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Selection Committee : Arthur C. Clarke ; Dr. J. G. Porter ; E. J. Carnell and Herbert Jones.

Science Fiction News is edited by Herbert Jones and published by the Science Fiction Book Club for distribution to its members. Accounts and Distribution : Dunhams Lane, Letchworth, Herts. Membership of The Science Fiction Book Club can be arranged at any bookshop. Enrolment Forms obtainable from : 1, Tavistock Chambers, Bloomsbury Way, London, W.C.1.

George Over Limited, Market Place, Rugby

# SCIENCE FICTION NEWS



No. 22. Vol. 1.

October/November, 1956

## Ask your Grandma

Many people of an older generation will tell you that they first heard of the Atom as a sort of joke : if anyone were to split it, either accidentally or with malice aforethought, the Earth, with a planetary capital 'E,' would crumble to bits.

Thus in a dim way our grandparents, or even our great-grandparents, grasped the idea of chain reaction. It is significant that they never mentioned what happened to 'The Race'—either we didn't matter or we were untouchable ; it depended as everything does, upon your education.

Ironically, the Atom dominates the present age both for good and ill at the same time : by the mortal fear of its consequences when, in the form of armaments, it is left to politicians and militarists ; by the hopes that are raised by the prospect, Utopian in its implications, of a cheap and limitless source of power.

Everyone 'knows' this, 'feels' it somehow, but bafflement is the most popular state of mind . . . drift . . .

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The realities of science leak out but that is not enough. The tempo must increase, which brings us to the British Association.

The Annual Conference of the British Association gets the best press of the year. The speeches get well reported in