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THIS MONTH'S CHOICE IS
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by **John Wyndham and Lucas Parkes**
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THE MAY CHOICE IS
THE CANOPY OF TIME
by **Brian Aldiss**
(*Faber & Faber 15s; SFBC 5s 6d*)

DETAIL

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QUO VADIS?

ALMOST a year ago a talk was given on the B.B.C. Third Programme on the general trend of sf. We think you may be interested to see what the predictions of the speaker, Lawrence Alloway, were and how sf has shaped up since.

The talk hinges on the magazines, especially on *Astounding*. Science Fiction, says Mr. Alloway, is always in a crisis: when the number of magazines being published is up the worry is: will serious sf be buried under the junk, and is it getting a bad name? When the number is down the worry turns into: what's wrong with science fiction? The number is down now (but, let me interrupt Mr. Alloway for one moment—SFBC is up!) and *Astounding* has tried to meet the situation, as we know, by changing its name to *Analog Science Fact and Fiction*. Campbell replied testily to protests: 'Analog is a darned sight better description of this magazine than "Astounding" or "Flabbergasting" or even "Stupefying"'. The science fiction we run in this magazine is in actual fact a good analog of the science facts to come.

This is true. Under Campbell's editorship in the late thirties and forties the crude gimmicks of much of early pulp sf became obsolete, and stories were written which studied the social context of science, the kind of cultures which produce inventions and the kinds of change inventions produce. Asimov called this period 'the Campbell era'. His demands for technical detailing were so stringent that, for instance, some years before Hiroshima, a couple of Campbell's writers were discussing Uranium isotope 235 as a source of nuclear energy and the problem of radio-activity after a nuclear explosion. To quote Campbell, sf is 'the literature of the technological era', and its dynamic is provided by what might