious to any sane mind, is nothing more diabolical than laziness or lack of imagination on the part of our s-f authors.

Every writer is conditioned, consciously or unconsciously, by his environment. Only a genius can imagine and describe a culture completely alien to that in which he lives; and some s-f authors have made partially successful attempts to do so—witness Heinlein's "Beyond This Horizon" and van Vogt's "Null-A" stories with their sociological implications. Unfortunately, though, few s-f authors are creative geniuses. But because they describe societies which are reflections of their own, it does not follow that they approve of them. After all, few writers resemble the people they create, or necessarily condone the behaviour of their characters.

One of the themes that has run through science-fantasy since the beginning has been the idea that eventually all races will be united in a World State, in which all will have equal rights. This theme has become more urgent since the advent of atomic power. For every story with a "fascist" tendency (meaningless catchphrase!) one can find dozens that have preached tolerance, the equality of men and the enrichment of life by the application of science. But perhaps it is only appropriate that now such charlatans as Lysenko are turning Russia against science itself, its poor relation science fiction should come under the same interdict.

THE NOVA VENTURE

THURSDAY'S CHILD

*Wednesday's child is full of woe,
Thursday's child has far to go . . .*

The casual visitor to the "White Horse" hostelry in Fetter Lane, London, of a Thursday evening, is somewhat nonplussed to find that a horde of literary maniacs has apparently taken an option on the premises. The saloon bar is filled with a noisy crowd which seems to derive its high spirits as much from the gaudy-covered magazines and books littering the tables as from the glasses and bottles that barely find room between them. Not a Thursday night passes without some eager arm, reaching out for the latest **Astounding** or a copy of "Edison's Conquest of Mars," knocks over somebody's beer, and there is a concerted scramble to save a pile of **Planet Stories** or the "Checklist of Fantastic Literature" from a soaking in the brew. Of light or brown ale, or lemonade (which doesn't have quite such a damaging effect on a handsome Bok jacket), there is plenty more to be had from the patient landlord. But the wondrous array of literature assembled here for mutual scrutiny is, for the most part, irreplaceable.

Several of the company are equipped with attache cases; at least one totes a Gladstone bag, stuffed with rare books. Collector's items are examined, rejected, purchased, swopped, even borrowed. Everybody is fairly accommodating; they're all fantasy fans together. Not all the animated discussion is over the market value of books and mags. Around one table may proceed an argument over the merits of a new story, the whole of an author's output (especially Mr. Shaver's), or a magazine's changing policy. At another, science-fiction may be all but forgotten in the heat of a political debate, which may have arisen in course of examining an article by Olaf Stapledon in a philosophical journal. In a corner, a BIS enthusiast may be reviewing the Society's new lecture programme or exhibiting the latest colour pictures by Chesley Bonestell—more probably, both. In another corner, two indignant authors may be arguing with a hard-faced editor—or two indignant editors with a hard-faced author. That is, if it

is still early in the evening. Later, the two editors may well be arguing with each other in the adjacent bar, where a meeting of the directors of Nova Publications is in progress. Woe betide the stranger who has sought refuge there!

These Thursday evening gatherings of the so-called London Circle of fantasy fans have been, and still are, the focal point of all the post-war activity in the field of British fantasy-fiction—at least, as it is accepted by the fantasy fandom of these islands, and of the U.S.A. They began as a weekly get-together between John (Ted) Carnell, originator of **New Worlds**, and authors Frank Edward Arnold, William F. Temple, the late Maurice G. Hugi, and a few others whose work Carnell featured in the magazine launched by Pendulum Publications in July '46*. In effect, they were friendly, out-of-the-office editorial conferences, with a strictly professional interest centring round the future development of fantasy-fiction in Britain.

A few old-timers, learning of the conclave, saw in it a chance to recapture the pleasant atmosphere of pre-war days, when those who formed the backbone of the movement of fantasy fandom—in particular, the leading lights of the Science Fiction Association—used to foregather in a pub in Grays Inn Road which fell victim to the blitz. So, the "White Horse" circle expanded; the business conference became more of a club meeting. Among the newcomers were some who carried news of Walter Gillings' preparations for **Fantasy** as a successor to his **Tales of Wonder**. Why, they asked, shouldn't he and his potential contributors be asked to swell the throng?

It was a ticklish question. Though always good friends and collaborators in any effort to promote British science fiction, before the war (and during it, as far as they could: each did a spell as president of the British Fantasy Society), Carnell and Gillings were now, on the face of it, hot competitors,

* See "The Birth of **New Worlds**," by John Carnell: **Fantasy Review**, Aug.-Sep. '47.

each with his own publishers as backers. Though Gillings had started to lay his plans for *Fantasy* soon after leaving the Army in '43, paper shortage still prevented the mag. making a start when Carnell emerged, found his sponsor, and whipped up a first issue of *New Worlds* all in six months. Knowing their irascible "Grandpop" Gillings of old, a few thought he might respond to the invitation all too readily and bear down on the 'White Horse,' swearing to make somebody pay dearly for pipping him at the post.

Everybody paid—but only when their turn came for another round of convivial drinking. Having joined the party with reasonably good grace, Gillings proceeded to smoke scores of Carnell's cigarettes in a series of regular Thursday evening peace-makings which were to lead, in due course, to a truly collaborative effort on behalf of British science fiction.

RESOLUTION FOR '49

Two beer-stained issues of *New Worlds* were being passed around the saloon bar, for the edification of new arrivals in the Circle (authors John Beynon Harris, A. Bertram Chandler, Arthur C. Clarke, among them), when *Fantasy* finally got started in December '46. A rash of associated publications, not always as thoroughly approved but typical of the trend, broke out in between times! So rosy was the prospect that Gillings (animated as much by pessimistic premonitions as keen anticipations) resolved to launch a *Fantasy Review* to spread the news of all this developing activity, in which the first signs of a welcome intrusion on the part of America's fantasy book publishers gave the "White Horse" assembly a good deal more to talk about.

But the triumphs of *New Worlds* and *Fantasy* were equally short-lived. A year later, two more issues of Gillings' mag. had appeared according to schedule—a necessarily sluggish one—and the fans were still waiting anxiously for *New Worlds* No. 3. It at length emerged, but not before the bad news was put out about *Fantasy*: there would be no more of it for a much too indefinite period. And although bi-monthly publication was bravely anticipated for the laggard, once it did not have to contend with printing strikes and power cuts, the fourth issue of *New Worlds* remained no more than a neg-

lected pile of manuscripts and rough sketches until three months ago. That—and a mountain of good intentions which, starting as vague hopes and dreams, have gradually solidified into a Good Resolution for '49. The resolution being: that those who are genuinely concerned with the promotion of fantasy-fiction in this country should pool their resources, financial and otherwise, to produce and publish a magazine of their own, for sale to themselves and the public at large, independent of any existing publisher whose first concern must be to make a profit.

This highly desirable enterprise was approved, in principle, nine months since, when the London Circle threw open its bar doors for a day to all who cared to participate in the delights of a fan convention†. By then it had become clear that the future of *New Worlds*, as of *Fantasy*, was far from rosy, and that all further attempts to establish such a publication were similarly foredoomed to failure so long as they depended on the internal economies of a sponsor with other irons in the fire. Increasingly, Gillings and Carnell realised the value of consolidation as opposed to competition, however friendly. Already more-or-less agreed between themselves to join forces eventually in a publishing concern of their own, they had begun to see the immediate possibilities of the idea. With the backing of interested authors and fans, they could make a start to the venture without waiting for the improvement in publishing conditions which might not come for a decade—by which time the opportunity would be lost.

The result was a decided tendency among those of the 'White Horse' company whose interests were more professional than the rest to go into prolonged huddles round a table in the corner. Besides the two editors, author Beynon Harris and book distributors G. Ken Chapman and Eric Williams, old stalwarts of the SFA, became regular devotees of the Inner Circle, around which developed a somewhat secretive air of earnest endeavour and good-humoured difference of opinion. There was little argument over the wisdom of the move to combine forces, even among the authors whose co-operation was the first to be sought. Though †† was evident they could not expect

† See *FR*, Feb-Mar. '47.

†† See *FR*, Jun-Jul. '48

some rates for their work, a bright proposal that they should be recompensed according to the number of copies the magazine sold, appealed to their sense of fair play and the equitable distribution of profits.

For the mag. would have to make a profit, sufficient to permit it to survive and develop—and possibly enable other publications of similar interest to be launched. This was no purely altruistic effort, like many a fan magazine, but a strictly business venture, which simply must succeed. And why not, when those who would make it had such a fund of varied experience of the fantasy medium, and would have the support of so many others who knew its subtleties? The assets of their organisation were such as none other could possibly muster. It could hardly fail . . . But distribution of the magazine, once published, was a prime factor. Determined not to become any more involved with a big distributing company than with a publisher who might lose interest in it, the venturers bided their time, surveying the possibilities as casually as they seemed to wait for the necessary publishing facilities to fall into their laps.

TOO MANY COOKS?

Answers to both these problems presented themselves, so conveniently as to suggest a providential agency at work, within a few weeks of Carnell's acquiring the title of **New Worlds** from Pendulum Publications, who had suspended all their activities. Ex-RAF officer Frank Cooper, proprietor of Peach Cooper Libraries, whose subscribers showed a distinct hankering for fantasy-fiction, decided to investigate the sources of supply, gravitated to the "White Horse," and came up against the project for re-launching **New Worlds** before it foundered completely. He proved a valuable acquisition: it was he who did most of the paper work involved in incorporating a limited company, for which the most appropriate title of Nova Publications (the result of a happy inspiration by the wife of one of the six working directors) was finally approved. By general consent, author Beynon Harris became Chairman of the Board, while the special duties of the rest followed almost naturally: Cooper as secretary, Chapman treasurer, Carnell and Gillings in the editorial and advertising departments, and Williams looking after subscriptions. (In generous mood, the

Board resolved early that unexpired subscriptions would be honoured).

No sooner was the company formed than a frank announcement of its intentions, inviting financial participation in the enterprise, was issued to a wide circle of authors and fans, most of whom were ready and anxious to have a share in the business. Sums, small in themselves, but amounting in the aggregate to a substantial figure, came in from all sides to swell the sum subscribed by the directors—the first to put their hands in their pockets. Only a few who felt that too many cooks might spoil the success of the undertaking—a very real consideration, but one which the prime movers had resolved to bear constantly in mind—declined to contribute their widow's mite. When the total was totted up it was found that, without counting too many chickens, there would probably be an ample margin of working capital to devote to a further issue when **New Worlds** No. 4 was published and all the bills paid. The directors, now holding their meetings with proper formality in the private bar, looked forward with a justifiable confidence to the outcome.

Although it was initially conceded that the company as a whole must leave the question of editorial policy to its editors—or, rather for the moment, to its editor, Gillings having decided it were better to restrain himself than interfere with Carnell's continued development of **New Worlds** as he had planned it—discussion of major points of principle on which both editors sought the general feeling of the directors became almost violent as the issue went to press. For instance, the cover: should it be gaudy or subdued, designed to appeal to the converted s-f fan or the reader who doesn't know science fiction from cowboy stories? Are there any such readers left? The directors were doubtful. In the end, after they had seen what the boys in the front room would have out of three suggestions by artist Dennis, they decided (whatever the landlord thought) to ignore "human interest" entirely and appeal to the customers' intelligence. A picture of a space-ship bearing down on the Moon might not be very original, but at least it still has topical value; and it doesn't pull the sordid trick of wheedling one-and-sixpence out of a moron whose roving eye has caught sight of a buxom damsel in a zipper-

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Walter Gillings' FANTASIA

Two new Canadian fantasy mags., preparing for publication, to be titled **Supernatural Stories**, **Strange Adventures** . . . Probable contributors to first issue of one or other, or both: David H. Keller, Stanton A. Coblentz, Duane W. Rimel, Bryce Walton, Forrest J. Ackerman, E. Everett Evans . . . Plans for **Select Science Fiction** (see this col., Oct.-Nov. '48) abandoned . . . Projected mag. forthcoming from publishers of **Fate** (ditto) to be regular pocket-size publication "combining best features of such top-notchers as **Astounding**, **Blue Book**, the old **Argosy** and **Amazing**"—vide Editor Robert N. Webster . . . Mexico's fortnightly **Los Cuentos Fantásticos** deriving stories, covers, illustrations from **Amazing**, **Wonder**, **FFM**, etc., without so much as by-your-leave . . .

