

January 1960

## ● THE CLOCK OF TIME

by Jack Finney

Jack Finney has a perky wit, a powerful imagination, and a lively moral sense; and these short stories display them all. He is also, and above all, *original*—it takes a real original to dream up a little device to remove adjectives and adverbs from over-flowery prose and to make the story about it the shortest and pithiest in the book (it too having been treated by the 'adjective cellar'). Many of Mr Finney's stories are about Time, and the title of the book comes from the following preface in the book: 'Haven't you noticed, on the part of nearly everyone you know, a growing rebellion against the *present*? There is a craving in the world like a thirst, a terrible mass pressure against the barrier of Time. I am utterly convinced that this terrible mass pressure of millions of minds is already, slightly but definitely, affecting time itself. . . . Man is disturbing the clock of time and I am afraid it will break.'

*Eyre & Spottiswoode 12s 6d; SFBC 5s 6d*

### THIS MONTH

## OCCAM'S RAZOR

by David Duncan

(Gollancz 12s 6d; SFBC 5s 6d)

### DETAIL

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## The Relevance of Science Fiction

I KNOW an avid SF reader who refuses to tolerate the idea that there may 'be something in' the ideas of SF writers. He regards u.f.o.s., e.s.p., parapsychology, experiments with time, and life on other planets, even space travel, as the harmless dreams of the SF writers, and laughs at those who suggest that the stuff of science fiction may be the stuff of legitimate science within a short time.

I wonder how many SF readers share my friend's tendency to keep S and SF apart. Personally I think that in the imaginative flights of the best SF writers may lie real insights into the nature of reality. Not that SF accurately predicts what plodding research science later proves; rather, SF may direct attention to little-understood facets of experience or suggest possible lines of inquiry and experiment. As Arthur Koestler has shown in his recent book, *The Sleepwalkers*, the speculative imaginings of the earliest Renaissance astronomers may have been directed to discovering, for example, The Divine Harmony of the Universe, but actually led to the proving of the heliocentric hypothesis. So, our Heinleins, Simaks, Maines, Finneys, and Sturgeons bring creative imagination to bear upon the possibilities of human intelligence and destiny.

The relevance of all this is the wonderful programme of choices for the next half-year, three books which in their different ways exemplify the relevance of science fiction at its best. O. C.

## A PROGRAMME NUMBER