

Have you had your copy of **THE NEON HALO**

by Jean-Louis Curtis, yet?

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ONE of the most outrageous, horrifying and remarkable SF novels to have appeared for some time, *The Neon Halo* describes what our civilization is going to become forty years from now. The USA and the USSR have joined in harmony after the atomic war and guard the conformist peace of the white races against the yellow barbarians. The cross of Christianity has been superseded by the Delta, an iron triangle symbolizing a religion of community, police rule and subjection of the individual to the collective. Mankind has been released from the ravages of sex, art, individualism, religious mysticism; happiness is a forbidden word and the highest ideal is to be relaxed. In these five long stories we watch the history unfold; at first things are merely worse than they are now, and at the end they are unspeakable. The book is not without humour, though.

The first story concerns M. Laurent, who has devoted his life to refugee work, and is glorified with a neon halo of publicity. Too late he discovers the uses to which he has been put by the big bosses. The fate of Coulon d'Esclarmont, a French aristocrat, who becomes a donor at the Institute of Parthenogenesis is grisly indeed, but not unforseeable. In an increasingly commercial world ideas are at a premium, and to the great idea-seeking organization comes a young man with an idea of fatal simplicity. . . . An exclusive club for the secret practice of indolence, eroticism and individuality is exposed and taken over by the authorities for a rather different purpose. Finally, we are treated to the sight of a thoroughly rationalized community dealing with sex, and it is not for the squeamish.

Throughout, the theme is subtly presented with biting wit and a powerful insight into the idiocies we could so easily come to. This book will appal you, but it will also entertain and provide food for thought. It has been very ably translated from the French by Humphrey Hare. 15s for 7s 6d—free if you introduce a new member to the Club.

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DETAIL

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Science Fiction and the Truth

SCIENCE fiction has a habit of leading on to much wider subjects. Anyone who reads enough of it, and with a sufficiently alert mind, will eventually be reading abstruse books on a score of apparently unconnected subjects, leading in the most diametrically opposed directions. Those with scientifically trained minds will read Einstein if they have not already done so, and will pass naturally from engineering or rocketry to the causes of the downfall of Crete, or to psychology. Lovers of such books as *Earth Abides* will find themselves, in a very short time, reading Spengler on the Decline of the West, or pamphlets on politics and the colour bar. Those who revel in books like Maine's *Timeliner* will be found reading Ouspensky and Dunne; they will perhaps pick up a few copies of Bellamy and Velikovsky, read that scholarly work *The Secret Doctrine* or even *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, and, if they also go in for flying saucers (though for some reason fans are often a little wary of these, probably on the principle of 'go easy, chum; dreams don't come true'), they will already have read Adamski and his many imitators. From theories of cosmic cataclysm, Atlantis, the third eye and the sevenfold soul of man they will pass almost without transition to Buddhism and the Vedas, the Upanishads and Yoga. Excited beyond measure by the new worlds which open up (the Psychical Research Society has by now been left far behind), they will get a wonderful Stout Cortez feeling. Then, with that stern nucleus of judgment which is hidden within even the maddest of fans, they will be pushed to investigate Boehme and the Christian Mystics. At last, pausing only to gather a few flowers by the way, like the *Popol Vuh*, perhaps, or Eliphas Levi on Magic, they will find themselves back at the Bible, which they left, usually, so many years ago. Ah, the dear old Bible. Those familiar Old Testament stories which used to leave us so non-committal, and perhaps a little sick, and the New Testament,