A. E. van Vogt's next **Astounding** serial will be story originally intended as last of his much-criticised "Son of the Gods" series . . . Creator of Slan now lecturing on telepathy experiments with wife E. Mayne Hull, busy writing more "Art Blord" tales . . . Christopher Youd's second **ASF** piece, "Colonial," concerns Venusian incident in struggle between atomic power corporations of the future . . . Startling accepted "Automaton," novelette (written for **Fantasy**) by Arthur C. Clarke, now seeking publisher for novel, "Prelude to Space," dealing with 1978 Interplanetary Project . . . Kurd Lasswitz's "Auf zwei Planeten," space-travel novel first published 1880 (for synopsis, see Willy Ley's "Rockets"), available in new German edition with drawings by Walter Zeeden . . . **BIS Journal** reports Professor Herman Oberth farming near Nuremberg, "still very interested in interplanetary matters" . . .

Dr. David H. Keller and wife in Sauk City, Wis., visiting Arkham House, whose owner-tenant August Derleth wrote in **Arkham Sampler**: ". . . they made their departure convinced that ogres do not inhabit (it), slander and malice to the contrary" . . .

Keller's "The Homunculus" coming soon from Prime Press, who will reprint famous Hall-Flint classics, "The Blind Spot" and "The Spot of Life," followed by Flint's "The Planeteer" . . . Fantasy Publishing Co. assembling Olaf Stapledon's "The Flames," "Death into Life" and "Old Man in New World" in one volume entitled "Worlds of Wonder" . . . New novels by John Taine ("The Black Goldfish"), L. Ron Hubbard ("Kingslayer"), Murray Leinster ("Journey to Barkut"), also forthcoming . . . L. Sprague de Camp's "Johnny Black" tales to appear in book form . . .

New American comic, "Adventures into the Unknown," features cartoon-stories of ghosts, werewolves, haunted castles . . . Series of film shorts based on famous weird tales by Poe, Collins, Stevenson, being made for television in U.S., where fans bemoaning suspension of radio programme, "Escape," featuring fantasies by Wells, Rider Haggard, John Collier . . . **Look** ran feature on screen players of Tarzan, including latest, Lex Barker, appearing in "Tarzan's Magic Fountain" . . . After meeting Frankenstein, Abbott and Costello to have fun with "The Invisible Man" . . . Dinosaurs will share honours with Barton MacLane in "Unknown Island," now shooting in Hollywood . . . Sally Ann Howes starring in "Stop Press Girl," British film about young woman with strange influence on machinery . . . Wells' "Time Machine" televised by B.B.C. . .

Editor John W. Campbell trying to contact science fiction's shortwave radio fans through his amateur station W2ZGU . . . Californian fan Francis T. Laney published his memoirs of fantasy fandom . . . Futurian Society of Sydney celebrated ninth birthday . . . U.S. fantasy publishers joined forces at New York Book Fair . . . "The Kid from Mars," by **Thrilling Wonder** ex-editor Oscar J. Friend, forthcoming from Hadley . . . Jarrolds preparing new collection of Lord Dunsany's tales to be titled, "The Man Who Ate the Phoenix" . . . Hutchinson will publish "Address Unknown," story of radio messages from another planet by 80-year-old Eden ("Saurus") Phillips . . . Arthur Machen's "The Three Impostors" included in "The Eighteen-Nineties," anthology chosen by Martin Secker (Richards, 21/-) . . . **Harrow Observer** diarist recorded local author Bernard Newman's celebration of 20 years' publication with "The Flying Saucer" (reviewed **FR**, last issue), his 60th volume . . .

British fans launched new Science-Fantasy Society with first issue of **Science-Fantasy News**. Plans for local groups, oversea contacts, promotion of fan publications, now in hand . . . Life planning to run survey on s-f field . . . Following feature on space travel, **Science Illustrated** (Jan.) had letter-article by Editor Campbell, "Good-bye to Gravity and All That," concerning "floating bodies, flower-bedecked spaceships, flying dandruff and giant nursing bottles" . . . Another Campbell piece on inhabited

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THOMAS SHERIDAN continues

THE STORY OF 'WONDER'

The Interplanetary Influence

To hands that have become adapted to the slim, pocket-size magazines of this era of austerity publishing, the bulky, 140-page **Wonder Stories Quarterly** of 20 years ago seems distinctly Brobdingnagian. To the fans of those days it was something you could really get your teeth into. Appearing concurrently with an equally massive **Amazing Quarterly**, it went to supplement the regular diet of science fiction provided by the rival monthly publications by a periodical feast of reading which was often more satisfying, both to the appetite and the discriminative sense. The novel-length stories it presented all of a lump instead of in the irritating serial form, its plentiful illustrations and tight-packed columns, all contributed to its delicious meaty aspect; and if the fare proved a little too lumpy at times, it was mostly digested quite happily. The only drawback to the heavy-weight, solid-bound issues was the necessity of clamping them firmly down to a board in order to cope with them comfortably, especially if you liked to read in bed.

Resplendent with a gilded cover, **Science Wonder Quarterly** started off by featuring a translation of Otto Willi Gail's "The Shot into Infinity" (Fall, '29); its sequel, "The Stone from the Moon," followed in the Spring, '30, issue. These somewhat heavy but then quite fascinating tales were inspired by the astronomical ambitions of the German rocketeers, of whose Verein für Raumschiffahrt (Society for Space-travel) one Willy Ley duly wrote in a letter to "The Reader Speaks": he proposed to give his fellow members a talk on Science Fiction, as a change from the technical dissertations of Professor Oberth and his own recitals of the history of the rocket . . . At that time, astronautics and s-f made progress together. In the same correspondence columns, Associate Editor C. P. Mason was informing **Wonder** readers of the formation of the American Interplanetary Society, of which Managing Editor David Lasser and contributors Laurence Manning, Fletcher Pratt and G. Edward

Pendray were other prime movers.*

As Gawain Edwards, bearded Vice-president Pendray had amused himself writing "A Rescue from Jupiter" (Feb.-Mar., '30) for the monthly **Science Wonder**; it, too, had a sequel, "The Return from Jupiter" (Mar.-April, '31). It was Manning who, after collaborating with Pratt in "The City of the Living Dead" (May, '30), wrote those classic interplanetary pieces, "The Voyage of the Asteroid" (Summer, '32) and "The Wreck of the Asteroid" (Dec., '32-Feb., '33), followed by "The Man Who Awoke" stories and the popular Stranger Club series. Pratt, an earlier collaborator with Irvin Lester in "The Reign of the Ray" (June-July, '29), which played with the idea of a war against the Soviets in the 'thirties, distinguished himself with "The Onslaught from Rigel" (Winter, '32); by which time the demand for "interplanetary" stories had become so marked that **Quarterly** issues consisted of little else and were labelled to advertise the fact.

R. H. Romans' "The Moon Conquerors" (Winter, '30), which has seen British reprinting†, and "The War of the Planets" (Summer, '30) were among the first full-length stories to set this trend, to further which an Interplanetary Plot Contest was organised.

By offering prizes to readers whom he could not induce to try their strength as authors, Gernsback persuaded them at least to part with their ideas for such stories so that his established contributors might put them to good use when they were stuck for a plot. Such fertile writers as Ray Cummings, Clark Ashton Smith, R. F. Starzl and Jack Williamson were not above accepting

* Later, Nathan Schachner took over the secretaryship of the Society, while Dr. William Lemkin became its Librarian—both s-f writers.

† By Gerald G. Swan, as a 1/- paperback, following its reprinting in the first issue of **Science Fiction Quarterly** (Summer '40), which also republished "The Shot into Infinity" in its second (Winter '41 issue).

assistance from fans who proved capable of constructive thoughts along these lines as well as the withering criticisms that inspired the competition. Discounting those relying on "a war between two planets, with a lot of rays and bloodshed," which were discouraged in favour of "new points of view on interplanetary exploration," the editors found an originality and freshness in many readers' ideas "often unmatched by the best of our authors."

Among those who managed to maintain their reputations unaided in the *Quarterly*, before it petered out at the end of '32, Stanton A. Coblentz, with "Into Plutonian Depths" (Spring, '31), and John Scott Campbell, with "Beyond Pluto" (Summer, '32), were fairly conspicuous. More so was British mystery writer J. M. Walsh, whose "Vandals of the Void" (Summer, '31), a tale of intrigue and adventure in the spaceways, saw book publication in England; though "The Vanguard to Neptune" (Spring, '32) was not so fortunate. The final (Winter, '33) issue divided the honours between German Ludwig Anton's "Interplanetary Bridges" and "Exiles of Asperus," by Britain's John Beynon Harris, who was still to contribute further to the monthly *Wonder* in which he had made his appearance in '31.

Other British writers appearing in the *Wonder* magazines at this time were George B. Beattie and Benson Herbert; Festus Pragnell was another English reader who was to turn contributor before long. Harris had gained encouragement from winning a slogan contest run by *Air Wonder Stories*, which died without using his tag, "Future Flying Fiction." Walsh, while occupied with his thrillers, had developed a flair for s-f which had been with him since his Australian days; and like his compatriots, who lacked a home market for their imaginative tales, he awakened a ready response in Editor Gernsback. Aided by expert C. A. Brandt, who had joined him as Literary Editor, the pioneer of scientifiction continued eagerly to implement his policy of presenting the work of European writers, holding out to his readers the promise of several interplanetary novels he had secured on a trip to England, France and Germany in '32.

The Teutonic school was well established already. Early in the career of the *Quarterly* it had featured the slow-moving stories of the German Jules



FRANK R. PAUL, the "world-famous" artist whose cover paintings have adorned a dozen science fiction magazines, has been illustrating in this field since the days of Hugo Gernsback's *Electrical Experimenter*, which became *Science and Invention* and led the way for *Amazing Stories*. Born in Austria 64 years ago, he settled in the U.S.A. in 1916 and worked as a newspaper cartoonist before he joined Gernsback. His flair for depicting futuristic machines and unearthly landscapes—not to mention greybearded professors and stalwart heroes in kneebreeches—became such an asset that Gernsback took him with him to start *Wonder Stories* and its companion magazines, whose covers he executed until it became *Thrilling Wonder*. He had by then become such an institution in science fiction that he reappeared as an interior illustrator in *Wonder* and, later, as cover artist of *Marvel Science Stories*, since when his work has been used in *Science Fiction*, *Future Fiction*, *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, and other publications. Though his style is considered *démodé* by many fan critics, he still has his enthusiastic admirers among the older generation of readers, who bid high for his cover originals at conventions. His conceptions of life on other worlds, to which *Fantastic Adventures* devoted its back covers for several years, have always been specially delightful. Interviewing him in '38, *America's Family Circle* magazine dubbed him, on the strength of these, "The Bogeyman."

