

very one to be chosen by more than one competitor. It was Ray Bradbury's *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES*.

I could not make up my mind finally as to the most outstanding entry so the prize of 3 guineas is divided equally between R. H. Spikes (*LIMBO '90*)—"grow up or be blown up" is the thought of the year—and G. P. Hudson (*EARTH ABIDES*) whose entries are printed below.

Special book prizes go to Mrs. Telling for her so honest and clear statement of her preference for Fowler Wright's classic story *THE WORLD BELOW*, and to Rodney Martin Hillman, our youngest member, for a spirited appraisal of *THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES*.

To all members who entered for the Competition we offer our thanks; to those who meant to enter but didn't, and to those who were unsuccessful this time—there will be another chance later on.—H.J.

P.S.—Don't be put off by our disapproval of the pools.

MY FAVOURITE SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL

By R. H. SPIKES,

25 Bassett Road, Coudon, Coventry.

Bernard Wolfe's *Limbo '90** pre-supposes an East-West H-bomb war conducted by robot brains. Afterwards there is a recoil to extreme pacifism. Men voluntarily undergo amputation of their limbs to "immobilize" aggression. But atomic-powered artificial limbs, far more efficient in some ways, become fashionable. World conflict breaks out again on the pretext of a quarrel over supplies of a rare metal used to make the limbs.

This is my favourite science fiction novel to date because, more clearly than others, it holds a mirror to to-day's world. Neither Huxley's distressing "Ape and Essence" nor Orwell's lucid "1984" is really science fiction. This book is; and

* Secker and Warburg, 15/.

though it may rank below Orwell's, its vision is sometimes more penetrating.

Its message is that, while we must grow up or be blown up, we shall never achieve self-mastery if we regard ourselves and our brains as pseudo-machines. This argument is elucidated in some extraordinarily interesting passages on pre-frontal lobotomy and in the author's conception of the "Inmob" movement.

Self-mastery, the book postulates, can ultimately be gained only through self-analysis. Freud is the indispensable complement of the makers of electronic brains and atomic bombs.

I find this message inspiring. It is an antidote to apocalyptic pessimism. It affirms the latent supremacy of the human mind, so often likened to a hapless Frankenstein powerless to control his own dreadful creations.

Mr. Wolfe—whose narrative is as thrilling as it is imaginative—assumes that all our ills are due to masochism. This hypothesis may be disputable, but he uses it most skilfully to illustrate the desperate problems confronting men to-day from the nature of their own being. And his estimate of the potentialities of new techniques in electronics is as fascinating as frightening.

By G. P. HUDSON,

13 Exeter Street, Ardwick, Manchester, 12

Whether George R. Stewart's novel *Earth Abides** is true science fiction or not I do not know, but it is certainly my favourite novel.

This is a story, which because of its setting and circumstance, calls for the highest skill in description and the natural unfolding of one event from another.

In a story of this character there is no opportunity for rapid improvisation, imaginative licence, and the inventing of a host of technical gadgets to carry the hero along through one crisis after another.

* The Club's First Book.