

The basic premise from which the novel begins—civilization overwhelmed by a tremendous natural catastrophe—is in itself sound and requires no further elaboration, and the succession of events is logical and clear.

Stewart's description of the inmost thoughts and emotions of Ish, the last American, and Em, the woman who strengthened and sustained him, their knowledge of what has passed for ever, together with the desire to see that old follies are not reborn, is the most moving quality of the book.

Moving too are the asides which tell of the slow triumph of Nature, unchangeable, and indifferent towards the works and aspirations of men.

Through the book runs the mystery of the hammer, a link between past and present, an ordinary miner's hammer which becomes the symbol of a new race of men, helped on by the tarnished remains of the old civilisation, yet purer for lack of its convention and complexity.

One is left at the end of this engrossing book with a mixture of feelings hard to describe, regret for what has been and passed away, and elation in the childhood of the Third Americans.

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to say that many members responded to our invitation to enrol new members for the Club. The offer of a free book for this service is still open—details were given on page 7 of *SF News* No. 5.

hard to put down; but Isaac Asimov has done it, deftly and convincingly—and most entertainingly.

To Dr. Susan Calvin, who knew them better than anyone, having worked with U.S. Robots and Mechanical Men, Inc., from 2007 to 2057, the positronic robots were "a cleaner, better breed" than their creators, thanks to the Three Laws of Robotics, which compelled them to be true servants of humanity and to safeguard themselves for that purpose.

This fascinating book by one of America's cleverest science-fictionists tells the history of the robots from their inception until the retirement of Dr. Calvin, who has seen them develop from the stage of baby-sitter to the role of peacemaker and protector of all mankind. It is an intriguing, adventurous and, at the same time, very *human* record.

S.F.B.C. COMPETITION REPORT

We live at a time when Saturday *morning's* illiterate pauper can become Saturday *night's* possessor of great wealth—as much as £75,000 they say—a circumstance wherein illiteracy ceases to be a handicap, much less a social stigma. It is remarkable therefore, and gratifying, that a number of people will enter a contest in which the possible reward is infinitesimally smaller and the mental equipment required considerably greater than in 1—2—X.

I was delighted by the verve of writing and the wide knowledge of the subject displayed by members when they got down to the task of telling us about their favourite science fiction novels.

For the interest of all members these are some of the books mentioned by competitors (author's name in brackets): BORN IN CAPTIVITY (Brian Berry); LAST AND FIRST MEN (Olaf Stapledon); FOUNDATION (Isaac Asimov); THE WORLD BELOW (S. Fowler Wright); THE LOST WORLD (Conan Doyle). By an odd turn of the wheel, the book that aroused most dissension among members when it was published in the Club was the