Verne, Otfrid von Hanstein, with "Electropolis" (Summer, '30) and "Between Earth and Moon" (Fall, '30); later, in the monthly publication, three more were serialised. Bruno H. Burgel's "The Cosmic Cloud" (Fall, '31) was another German product; "A Daring Trip to Mars," by Max Valier, rocketry's first martyr, appeared posthumously in **Wonder Stories** (July, '31), which in due course reflected the French influence with S. S. Held's "The Death of Iron" (Sept.-Nov., '32) and Eugene Thebault's "The Radio Terror" (Jun.-Oct., '33). If all this foreign infiltration was frowned upon by the now considerable host of American fantasy writers, they did not demur. After all, s-f was truly international, as the letter columns testified, and at least it kept the translators busy.

In his constant design to organise his readers as propagandists for his stock-in-trade, Gernsback offered \$500 in prizes for letters on "What I have Done to Spread Science Fiction," which he published in the **Quarterly**. Wrote he, earnestly: "The editors feel they have a great mission . . . But it is impossible for us to succeed . . . unless our readers preach the gospel of science fiction. The select group of readers which now exists is a marvellous nucleus for a far greater mass . . . yet to come." He suggested how the converted might "spread the new gospel far and wide" by talking to club meetings, writing letters to the papers, and wheedling subscriptions to the magazines out of their relatives; though carefully he emphasised that "this is not a subscription contest. Our purpose is only to convert others to the cause of science fiction."

In **Science Wonder**, he harped on the "Science Fiction Week" which was specially set aside for an intensification of this campaign to confer "immense benefit on all who have not yet had the pleasure and profit that comes from close acquaintance with science fiction." The gossellers were to publicise "the existence and power of this great educational force . . . in several interesting ways which (would) bring them into the public eye and mark them as pioneers in science fiction." One of these ways was to blaze a trail of sticky posters (available to all who cared to write in for them) on shop windows, news-stands, telegraph poles, and other sites suitably eye-catching. Thus science fiction, by degrees, was "bound to sweep the world."

For attesting to his own efforts in this direction, a prize of \$100 went to Raymond A. Palmer, who had developed the Science Correspondence Club; but "it is in the production of more accurate and better s-f that I am now greatly interested." He had started a scientific library which authors concerned with the accuracy of their work might consult, and established contacts giving rise to writer-collaboration. It was the same "RAP" who, many years later, as editor of **Amazing**, was to antagonise fandom with the Shaver Mystery. . . . Another \$100 prizewinner was Ralph Milne Farley, who claimed that by writing and publishing newspaper articles on the field he had "furnished more ammunition than any fan." In due course Editor Gernsback announced that the contest had been an unqualified success and, together with the "Week," had given s-f greater impetus than it had ever received before. But he wasn't entirely satisfied.

"There is no doubt but that the general public is still unaware of this newest of all forces in literature . . . It is a sad commentary on our general level of taste or intelligence that, despite the growing popularity of science fiction, the appetite of the American magazine reading public still inclines to Wild West, broncho-busting stories and sex thrillers. . . . The Editors have never believed so firmly as they do now that science fiction will one day sweep the country. But until that day comes, there is the steady winning of new converts by those we now have. So we go on, year after year, building substantially the great army of science fiction fans . . ."

It was going to be a long, hard struggle.

(To be continued)

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Among the Magazines

with KENNETH SLATER

'NEW WORLDS' AGAIN . . .

The British magazine 'New Worlds,' which was suspended after its third issue appeared in October '47, due to the closing-down of Pendulum Publications, is due to reappear at the end of February in an entirely new format, revived by Nova Publications, the enterprise which many science fiction writers and fans have assisted in launching for this purpose. It will be priced at 1/6 and have 88 pages.



Since we announced the contents of the fourth issue of **New Worlds** in this column, there have been some changes made . . . After over a year's delay, the issue should be out under its new banner by the time you read these lines. It features the promised John Brody novelette, "World in Shadow," concerning the struggle to upset a utopian world state which has grown too complacent, and "Edge of Night," by John K. Aiken, a profound piece set in the remote future, dealing with a battle of wits between the embodiment of Man and an alien mind on Pluto. Norman Lazenby's "The Cireesians" is a story of an extra-galactic voyage; A. Bertram Chandler is present with "Position Line," which has to do with the vagaries of magnetic compasses on Mars.

E. R. James contributes "The Rebels" which is another story of space-travel, and Arthur C. Clarke writes an article on "The Shape of Ships to Come" in which he debunks all artists' ideas of space-ship design—including that of cover artist Dennis! Besides his interior illustrations, there are some by newcomer Hal White, whom Editor Carnell discovered almost on his own doorstep.

First (Jan.) issue of the revived **Super Science Stories** is not yet to hand, but details of contents are available. Featured are a Henry Kuttner novelette, "The Black Sun Rises"; a piece by Ray Bradbury, "The Silence," and other stories by Cleve Cartmill, Manly Wade Wellman and Ray Cummings. The cover is by Lawrence; inside illustrations by Kramer, Paul

and Finlay, among others. A fan department, "Fandom's Corner," is conducted by James V. Taurasi of **Fantasy Times**. The second (Mar.) issue will present stories by A. E. van Vogt, Orlin Tremaine, Harry Walton and John D. MacDonald. Artists Bok and Giunta are also helping to decorate future issues.

No. 4 issue of **Fantasy Book** came as a pleasant surprise. There is another slight size-change, and the cover is somewhat bilious-looking, but there are two very good full-page interiors. The concluding instalment of Festus Pragnell's serial is something of a let-down; at the same time, another one makes a start—"The Black Goldfish," by John Taine, which we haven't sampled as yet. "Out of the Sun" is a science-fantasy with an old-fashioned touch by Lloyd Arthur Eshbach; "Dwellers in the Dust," a time-travel tale by Forrest J. Ackerman, and "Wall of Darkness" a nice piece of horror by Basil Wells. In "Prison Rats," Gene Ellerman gives a new twist to the lycanthropy idea.

The future of **The Arkham Sampler** seems obscure; but Editor Derleth assures us in the Autumn '48 issue that although he is "not much satisfied" with the mag, it will see at least four more issues. It was a relief to find the Sage of Providence represented in this number only by the conclusion of "Unknown Kadath" and his encounter with the shade of Poe in a poem by Derleth.

January **Weird Tales** is notable for a strictly whacky piece by Robert Heinlein, no less—"Our Fair City," which

features an intelligent whirlwind. The lead story, Allison V. Harding's "Four from Jehlam," is not outstanding, but there is an out-of-the-rut tale by E. Everett Evans, "Food for Demons," and one of Robert Bloch's excellent psychological horror studies, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," which make good reading. Snowdon T. Herrick's "Open Season on the Bottoms" poses the mystery of why people whose names end in "bottom" seem to be disappearing, but leaves the answer to the reader's imagination. Other pieces are by Frank Gruber, John D. MacDonald, Harold Lawlor, Stephen Grendon, Eric Frank Russell and Mary Elizabeth Counselman. Illustrations by Lee Brown Coye: some may like them, but to me they are only fuzzy blotches.

Besides the van Vogt "Weapon Shops" novel and the Blish-Knight and Benj. Miller novelettes we mentioned last time, February **Thrilling Wonder** features a William Fitzgerald space-travel tale, "Assignment on Pasik," and four short stories—in spite of a slight cut in size. Editor Sam Merwin Jr. authors one of the shorts, "The Carriers"; the ubiquitous Bradbury does "The Man"; Theodore Sturgeon is here

again with "Messenger," and Margaret St. Clair with another Oona piece. The Tremaine article series continues with a bit on heredity. Next (Apr.) issue brings a Noel Loomis story of "The Ultimate Planet"; one by Edmond Hamilton, "Alien Earth"; another in the Benj. Miller "Orig Prem" series, and yet another by Bradbury—who we note is becoming so prolific that at least one of his pieces has appeared under the **Wonder** "house name" of Brett Sterling.

"The Time Axis," in January **Startling**, is as interesting a job as Henry Kuttner has done for some time past—or will do in the future, perhaps. In addition to the "Hall of Fame" reprint, we have a Jack Vance novelette in which Magnus Ridolph tackles the amusing business of "The Sub-Standard Sardines"; the first in a series of space-conquest tales by Rene LaFayette, "Forbidden Voyage," and other pieces by John D. MacDonald and R. W. Stockheker. Murray Leinster also tells "The Story of Rod Cantrell," who will be back in the next (Mar.) issue as the leading figure in the feature novel, "The Black Galaxy." The reprint will be Clifford D. Simak's "The Loot of

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Time."

In spite of some contradiction on the cover of January **Amazing**, which proclaims "Science stories that prophesy the future" yet boosts "The story of Daarmajd the Strong, mighty king of the prehistoric world," said story—"Dinosaur Destroyer," by Arthur Petticolas—is quite good reading. It introduces another Tarzan-type character, of whom we understand we might have read more; but the author has died since writing this, his first and only story. The setting of John Stuart Walworth's "Invasion of the Bone Men" is either in the dim past or the far future; one can't be sure—and the rest of the piece is just as uncertain. Much better meat is "The Robot and the Pearly Gates," by Peter Worth; Chester Smith's "Pattern for Destiny" is fair, but rather in the revivalist manner; and "The Flea Circus," by August Meissner, presents something new in mutants. Mr. Shaver creeps in with an article, which Editor Palmer heads with a large disclaimer.

Fantastic Adventures for January features an Arabian Nights fantasy, "The Return of Sinbad," by Chester S. Geier, which is fair enough if you like that sort of thing; personally, I wish he would stick to science fiction and leave fairy stories to less experienced writers. "Devil of Doom," by A. Morris, is pure pirate adventure with rockets instead of sails; "The Hammer on the Moon," by Charles Recour, continues the theme of a race to the Moon between America and Russia; and Rog Phillips comes up with an amusing gadget story, "The Can Opener." In "That Guy, Satan, Sends Me," newcomer George Reese depicts a Hell which suits all comers, and Roger

P. Graham rounds off the issue nicely with a robot tale, "Unforeseen."

Lewis Padgett leads off the January **ASTOUNDING** with "Private Eye," for which Hubert Rogers has done the cover. Isaac Asimov is also back with "The Red Queen's Race." Dr. J. A. Winter follows up "Expedition Mercy" (Nov.) with "Expedition Polychrome," and Judith Merrill makes a further appearance with "Death is the Penalty." There are also "How Can You Lose?" by W. MacFarlane, and the conclusion of the van Vogt serial. A three-part Will Stewart story, "Seetee Shock," starts in the Feb. issue, which presents three British writers' pieces: Peter Phillips' "Manna," Eric Frank Russell's "A Present from Joe," and "Christmas Tree," with which Christopher Youd makes his debut. Lewis Padgett is here again with a novelette, "The Prisoner in the Skull," and D. W. Meredith comes up with "Next Friday Morning." There is a rather striking cover by Rogers.

As yet we haven't tackled February **Famous Fantastic Mysteries**, which presents a long novel, "Angel Island," by Ined Haynes Gillmore, about a race of winged women; a rare piece dating back to 1914. Jack London's "The Scarlet Plague" is also reprinted, for those who care to re-read it. Next (Apr.) issue brings a fantasy of more recent vintage, Edison Marshall's "Dian of the Lost Land." The Merritt classic, "Seven Footprints to Satan," gets another reprinting in January **Fantastic Novels**, which also revives a short story, "The Wrath of Amen-Ra," by William Holloway, from the '20's. An article by Ben Nelson deals with the mysterious island of Ponape, setting of Merritt's "Moon Pool." The March issue will bring back George Allan England's classic "The Golden Blight."

WALTER GILLINGS' FANTASIA —Continued from page 7

planets, "We Are Not Alone," in **Pic**, illustrated by Chesley Bonestell, who did astronomical cover for **Scientific American** . . . Author Erik Fennel wrote to **Time** protesting: "I make my living writing science fiction, and characters like Weiner (M.I.T. expert on cybernetics, science of control mechanisms) are lousing up the racket . . . The pincers of technology squeeze inexorably upon the poor s-f writer" . . .

Of **Daily Mail** write-up "on moonshine schemes for platforms suspended in space, reached in rocket ships, and despatching atom-headed rocket bombs to any part of the globe," **Tribune** commented: "Most of the matter had already appeared in a '35 issue of a popular boys' weekly" . . . Reviewing "The Voyage of Luna I" (see this col., last issue), **Tribune's** Geoffrey Trease found it "curious how few tales of space-ships come out in book form, when their popularity is shown by . . . almost every comic paper" . . . Yet another piece on trip "By Space Ship to the Moon" in **The Star**; this time by Canadian Rocket Society chairman E. C. Evans Fox, who thought it would be a good thing if wives accompanied our space explorers and . . . kept house for them" . . . What! No girl stowaways? Tck!

Geoffrey Giles writes

ABOUT BOOKS

The spate of novels on the theme of atomic power has brought the re-issue of Karel Capek's "Krakatit," first published in '25, under the new title of "An Atomic Phantasy" (Allen and Unwin, 9/6). Regarded as a pure fantasy, a piece of prophetic writing, or an allegory with a topical application, this tale of an explosive that goes off by itself makes highly amusing reading. Another light-hearted reprint is J. D. Beresford's "The Hampdenshire Wonder" (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 6/-), which inspired Olaf Stapledon to write "Odd John."

If you liked "The Unfortunate Fursey," who has something of the *Unknown* flavour about him, you may follow his further misadventures in "The Return of Fursey," by Mervyn Wall (Pilot Press, 9/6), in which the ancient monk is apprenticed to a sorcerer and proves a most difficult student, quite unable to control his demons and vampires. Or you may prefer Stephen Gilbert's "Monkeyface" (Faber, 8/6), in which a young ape of unknown species learns to talk and goes to school.

Fourth in the series of Charles Williams' fantasies reprinted by Faber at 8/6 is "Shadows of Ecstasy." The one and only novel of the philosopher P. D. Ouspensky, whose speculations about Time and the universe influenced J. B. Priestley in the writing of his Time plays, is also published by Faber at 8/6. "The Strange Life of Ivan Osokin" is about a man who is enabled by a magician to live his life over again and again, until it becomes rather confusing.

A second volume of weird stories in the old tradition by Sir Andrew Caldecott, whose "Not Exactly Ghosts" appeared some time ago (and is now engaging the attention of our American connoisseurs), is published by Edward Arnold under the title, "Fires Burn Blue." And those who have not yet relished the fantasies of James Branch Cabell should note that his "Jurgen" is being reprinted in a cheap edition by John Lane.

A cheap edition of "The Devil Rides Out," by Dennis Wheatley, whose latest work in this vein is reviewed in this

issue, is now available from Hutchinson; while Rider have reprinted the famous "Dracula" in a 6/- edition.

GLUT OF DE CAMP

Among the latest of the fantasy publishers' products arriving from the U.S. is "The Carnelian Cube," a collaboration of L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, which might have appeared in *Unknown*. It's a humorous record of a stodgy archaeologist's adventures in his three dream worlds; it is also the first Selection of the Fantasy Book Club and the initial production of the new Gnome Press, which will now publish "The Porcelain Magician," the collection of Frank Owen's oriental fantasies previously announced as coming from the New Collector's Group.

In from the Fantasy Publishing Co. is Ralph Milne Farley's "The Radio Man," first in the promised series of reprinted *Argosy* novels about Miles Cabot on Venus. Following this will come John Taine's novel, "The Cosmic Geoids," after which the Los Angeles house will issue a collection of Basil Wells' tales, entitled "Planets of Adventure." The collection of Theodore Sturgeon's stories, "Without Sorcery," which has just arrived from the Prime Press, will be followed by Sprague de Camp's *Unknown* classic, "Lest Darkness Fall"; and due soon from Shasta Publishers is "The Wheels of If," which will include several other popular De Camp tales.

Added to the Arkham House schedule for '49 are a collection of A. E. van Vogt tales to be published under the title "Away and Beyond," and another assembly of stories by S. Fowler Wright, the British fantasy author, whose work is so much sought after by American fans. Also coming shortly is a new Derleth-edited anthology, "The Other Side of the Moon," with pieces by a variety of authors, from Beresford to Padgett. Among them will be Clark Ashton Smith's "City of Singing Flame," Lovecraft's "Beyond the Wall of Sleep," and some more recently published items by such as Nelson Bond and Murray Leinster which not everybody will have read.

Local Press Does Russell Proud

No reader of *The Bootle Times* was more surprised—and gratified—than Eric Frank Russell on opening the local paper to find it had devoted a full column of its "Around the Town" feature to his Fantasy Press book, "Sinister Barrier"^{*}, his fame as a science fiction writer, and the increasing popularity of fantasy-fiction in general.

Under the heading, "Mr. Eric F. Russell Makes Our Flesh Creep—With a Purpose," gossip writer "Tempus," evidently no stranger to s-f, observed that "the public taste moves steadily away from crime fiction to the work of Mr. H. G. Wells' successors, Stanley G. Weinbaum, C. L. Moore, Howard Phillips Lovecraft and Jack Williamson, whose visions of an atom war-ravaged world provide thrills far more real nowadays."

From the dust-jacket of the book (which Russell had sent, without comment, for review in the normal manner), the columnist gleaned the information that the author "is a technical representative of a steel corporation, but itches to be a professional writer. To fulfil that ambition, he has written two books, 44 stories and 28 articles, but still is dissatisfied with his work when he reads it after a year's time. (He) is 43 years of age . . ."

After recording the original publication of the novel by **Unknown**, its revision, and its "horrific" illustration by Cartier, the writer considered Russell's "pessimistic premise that man is by no means the master of his fate," remarked in passing that his style "is as much influenced by Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler as his imagination is by Wells and Verne." Having quoted a typical passage, he added: "The chapters concerning the Viton-inspired war which follow are a dreadful forecast, fantasy apart, of what the next war might easily be, and Mr. Russell finds a deal of scope for his flamboyant style in vivid descriptions of the world disaster. As Wells' 'Time Machine' proved to the percipient to be a stern warning of the way mankind was going, Russell's 'Sinister Barrier' might also, reading between the lines, be a fierce allegory."

Apologetically, almost, the writer ventured the criticism that Russell "disposes of his Satanic forces just a

little too easily," and quoted a further passage describing the explosion which results when "his hero whips a 'wavicle' gun out of the hat and turns it on the Vitons. (Its effect) sounds little worse than Nagasaki. But the warning, I think, is there . . . Whether Mr. Russell's Vitons are the people on the other end of the puppet-strings or not, he obviously derived a great deal of enjoyment out of writing about them. His zestful tale is almost guaranteed to make the reader's scalp tingle—and may even make him think as well."

BRITISH REACTION TO BRADBURY

Ray Bradbury's short story collection, "Dark Carnival," published by Arkham House in '47 (reviewed **FR** Aug.-Sep., '47), and issued here by Hamish Hamilton, received attention by the *Times Literary Supplement* and *Manchester Guardian*. Said the *Times* reviewer:

"Mr. Bradbury is a young American writer with what his publishers call 'a remarkable gift for writing about the weird and the macabre.' The claim is justified. Mr. Bradbury has such a very marked feeling for words and can tell a story so deftly that it is a pity he confines himself to obsessional themes such as skeletons that threaten owners' bodies and hypersensitive children terrifying each other . . . Within his limits he is admirable. It is to be hoped he will widen his range."

The *Guardian* critic found Bradbury's stories showing "ingenuity rather than imagination . . . with the result that though several of them, like the title one, are painstakingly nasty, they do not make your flesh creep. It is a dangerous thing for a young writer to get a reputation for the macabre."

For his story, "Powerhouse," Bradbury was recently awarded a \$100 O. Henry Memorial Award for '48. He has been included in several anthologies of "Best Short Stories" by American writers, and generally received encouraging comment from critics. An exception was when the *New York Mirror-Times* expressed itself shocked at the inclusion of his vampire tale, "Homecoming," in such a collection in '47, citing it as an example of decadence in the modern short story.

^{*}See *Fantasy Review*, Dec. '48-Jan. '49.

WALTER GILLINGS recalls the MAD SCIENTISTS, TIN MEN AND PTERODACTYLS

It was, if memory serves me right, the serialisation of Edgar Rice Burroughs' "At the Earth's Core" by a boys' paper called **Pluck**, some 27 years ago, that gave me my first taste of science fiction. Little did I realise that the story had appeared eight years before in an American magazine with whose traditions I was, much later, to become obsessed. Nor could I know that Reginald Wray had done much the same thing, at about the same time, in the **British Boys' Friend**, locating his lost world, complete with sea and sky and prehistoric monsters, beneath that part of the Earth's crust supporting the Yorkshire moors. I discover that now from Mr. Turner's most informative survey* of a literature which, deriving in the first place from the spectres and vampires of the 19th century Gothic thriller, has gained a good deal in strength and popularity by proceeding by way of Verne to Buck Rogers as well as to Sexton Blake and Billy Bunter.

I have discovered a lot from Mr. Turner, who has evidently luxuriated in this truly fantastic field for much longer than I have been able to read. Though **Scoops** would seem to have eluded him (and I was a bit old for it, anyway), he has enjoyed much that I have missed, either through being born too late or for lack of sufficient pennies in my youth. I tremble now when I think that, if I had not gained the favour of the village tomboy by resisting the urge to pull her pigtailed, I might have lost the infinite pleasure of the two instalments of Burroughs with which she presented me in exchange for a bedraggled copy of the **Children's Newspaper**. Or, worse, the pleasure of anticipation with which they left me, prepared for my true initiation in due time.

It was the respectable **C.N.** (which is still with us) that developed my inclinations further by serialising "A

* "Boys Will Be Boys—the story of Sweeney Todd, Deadwood Dick, Sexton Blake, Billy Bunter, Dick Barton, et. al.," by E. S. Turner. Michael Joseph, London, 9/6.

Message from Space," by George Goodchild (also still going strong). That story had everything an imaginative ten-year-old could wish for. It made such a vivid impression on me that I had to cut it out and keep it: first sign of the collector's instinct! My son has revelled in it since. It was tame enough at the start, all about a cruise in an airship bigger than the R34; but it suddenly went off into a riot of messages from Mars, seeds from space, sprouting fungi, a Great Torpor and all. It was a good many years before I encountered its progenitor, Conan Doyle's "The Poison Belt," with which still later the editors of **Scoops** tried—mistakenly?—to make respectable the only twopenny blood to be solely devoted to science fiction.

I have cause to suspect that, one of these fine days, Thomas Sheridan may give us "The Story of **Scoops**" in **Fantasy Review**. In the meantime, Mr. Turner, in his much-reviewed and highly appreciated "refresher course," has revived more than a few memories of the days when we read science fiction without consciously recognising it as such. Though, to me, the adventures of Sexton Blake were always much more exciting when he had to contend with the invisible Mr. Mist (and Professor Low asked in an accompanying article in the **Union Jack**: The Invisible Man—Is it such a Far-Fetched Idea after all?) And I can only reproach myself, now, for missing the issue in which one of the more ruthless of Blake's adversaries arranged to have him fired to the Moon by rocket: "but Blake, with nine hours to go, cut himself out with his pocket hacksaw." It is possible I was too immersed in a pile of back numbers of the **Nelson Lee Library** which I'd swopped for some German overprints; for I was a devoted follower of those inveterate discoverers of lost civilisations, the boys of St. Frank's, who once chanced upon El Dorado (in Brazil) when it was being administered by the master crook, Professor Zingrave. Their flying machine disabled, the boys found themselves marooned on an island of

molten gold, from which they were eventually rescued in a giant chariot drawn by triceratops. The flying machine became airworthy again, and it only remained to beat off an attack by claw-winged pterodactyls before returning to England, home and school. Short of a love interest, it is hard to think what other ingredients could have been introduced into that memorable story.

I remember, too, the early days of the *Boys' Magazine*, which went the whole hog with the fantastic; though I had begun to be distracted by Edgar Wallace, if not by Wells, by the time the hoardings were plastered with colourful posters announcing "The War of the Robots." So I must have escaped "The Menace of the Monsters," by John Hunter, "an author who worked affectionately through the Book of Evolution," and who seems to have outdone Messrs. Burroughs and Wray while keeping Mr. Wallace to his "King Kong":

Not content to leave his saurians in their lost valleys he must needs bring them to Britain (in) a vessel . . . 'homeward bound from a place that lay beyond the dark curtain of one of the world's unknown places, her open hatches emitting a sickening odour of musk and foulness, a slow steam of hot and monstrous living creatures.' . . . The ship was wrecked and the animals made their way ashore . . . Pterodactyls clawed down aircraft, stegosauri derailed the Royal Scot and invaded packed football grounds. A giant ape clung to one side of Tower Bridge and plucked a taxi from the opposite bascule . . . One motoring party found themselves driving into the jaws of a pelagosaurus, which had cunningly opened its mouth where a bridge had once been.

But the monsters did not have everything their own way. The wastage was considerable. One was torpedoed by a naval craft, another was bisected by the 'Bremen.' Some killed each other, and some were slain by the most formidable foe of all—the English climate . . . St. Paul's for once was spared, but before the last creature had been accounted for Nelson had been lashed from his monument. There was some satisfaction in the fact that the Admiralty Arch resisted all efforts by a dryptosaurus to overthrow it.

Yet I cannot account for my apparent indifference to that exciting serial, "The Raiding Planet," in which Brian Cameron described the war between the Earth and the planet Thor in 1987, and with which Mr. Turner has fun in his chapter on "Planets and Lost Cities." Thor, the "new" planet, was heading towards the Earth at an estimated 40,000 miles an hour, threatening to destroy the world within three weeks:

The Earth seemed to know what was coming to it. Quakes were frequent and mysterious fissures appeared everywhere . . . When Thor had grown very big indeed in the sky the last bastion of Britain collapsed: the Stock Exchange closed . . . Suddenly Thor stopped and began to circle the Earth like a moon. This looked like a respite, until Thor began to send out raiding battleships, packed with thousands of men . . . Soon the air was full of Thorians in chain mail, each descending individually with the aid of a small propeller behind his shoulders.

London by now was badly bruised. Whitehall and the Houses of Parliament were in ruins. A 'caterpillar machine' had reared itself in the air and fallen smack on the Marble Arch, where the Cabinet were suspected of hiding . . . Towers of Terror, each bowling along on a huge ball, were stretching out giant grabs to pick up cars and shake out their occupants. Ray guns were being erected by the invaders right across the Midlands. And a Thorian plan was afoot to create a vast magnetic field to embrace every division of the British Army, causing all items of metal equipment to stick together . . . England—as usual—was the one hope of the world. And the one hope of England was the 'atom-destroyer,' a powerful disintegrator which operated on the ray principle.

Why had the Thorians invaded, anyway? The answer was that theirs was a dying planet, and it was a question of finding new living room or perishing. From the outer void Earth had seemed as good as anywhere. But unrealised by the Thorians the moving of their planet from its orbit had solved their problem for them. The axis had altered and the poles had begun to melt. This meant—as any reader of 'scientifiction' knows—the unfreezing of brontosauri and mastodons and sabre-toothed tigers which had been locked for centuries in their remote caverns of ice. These were a bit of a nuisance for a while, but you can't have a new world without new (or rather, very old) problems.

This, as Mr. Turner cheerfully admits, was only the start of the "inter-planetary skullduggery" which has continued to intrigue so many of us through the years, and which he has found not to be the sole prerogative of the twopenny blood; for he has read *Astounding Science Fiction* and our late-lamented *Captain Future*—or has learned of them from Mr. S. J. Perelman, from whose "Crazy Like a Fox" he quotes a description "of the main street in Jungletown, a stop-over town full of clip joints somewhere in the Cosmos," as depicted by our Mr. Hamilton. And he relies on Mr. Perelman for his view of Captain Future's bodyguard, so

nightmarishly pictured by artist Wesso,* as "one of the most paralysing in modern fiction":

It consisted of a white-faced, green-eyed, rubbery android, or synthetic man, and a giant metal robot with a pair of photo-electric eyes who carried a transparent box in which was housed a living brain, with two glittering lens-eyes. Against this, an extravaganza in a recent British thriller, in which a hovering space-ship is encircled and dragged to the ground by a giant earth-worm, is a trifle of the imagination. Or is it?

In the mood he has induced in us, we feel inclined to assure Mr. Turner: it is! Especially when we compare the illustrations, for which we must award the palm to the Americans when it comes to getting into the real spirit of the thing. I use the plural, now, because I find support for my own feelings in the more expert opinion of my offspring, who in those not very distant days before he graduated to *Astounding* was seldom content with the British brand of scientific blood as dispensed by the *Hotspur* and the *Wizard*. There are exceptions, of course: he is still loud in his praises of "The Crimson Comet," which seems to have derived from Mr. Hamilton's "The Comet Doom"—or one of the many other stories he did with the same plot. But the Americans, though they may have "used the universe as just another place in which to play cowboys and Indians," have at least resisted the temptation to place the cowboys and their steeds, steers and all, quite unchanged, upon the planet Venus, as one careless British writer did.

Others, too, have recently transported schoolboys to alien worlds, where they have behaved much the same as on Earth; but a mere change of setting is not enough to make an interplanetary story satisfactory to a generation which has been raised on Flash Gordon. As Mr. Turner points out:

There had to be a reason for interplanetary travel. Mere lust for scientific knowledge was not enough. Sometimes it was necessary to prevent the theft of the Moon or the wanton destruction of, say, the Pole Star. Sometimes it was necessary to check up on what another planet was doing in the Milky Way, or to forestall an attempt at colonising use-

* *Captain Future: Wizard of Science*, issued quarterly from Winter '40 to Winter '44, was also illustrated by Virgil Finlay; Erle K. Bergy did the covers. The stories in the series started by Edmund Hamilton were later continued by Manly Wade Wellman under the name of Brett Sterling.

ful nebulae. In the more advanced stories it was a case of protecting trade routes through Space. Or it might be necessary to do battle with a Space Emperor.

He has found that, whereas in the old days the method of propulsion of a space-ship was left vague ("Someone would just discover the secret of overcoming the force of gravity, just 'as someone else would trip across the secret of invisibility, and that was that"), magazines like *Astounding* now have the details more plausibly worked out; and he quotes from Murray Leinster's *Astounding* story, "First Contact" (May, '45), in showing "the difference between the super-confident science fiction of to-day and that of 40 or 50 years ago, with its defensive footnotes" (apparently unaware that Mr. Shaver is still very much on the defensive), "But the basic plots are not necessarily more ingenious or audacious."

He gives the British authors more credit for trying "to teach Thorians and Plutons to play a straight bat." An attempt by the Venusians to steal Earth's moon in another *Boys' Magazine* space epic, 'Buccaneers of the Sky,' he cites as typical of "a failing which characterised the inhabitants of other planets: they were not sporting."

The dwellers on alien stars might be, and usually were, ahead of us technically; they might have robots working for them as slaves; they might have attained the twin goals of perpetual motion and perpetual life; but they had no more sense of fair play than Neanderthal Man . . . Not only were the men of other worlds unsporting, they were humourless and void of all ordinary human emotions except the lust for power and the lust for revenge. They were too highly mechanised—that was the plain truth of it. Oddly enough there never seemed to be any women or children; the populace were apparently bred in laboratories. As fighters they lacked initiative and could be swatted in hundreds by any British schoolboy (especially as the lowered force of gravity on an alien planet gave schoolboys ten times their normal agility). In their civil wars—one group were always trying to become a Master Race—experience showed that whichever side could first call in the aid of a British schoolboy would win.

If we are to believe their Russian critics, the American authors have made some changes in this respect. It is the Terrestrials who are the power-seekers, the space-buccaneering enslavers of alien races. And Mr. Bergy has certainly done much to remedy the lack of a perfectly natural sex-interest.

Not that the inhabitants of other planets were necessarily human or even approximately human. In a **Union Jack** story entitled 'In Trackless Space' (1902) the Moon was found to be occupied by giant spiders fitted, for no very adequate reason, with electro-magnets. A trip to Venus revealed only giant centipedes and scorpions.

And the BEMs (Bug-Eyed Monsters, Mr. Turner) are still very much with us, in adequate variety; though perhaps the life of other planets is, on the whole, more human—and humane—than it was in the early days of **Astounding**. Those spiders, incidentally, were the creatures of our veteran British writer of science fiction, George C. Wallis, who under that name or the pseudonym John Stanton wrote much of the fantastic material featured in **Union Jack**, the **Boys' Herald**, **Boys' Friend** and other papers long before his advent in **Weird Tales** and **Amazing Stories**. Yet when **Chums** (to which Mr. Turner gives short shrift as a "respectable" magazine) decided to give science fiction a whirl in '31, they imported a couple of pieces by Jack Williamson and Ed Earl Repp which had

appeared earlier in **Air Wonder Stories**.

So, what with the poor show of **Scoops** in '34, and **Modern Wonder** being compelled to transform John Beynon's **Passing Show** serial, "Stow-away to Mars," into "The Space Machine" (turning the heroine into a schoolboy in the process), I am inclined to think I was lucky to come in at the tail-end of an era of juvenile science fiction which can never be repeated for lack of British writers capable of producing the sort of stories our fathers read. Perhaps Mr. Charles Ray of Amalgamated Press was only too right when he told me, 20 years ago, in response to my plea for science fiction, that what the Americans were doing had all been done before, if not quite in the same way. Unless, of course, we are going to submit to the view, to which Mr. Turner seems to subscribe, that American science fiction is only a slightly more refined form of fantastic blood-and-thunder?

At least, worse things could be said of it. Worse things have been said. And Messrs. Bolkhovitnov and Zakhartchenko can't have it both ways.

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Book Reviews

There Ain't No Sich . . .

THE LUNGFISH, THE DODO & THE UNICORN, by Willy Ley. Viking Press, New York, \$3.75.*

THE LUNGFISH & THE UNICORN, by Willy Ley. Hutchinson, London, 9/6.

Reviewed by **John K. Aiken**

Books on frontier regions of knowledge are invaluable—and not alone to science fiction authors and readers. They show up gaps, suggest unusual lines of research, may even lead to the development of whole new sciences. But they are not easy to write. They require detailed knowledge of two or more different fields and a breadth of outlook, coupled with a pioneering spirit, which is usually foreign to the specialist. Mr. Ley is one who has an abundance of these qualifications; and in this "Excursion into Romantic Zoology" he deals fascinatingly with those of its frontiers which touch on the territories of mythology and palæontology. In other words, he is concerned with those creatures which, popular opinion in despite, have never existed at all, with others which have only recently ceased to exist, and with those which should by rights have ceased to exist a very long time ago, but have stubbornly or luckily survived.

Combining able documentation with an anecdotal style, in the manner with which we have become familiar through his many intriguing contributions to **Astounding**, Mr. Ley answers such questions as these: Should one believe in sea serpents? Have any of the giant saurians survived to the present day? Did unicorns ever exist? Were there really in Madagascar, up to a couple of centuries ago, 15-foot birds which laid two-gallon eggs? Can mankind be absolved from blame for the extinction of the Dodo? Without stealing too much of his thunder, let me say that a surprising number of these ques-

tions are answered in the affirmative.

Perhaps it is not giving too much away to mention that the first authenticated unicorn came into existence in about 1933; that there is considerable reason to suppose that at least one species of dinosaur, probably of the brontosaurus type, exists at present in Equatorial Africa; and that the last wild European bison was shot in Poland hardly 30 years ago. Fantasies one has read, therefore, of plesiosaurs in central African lakes, or of Aepyornis eggs preserved in Madagascar swamps, are not so wide of the mark as their authors may have supposed; and Mr. Ley's book is a mine of information for would-be writers of such stories.

One cannot help feeling, in reading of recently extinct species such as the Great Auk, a sense of guilt and nostalgia—guilt on account of the wanton selfishness with which Man seems to have given the coup-de-grace, and nostalgia, I suppose, not only because of natural conservatism, but because one would like to have seen the creature oneself. However, Mr. Ley is a little comforting regarding Man's share in their demise. Most such species, he says, were moribund in any case, having evolved to a state of specialisation at which they could neither flee from nor defend themselves against predators, of which Man is simply one type. It can be claimed that their extinction was perfectly fair, biologically speaking. Yet one cannot help hoping that the whales, for example, will not follow Steller's giant sea-cow into extinction. Valuable, interesting and beautiful animals as they are, the present internationally-licensed rate of slaughtering them looks very much like a death sentence to several species.

But to turn to a pleasanter side of the story: the survival of what Mr. Ley calls living fossils. Of these, the most interesting are surely the transitional types: Limulus, the horseshoe-crab, marine predecessor of the scorpion; Platypus, precursor of truly viviparous mammals; the Ceratodus, the Austra-

*This is a new, extended version of the first edition of the book, published in the U.S.A. in '41 by a firm no longer extant, which now appears in a British edition. The 361-page Viking edition has several additional chapters on vegetable animals, the wild horse, koala, etc., plus "The Story of the Kraken," which first appeared as an article in **Astounding**. A chapter on legendary giants in both books is from the same source.

lian lungfish, the link between fish and purely air-breathing animals. It is easy to see why such examples are rare: once the transitional process was initiated, one may presume by a mutation, evolutionary forces would tend to push it to completion. But why, then, have these primitive types survived at all, if not specially preserved by providence to plague the inveterate classifiers?

Mr. Ley does not fully answer this question, though the answer may be found in the converse of the proposition that over-specialisation can lead to extinction. If a type can only prevent itself from evolving too far, a drastic change in natural conditions is not likely to prove so dangerous to it as to a more highly adapted, and less highly adaptable, type. This is a lesson which Man himself, at present a reasonably primitive and flexible form, may ponder before his self-controlled evolutionary process has advanced too far along some undesirable path. Or has this already happened? Are De Camp's story of the "Living Fossil" (with Man in the title-role), or Wells' grim fore-

cast in "The Time Machine," legitimate predictions? Mr. Ley, with his wealth of out-of-the-way facts, catalyses these and many other speculations more effectively, perhaps, than could any fiction.

It is not easy, in short, to find fault with this book, my only major complaint being that it is not a good deal longer. A third version, extended to include such palæobotanical survivals as the Ginkgo tree and the Australian "Bush-boy," would be highly acceptable. And may I, at the same time, put in a plea for an authoritative discussion of my favourite mystery, that of the Abominable Snowman? The mountaineer Eric Shipton (in "Blank on the Map") describes the footprints of the smaller, or man-eating, Himalayan species, observed by him in the Karakoram, as being consistent with a one-legged bird weighing about a quarter of a ton; a smaller British species—or, rather, its track—was seen in Cornwall in the middle of the last century. There are, it has been many times reiterated, more things . . .

Heinlein's Space Manual

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

Reviewed by **Forrest J. Ackerman**

When "Rocket Ship Galileo," a new Heinlein book (Scribner's, \$2.00), appeared out of the blue some months ago, his followers were excited and eager—until they learned that it was "only a juvenile." Yet Heinlein-hungry fans who read it reported favourably on it, praising its adult approach; and it was not too surprising that he had done a creditable job on a space operetta, for it had long been an ambition of his to bring Tom Swift up to date.

Still, when, similarly unheralded, "Space Cadet" appeared in the U.S., it was given the cold shoulder by the science fiction book buyer, who presumed it was but a follow-up to the "Galileo" volume. It is not; and it is not just a "kid's book." It is mature, and it is marvellous.

A century and two decades after "Kilroy Was Here," first of manned space-ships, has circled the Moon and returned, a Space Patrol has been established. This is an organisation for the maintenance of interplanetary

law and order in the year 2075, and the story concerns the trials and tribulations of fledglings from Earth, Venus and Ganymede seeking commissions in the service. The pace they must follow seems fantastic to our Earth-bound minds of 1949; but Heinlein, the master of extrapolation, never indulges in wild fancies, and the picture he paints is realistic and convincing even in its amazing complexity.

One's head begins to whirl at the thought of having to master solar languages and become familiar with extra-terrestrial biology, history, psychology, law and institutions, treaties and conventions—but that is not all. Mr. Heinlein's Patrolmen must also have knowledge of planetary ecologies, system bionomics, interplanetary economics, the applications of extra-terrestrialism, comparative religious customs and the law of space, to mention only a few items in their terrifying curriculum. Then, it is obvious that you must study atomic physics and learn the art of astrogation. Before you become an astrogator your body must be subjected to punishment that makes wrestling with a boa-constrictor seem like nestling in your baby's lovin' arms.

You'll have to undergo everything from spiralling around devoid of all weight to bouncing about at seven gravities till you've hæmorrhaged and vomited and/or blacked-out. If you die—though they try not to let you—you are, of course, washed out of the service.

The Solar Patrol, to quote one of its officers, is "not a fighting organisation; it is the repository of weapons too dangerous to entrust to military men. Its members are trained to use weapons, are under orders, wear a uniform. But their purpose is not to fight, but to prevent fighting." One of their routine chores is inspecting the atomic war-rockets that ring around the Earth from pole to pole, to make sure they haven't strayed too far from their orbit.

Mr. Heinlein has long had an itch to get out into deep space himself, and perhaps he has alleviated it by the vicarious thrill of projecting himself into the next century via his typewriter. Certainly, he does it with such consummate skill that the reader is projected with him. Even the most jaded of armchair rocketeers will derive a new sensation from these pages, because of the air of authenticity in them. Here is a handbook of the future, a manual for interplanetariums.

The post-war Heinlein has disappointed many of his admirers with his puerile if highly-paid **Saturday Evening Post** short stories. The anthologists have been quick to include some of his interplanetary slicker between hard covers, but fans in general have sampled these tales and found them wanting. I would like to believe that the misdirection of his talents in this respect has been an expedient towards an æsthetic end; and if this little masterpiece is the result, all is forgiven. Back again in full measure are the pre-war **Astounding** richness of controlled imagination, the intriguing development of alien conceptions, the clarity of construction and semantic purity which made him a master of science fiction. His treatment of the manners and mores of the Venusian matriarchy, for instance, is as delightful as anything he did in "Beyond This Horizon," "Common Sense" or "Sixth Column."

Make no mistake: "Space Cadet" is a magnum opus of the post-space conquest period which I recommend with earnest enthusiasm as required reading for all s-f fans.

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Keller in Capitals

THE SOLITARY HUNTERS and THE ABYSS, by David H. Keller, M.D. New Era Publishers, Philadelphia, Pa. \$3.00.

Reviewed by **Weaver Wright**

This is the first production of a new semi-professional publishing house started by two veteran Philadelphia fantasy fans, Robert Madle and Jack Agnew. The illustrator of the volume, J. V. Baltadonis, is also local talent, and although the jacket is fair his two interiors have suffered in reproduction. The paper and binding are adequate—but typographical errors run rampant, and it is difficult to believe that any proof-reading could have been done on the book. Furthermore, I strongly suspect that the typesetting was done from a manuscript supplied by Dr. Keller rather than from the printed story as edited for **Weird Tales** by Farnsworth Wright; for it is full of capitalisation instead of italicisation (neither being necessary in many cases), and there is an irritating use of double and even treble exclamation marks. These, I know, are characteristics of Dr. Keller's MSS.

I do not know whether to lay the blame on author or publishers, but somebody obviously slipped. It is to be wondered if Mr. Madle or Mr. Agnew ever read "The Solitary Hunters" before bringing it back into print, because they should certainly have changed the date in it. When published in '34, it was a prophecy of '43; but '43 has come and gone, and we were not at that time living in a leisurely world with a four-hour working day, nor has capital punishment yet been abandoned. It would have been a simple matter to remove these anachronisms by altering the date to the mid-50's.

All minor criticisms apart, how does the story itself stack up to-day, after sixteen years? I myself had not read it before—and I enjoyed it hugely. Dr. Keller uses the simplest language in all science fiction; there is no difficulty in understanding him, and if the jacket and illustration give away much of the mystery, this mixture of entomology, penology and psychology is still engrossing. Again he brings us face to face with the prototype of the man-hating woman we have met previously in his "Tiger Cat," "Bindings de Luxe," and

other stories, and the lengths to which she goes to eliminate mankind make spine-prickling reading*.

It seems impossible that, when it was serialised in **Weird Tales**, "The Solitary Hunters" proved the most popular story of the year, in competition with Merritt, Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard and C. L. Moore; yet it was rated above such time-honoured pieces as "The Woman of the Wood," "Through the Gates of the Silver Key," "The People of the Black Circle" and "The Scarlet Dream." And although I still find it hard to credit, the fact remains that I enjoyed it.

About half as long again as this short novel of almost 100 pages is "The Abyss," the new novella which forms the latter half of the book. Remember "The Moon Rays," in which Dr. Keller had everybody staring at the Moon in a mass experiment (of which they were ignorant) to determine if the lunar rays might really be responsible for insanity? In "The Abyss" he has eight million New Yorkers chewing gum impregnated with chemicals which causes them to lose all their inhibitions and revert to ancestral attitudes of from one to five thousand years ago: Romans, Greeks, Huns, Norsemen, walking the streets of modern New York—fighting, killing, leaving a trail of blood behind them. And the experiment is suggested by a science fiction fan!

This story did not live up to my expectations, but it was amusing to read a new, utterly outrageous Kelleryarn. For screwy ideas, Dr. Keller remains the John Collier of the pulps.

* In his Introduction to "Life Everlasting," the recent Keller collection, Sam Moskowitz (to whom the author dedicates the present volume) records that many of Keller's stories deal with the conflict between the sexes, in which the male often loses the battle for supremacy. "Judging from these tales, it would appear that (he) does not like women. Perhaps it is because he is basically afraid of them. It may be that the answer to this pronounced complex can be found in his unpublished novel, 'The Fighting Woman.' It seems evident that he was early conditioned by the unflagging efforts of his mother to completely dominate, control and possess his every thought and act."

The Swashbuckling Schizophrenic

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

Reviewed by **Kemp McDonald**

What is there about Mr. Hubbard's stories of Arabian magic that is so appealing? They are simple tales, all much of a pattern, in which the hero, a timid youth to start with, is transported to other times or dimensions and caught up in a whirl of sorcery. In order to extricate himself he finds he must do nothing less than bring the whole other-worldly hierarchy of wizardry crashing down, and this he proceeds to do. Gradually he finds his feet, learns a trick or two, wins the affection of the dazzling heroine, and by the end is a thoroughly swashbuckling fellow, playing ogres and ghouls off against one another in the most precarious manner and getting away with it.

All the human characters are nice, straightforward people, perfectly good or bad; as for the jinni, ifrits and marids infesting these remote places, they all have their specific attributes, too—soup-plate eyes, roaring voices, a

contempt for human life and, luckily, a certain gullibility which offsets their supernatural powers. None of these characters, human or otherwise, is at all the sort of creature one ever meets; and yet the whole thing is self-consistent and convincing enough to be most enjoyable.

Perhaps Mr. Hubbard's apparent simplicity of approach is the art that conceals art. Perhaps one instinctively demands, as compensation for suspension of the laws of nature, simplicity of character and behaviour according to a limited pattern, to act as some frame of reference in an unfamiliar world. This demand fulfilled, the product is a lusty and satisfying adventure. There is added, too, the psychological satisfaction of seeing an extreme underdog, a poor devil who even comes off second-best against his aunt, triumph over a worldful of creatures definitely more unpleasant, at least in their potentialities, than the most slave-driving boss.

"Slaves of Sleep" originally appeared in the July '39 issue of **Unknown**, be-



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ing in my view the best of the series of similar tales of Mr. Hubbard's featured by this magazine*. Perhaps its superiority lies in the authenticity of the maritime flavour (derived, no doubt, from the author's own seafaring experience) of the quasi-Arabian seaport in which the other-worldly part of the action takes place: an authenticity remarkable when one considers what an exceedingly foreign port it is, this place where the souls of sleeping humans are trapped in the slaves who serve the ifrit aristocracy. Nor is there anything incongruous about the juxtaposition of a naval battle in 18th-century European style with the Temple of the Goddess Rani, complete with dancing girls (the only privileged human beings in the other world) and its insurmountable moat full of snakes—this last being surmounted by the intrepid-shrinking Tiger-Jan Palmer, schizo-

* Others in the series: "The Ultimate Adventure" (Apr. '39), "The Ghoul" (Aug. '39), "Typewriter in the Sky" (Nov.-Dec. '40), "The Case of the Friendly Corpse" (Aug. '41).

phrenic hero whose fusion of souls means the downfall of the Ifrit Empire.

It occurs to me, in fact, that Mr. Hubbard has achieved here the same kind of seemingly impossible synthesis of incompatible elements—seamanship and sorcery, psychology and astrology, mythology and modernism—whereby Kenneth Grahame, commingling animal and human characteristics, produced the classic that is "The Wind in the Willows." This is no small achievement. From the moment in which the unstopping of an antique copper jar bearing Solomon's Seal releases a cloud of dense, black smoke from which appears a face with glaring eyes and gleaming tusks, a rich, spicy atmosphere of magic, tanged with gunpowder and sea-salt, hangs over and unifies the action. Altogether, a delightful fireside adventure for a winter's night. And it is pleasant to be able to record the total absence of illustrations, decorations, or any other form of juvenile flummery from Shasta's modestly competent job of book production.

The Lure of Clark Ashton Smith

GENIUS LOCI & OTHER TALES, by Clark Ashton Smith. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wis. \$3.00.

Reviewed by **Arthur F. Hillman**

When a critic cannot find major blemishes in a book he is reduced to seeking minor faults in order to flight his shafts of wit and pronounce his omniscient judgments. Therefore, it is with a tinge of malice that I point to the fact that this volume is five tales short of the contents originally proposed by the publishers. Doubtless rising costs are responsible for this lamentable curtailment; and only the promise of further collections of the Sage of Auburn's work will alleviate the disappointment of his followers.*

Meanwhile, it must be admitted that this third assembly of Mr. Smith's tales is the equal of its predecessors†; perhaps even better, since several of them belong to the realm of science fiction. In the beginning, the weird and fan-

tastic provided the motifs for his colourful stories, but the gradual development of his work towards the sort of material he produced, in particular, for *Wonder Stories*, was all to the good. For his science fiction, despite its utter variance to modern trends in this field, will always stand as a superb example of imaginative writing.

For instance, the cosmic sweep and majesty of "The Eternal World" and its supramundane guardians, the Timeless Ones; the spell-binding mystery of ancient Mars wrapped in the eldritch despotism of "Vulthoom"; the inconceivable torture of the other-dimensional world of "The Visitors from Mlok" (now re-titled "A Star-Change"). The weird stories, too, ranging from the enchanting irony of "The Disinterment of Venus" to the powerful malignancy of "The Colossus of Ylourgne," are not only full of intriguing elements in themselves, but are presented in words of glowing fire and poetic imagery.

Clark Ashton Smith may be a Prophet of Doom, but he is robed in hues of gorgeous purple and gold. Although the fatalistic acceptance of the utter inhumanity of Fate and Death runs like a sombre thread through his tapes-

* A fourth collection, "The Abominations of Yondo," and a fifth as yet untitled, are in preparation by Arkham House.

† "Out of Space and Time" ('42); "Lost Worlds" ('44).

the prime press*

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extend to all their patrons best wishes for a Happy New Year—and good fantasy reading wherever you are. They are happy to announce an expanded publishing programme for the first quarter of 1949.

For January/February:

THE HOMUNCULUS

By Dr. David H. Keller

A previously unpublished novelette of 43,000 words which will be limited to an edition of 1,200 copies, of which 100 will be printed on fine paper, specially bound, and autographed. 16/6

For March/April:

THE SPOT OF LIFE

By Austin Hall and
Homer Eon Flint

Two volumes presenting the famous Argosy classics of fantasy. Each 16/6

And a collection of Flint's longer novelettes:

THE PLANETEER

which will include THE DEVASTATORS and other stories. 16/6

Owing to the above schedule we regret that we have had to postpone George O. Smith's

THE NOMAD

until April, but the following titles are now available:

WITHOUT SORCERY

By Theodore Sturgeon 16/6

LEST DARKNESS FALL

By L. Sprague de Camp 16/6

LORDS OF CREATION

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Things to Come in
FANTASY REVIEW

Germany's "Captain Future"

by WILLY LEY

An Interview with

RAY BRADBURY

Masters of Fantasy

by ARTHUR F. HILLMAN

tries, all are beautiful. His men and women are but puppets twitching to the strings suspended from alien talons but the puppets, stage and scenery are fashioned and contrived by a master craftsman. His devotion to beauty, the ultra-imaginative outlook which pervades his plots, and the avoidance of outworn stock situations and characters, place his tales in the highest level of fantastic literature.

To-day, many writers have succumbed to the realistic or humanistic trend of science fiction; and there is a disturbing schism between their work and the science fiction in this book. Even in the past, there was a bitter struggle between the two schools of thought. But Mr. Smith has remained faithful to the views he expounded in 1932: "One of literature's most glorious prerogatives is the exercise of imagination on things that lie beyond human experience—the adventuring of fantasy into the awful, sublime and infinite cosmos outside the human aquarium. The real thrill comes from the description of ultrahuman events, forces and scenes, which properly dwarf the terrene actors to comparative insignificance . . . Science fiction, at its best, is akin to sublime and exalted poetry in its evocation of tremendous non-anthropomorphic imageries."

To all the subscribers to such a doctrine this book will need no urging, for true delvers into the ultramundane will know what Mr. Smith has to offer. It is to the protagonists of the modern school that it throws down a challenge: whether they too, in spite of their inclinations, can resist the lure of Mr. Smith's kind of science fiction. I venture to suggest that if they once dip into these tales, they will find it as potent an attraction as the singing of the Lorelei to the sailors of old.

Immortal Lieutenant

DEATH'S DEPUTY, by L. Ron Hubbard. Fantasy Publishing Co., Los Angeles, \$2.50.

Reviewed by **Thomas Sheridan**

Supposing you were able to lead a charmed life, immune from accident or death—at the expense of other people's lives or limbs. Would life be worth living? Wouldn't you develop a guilt complex which would drive you to suicide, or a futile attempt at it? Even if, as in the case of Mr. Hubbard's Flight-Lieutenant McLean, you couldn't help becoming a war hero, seeing your buddies being sacrificed to your heroics would make it a pretty poor show. And if a beautiful young wife is liable to get the bomb which should have your name on it . . .

Mr. Hubbard got his idea for this **Unknown** story, which appeared originally nine years ago, from the disturbing fact of the "accident prone," so called by the insurance companies. According to him, these Jonahs have been around much longer than life insurance, having made themselves specially conspicuous in the history of the sea, where they have been blacklisted for their peculiar potentialities for disaster—which they themselves always survive. One seaman, apparently, has escaped every major naval disaster occurring during the past 20 years, and still lives to tell the tale—but not to any ship's company. And the insurance people have recently proved to their clients' satisfaction that accidents diminish, if they don't cease altogether, when the "prones" are weeded out of their factories.

Mr. Hubbard's hero plays his grim role as a result of an extension of his life-span by the Powers That Be, whose compensatory tricks make his continued existence a highly interesting, if tragic, business. The smooth-flowing narrative we have come to associate with this prolific but conscientious author (who has published over five million words of fiction in 72 publications, and uses other pen-names besides that of **Rene La Fayette**), is such that we become thoroughly bemused with the idea, which Mrs. Campbell thought was "lovely"; and we are thankful that Editor John Junior's "rude, unanswerable insistence" persuaded Mr. Hub-

bard to get it down in the first place.

Though it is a pity that certain technical howlers which, my ex-R.A.F. friends tell me, are still present could not have been removed before this book was printed, even if they were unavoidable in 1940. For example, they say that no Spitfires were ever based in France at that time, whereas McLean flies one. I wouldn't know. But if there was any London pub where you could get steak and chips or an omelette (unless it were made of dried egg) while the bombs were falling, I didn't know of it either.

There is a novel but somewhat mystifying—and unnecessarily horrifying—photographic dust-jacket by Lou Goldstone. His two interior illustrations seem quite superfluous.

Atomic Essay

SPURIOUS SUN, by George Borodin. Werner Laurie, London. 8/6.

Reviewed by **Alan Devereux**

Atomic explosion—chain reaction—the world aflame—collapse of civilisation—miraculous reprieve—the brave new world of the survivors . . . even the variations of the familiar formula are becoming monotonous. But this is no "atomic thriller"; it is more of a prophetic-fantastic essay in the Stapledon manner than a novel, for there is little in it of individual personalities and still less of the impact of events on personalities. Unlike Stapledon's cosmic canvases, however, it gives only a limited picture covering a three-year period in the immediate future; and although there are some interesting—if not very original—concepts arising out of the main situation, the author fails to develop them far, introducing them as stray thoughts in the thread of his argument rather than as aids to a narrative.

An explosion in an experimental atomic plant starts a chain reaction in the ionosphere, causing a prolonged outburst of radiation and the release of political passions in a third World War. This is succeeded by a general panic which compels the nations to combine in a brief period of peace and brotherhood, as the heat of the Great Glow becomes more intense and threatens to extinguish all life on the planet. At the last minute, when mankind is reconciled to its doom, it is reprieved by an unknown scientist who discovers how

to dissipate the radiant particles with the aid of machines set up at various points of the globe. The author is, perhaps justifiably, a little uncertain of the process whereby humanity is saved. But, after its brief glimpse of a golden age, it celebrates its escape by reverting to its old squabbles, until the future of civilisation is assured by the world's youth, which organises itself to take over from the old men.

The story, where it becomes evident at all, suffers from some incoherence, and the political situations hardly carry conviction. There are long, unnecessary explanations in places; and in others, where explanations seem to be called for, they are lacking. The author has been swayed between a desire to be frivolous and the intense seriousness of his subject-matter, which would seem to hold a gruesome possibility. There is dry humour in his tilts at the politicians, and the whole thing is good propaganda for world federation; but some of the more imaginative ideas it presents are dealt with so heavy-handedly that they seem merely ridiculous, and the book remains what it was obviously intended to be—an essay serving both as a prophecy and a warning.

Moonlight And Spiders

THE HAUNTING OF TOBY JUGG,
by Dennis Wheatley. Hutchinson,
London. 12/6.

Reviewed by Geoffrey Giles

If the title is not enough to attract him, one glimpse of the jacket of this book should arrest the attention of the weird story addict. It pictures a monstrous spider, which stretches its glossy bulk over both front and back covers and is reminiscent of **Weird Tales** at its most lurid period. On the other hand, those who recall "The Devil Rides Out" and "Strange Conflict" will need no gaudy horrors to persuade them to investigate Mr. Wheatley's latest excursion into the macabre; though the fact that he has adopted the outmoded diary form to tell his straggling story may repel the pernickety connoisseur, even if he has no aversion for giant spiders.

The fact is that there is in this 290-page volume nothing very original or

very profound; nor is there anything impressive in the writing, which at times descends almost to the gaunt simplicity of the schoolboy weekly. Yet it is still worth-while reading for those who care to be horror-struck with creepy-crawly atmosphere of the more blatant kind and who like a story in which they can become thoroughly absorbed, with here and there a spicy bit to keep their appetite whetted. Even Mr. Wheatley's little homilies on judicious living and the menace of Communism seem to have their place; and although one feels that 140,000 words were hardly necessary to do justice to a plot which holds very few surprises, that the interest never flags while it ambles amiably along says much for his abilities as a story-teller.

At least, the journal of Toby Jugg, being as naive as it is, makes the whole thing thoroughly believable, in spite of secret staircases, hypnotic passes, Satanists in satin robes, a poor demented old lady who ekes out her days digging a tunnel to a watery grave, and a lovely Aunt Julia who turns out to be a daughter of the Devil. Most plausible of all, perhaps, is the Great Spider, though equally so is the multitude of smaller spiders which the rascally Dr. Lisicky conjures up to plague poor Toby in the attempt to bend him to his will. If the inducement of a distinctly itchy feeling can be considered evidence of the potency of a writer's descriptive powers, Mr. Wheatley has distinguished himself.

Toby is a young millionaire, crooked by R.A.F. service and doomed to a wheelchair, who has increasing cause to suspect that his foreign guardian is not as concerned for his recovery as he pretends to be; rather, that he is directly responsible for the monster which, by squatting on his bedroom window-sill on moonlight nights, gives him every excuse for acting like a lunatic. Which, of course, is what the wily Doctor wants, so that he may acquire Toby's fortune for the cause of the Prince of Darkness. But, as might be expected, after true love has blossomed and kept the Great Spider at bay (just when Toby was about to clout it with a bottle of champagne), the Devil takes the Doctor instead. But not before Sally, the new nurse who takes such a lot of convincing, has narrowly escaped a fate worse than death. These Satanists have some nasty notions about virginity . . .

Fantasy Forum

Readers' letters on any aspect of fantasy-fiction are welcomed for this feature. Address: The Editor, FANTASY REVIEW, 115, Wanstead Park Road, Ilford, Essex.

Shall We Deny Atlantis?

I hesitate to cross swords with Alan Devereux lest it be thought I seek to defend Mr. Shaver and his works. A few only of these have I read, recently—as a matter of research only, too, to ascertain what all the excitement was about. But in his review of "I Remember Lemuria" (Oct.-Nov. '48), Mr. Devereux poses again the old, old question: if marvellous scientific civilisations have existed in the past, where are their records?

As our present "scientific" civilisation has existed for a mere 150 years and bids fair to die by its own hand before its age equals even that of the old Roman civilisation, we may usefully leave that adjective out of the argument. Neither I nor anyone else can answer Mr. Devereux's question; but as the oldest man-made objects extant cannot be dated back with any reliability for more than 8,000 years—or, if one accepts Muller's estimate of the age of Tiahuanaco, more than 14,000 years—it is idle to presume, in the face of gathering proof that *Homo Sapiens* may have existed as such for upwards of 250,000 years, that civilisations greater than our present one could not have flourished in times long since vanished into eternity.

Records may exist either in folklore or in the shape of ancient ruins; that, I fancy, will be accepted. So, to go back only 1,500 years, shall we deny Hengist and Horsa because there is no proof they ever existed? Shall we deny the architectural and mathematical skill of the ancient Egyptians because there is no actual account of the building of the Pyramids and the Sphinx?

I do not rely on the stories of the Garden of Eden or the Flood to bolster up my thesis; yet nearly all races have folk memories of a golden age followed by at least one world-wide inundation. And I would draw attention to the greater instability of the Earth's surface in past ages; also to the accepted shifts in its axial rotation and the climatic convulsion resulting therefrom.

I agree there is no proof, in the form of records, that marvellous civilisations ever existed in times past; but not until every inch of the Earth has been dug and sifted, with a negative result, shall I admit there is proof they never existed. Until that time comes, though I be damned by Devereux as a simple roman-cist, I shall shout with the loudest, "Long live Atlantis, long live Mu, and all their glories"—and, even though it be heresy, "Long live Shaver!"—George J. Peacock, West Wickham, Kent.

GILMORE MYSTERY: LATEST

I am much pleased with your magazine. It is invaluable, since it gives exactly the type of information which is highly desired but otherwise unobtainable.

Reverting to the article on *Astounding* in your Jun.-Jul. '48 issue, there appeared in the July '42 *Amazing Stories* an excellent novel entitled "The Return of Hawk Carse," by Anthony Gilmore. Editor Ray Palmer claims that Gilmore is a real, separate person; he just dropped him a line and got the story in return. The way the story ends it seems unfinished, and it is highly probable a sequel to it could be written. The problem is to get Palmer to call Gilmore again.

I cannot understand the difficulty in differentiating between science fiction and fantasy-fiction. I put genuine s-f hand in hand with science, and a scientific story is easily recognised as such; therefore, I cannot see the connection between true s-f and stories of witches, ghosts and the supernatural. Nor do I see why it is generally considered axiomatic that lovers of science fiction will also love fantasy-fiction. Fantasy means fairy tales, magic, or that which is fantastic. But science fiction, as exemplified by your British *Fantasy* and our *Astounding*, is none of this.—Russell Worthy, Williamstown, Mass.

STIFFENER.

Kindly enter my subscription to *Fantasy Review*. Regarding your magazine, I have little but praise to offer, and feel sure that by now your ears have become accustomed to such sounds. Having been connected with the world of fantasy and science fiction, either as a reader or professional writer and editor, off and on for something like twenty years—from my teens, in fact—I've learned what to expect of the usual fan magazine. While employed as Associate Editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* during '46 and '47, I had opportunity to become directly acquainted with almost all the American fan clubs and magazines, and acted as Master of Ceremonies at the Philadelphia Science Fiction Convention in '47. Out of all this association, I find *Fantasy Review* stands in the front rank of such publications for its sincerity, rationality, mature attitude, and excellence of material and editorial content.

I am particularly impressed by the quality of the book reviews, and the treatment accorded writers in this

A LARGE SELECTION OF FANTASY TITLES

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slightly purple field of literature. If words of approbation and encouragement for this adult approach can harden your resolution to continue and extend it, please consider them hereby pronounced, in firm and ringing tones. Let me say that I know many others here who share this opinion, and hope you will prosper and flourish in the years to come.—L. Jerome Stanton, New York.

[With ringing tones in our ears and cheeks slightly purple, we thank Mr. Stanton and those who share his opinion of *Fantasy Review*, which is immensely encouraged.—Ed.]

POLISHED MATURITY

Your publication, dealing with my favourite fiction, is about all one could ask in fanzines. We have nothing like it over here. Most of our fanzines are done in mimeograph or photo off-set, and they do not have the mature viewpoint or polish of your excellent publication.

I always enjoy articles on early s-f writers such as Bob Frazier's piece on the *Frank Reade Library* and Thomas Sheridan's review of Austin Hall's book. "Fantasia" presents news of our own s-f activities of which I am often unaware; it is a delightful column. Alan Devereux has said the final word on Shaver as far as I'm concerned; and orchids to Mr. Aiken for his honest review of "Beyond This Horizon." You certainly have an all-star letter column. Poor August Derleth—everybody swings at him, and I enjoy his smooth replies wherever I find them. All in all, your publication is one that has long been needed, an authoritative commentary on the field of fantasy-fiction.

The best of luck to you and to the English writers and fans in their new venture, *New Worlds*.—T. E. Watkins, Kansas City, Kan.

THINGS TO COME

My thanks to that gentleman and scholar, Jeff Giles, who said such nice things about "The Black Wheel"—would that I deserved them.

May you live long and happily, and publish billions of issues. I'd like to read one dated Aug.-Sep. 9856, in Vol. CDXXVLCVVIII. Why don't you put one out? Be fun reading reviews of Dwyster K-Zox's latest novel, "Greekforzels Were the Twinsipp Flunx," with illustrations in the current style—four-dimensional pictures viewed under polarised intuition-filters—Hannes Bok, New York.

[Sorry, but Space-Time considerations don't permit.—Ed.]

THE QUERY BOX

"THE LEMURIAN DOCUMENTS"

Can you give me any information on "The Lemurian Documents"? All I know is that it was a serial in six parts published in an American s-f magazine during the early '30's, and that the characters in the story were taken from Greek mythology. Unfortunately, I had only the issue containing the last instalment. I wonder, has it ever been published in book form? — Peter Johnston, Wellsbourne Mountford, Warks.

["The Lemurian Documents," by J. Lewis Burt, B.Sc., was a series of short stories, based on mythological legends of scientific interest, which appeared in *Amazing Stories* as follows: "Pygmalion" (Jan. '32), "The Gorgons" (Mar. '32), "Daedalus & Icarus" (May '32), "Phaeton" (Jun. '32), "The Sacred Cloak of Feathers" (Jul. '32), "Prometheus" (Sep. '32). They have never been reprinted in any form.—Ed.]

THE NOVA VENTURE— continued from page 6

suit, but who couldn't care less what alien planet she's bound for.

On the same principle, it was agreed that a less lusty type of advertisement than is usually found in fantasy magazines would help to give *New Worlds* dignity. As Chairman Harris pointed out in digging up this bone of contention: whereas not many fans are interested in moulding a mighty arm or conquering the smoking habit (which a surprising number have never acquired) they do respond to advertisements for books so long as they are of scientific or fantastic interest. Better no advertising at all than lower the tone of a magazine which itself would require

little advertisement to sell to those same fans, with so many of them taking a proprietary interest into the bargain.

Too many cooks? If the broth wasn't to everybody's taste, which remained to be seen, at least it was fairly certain that there would be a second, a third, a fourth—perhaps an indefinite number of helpings.

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BIG MARKET and good money for unusual or weird plays. You need expert theatre knowledge as well as ability. My qualifications are 20 years of acting, producing and writing plays. Course of twelve individual and personal lessons (no duplications) is **FOURTEEN GUINEAS** plus your promise to work hard. Write now, before my available time is booked.—Sam Bate, 1 Lilac Avenue, Coventry.

WANTED: complete file of **Scoops**. Good condition only. State price and condition.—Box 128, **Fantasy Review**.

WANTED: American **Horror Stories**, **Terror Tales**, **Silk Stocking**, **High Heel**.—BM/FRVV, London, W.C.1.

WANTED: **Weird Tales**, any issues. Will trade new fantasy books "Out of the Silence" and "Missing Angel," by Erle Cox, or 1944-45 **Astoundings** (American editions), or will pay cash.—Roger Dard, 232 James Street, Perth, Western Australia.

WEIRD, FANTASTIC and Scientific Fiction. Are you on our free monthly Mailing List for catalogues of books and magazines?—S-F Service (Dept. FR), 68 Victoria Street, Liverpool, 1, England.

STILL AVAILABLE: British Editions of **Astounding Science Fiction**, Aug., Oct. and Dec. '48, and **Unknown Worlds** Winter '48; 1/1d. per copy, post free.—Atlas Pub. & Dis. Co. Ltd., 18 Bride Lane, London, E.C.4.

EXCHANGE U.S. BOOKS by Huxley, Heinlein, van Vogt, etc. Write H. Manson, 52 Harbour Street, Irvine, Ayrshire.

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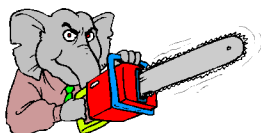
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