

claimed the power to conjure devils, and that is nonsense, of course, but just suppose . . . Children know what the moon is made of; scientists are less dogmatic, but just suppose . . . This may sound a simple formula, but Mr Brunner uses it with vigour and wit and originality; his skill as a writer and his imaginative-ness make its simplicity a positive quality. But the special mark of this anthology is his deep concern to find within his medium clues to man's ever-recurring social and ethical problems; he has used a marvellous combination of wit, good sense, intelligence and imagination to make his search a gripping and stimulating one.

Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

February

DROWNED WORLD by J. G. Ballard

'In J. G. Ballard's new book we have something without precedent in this country, a novel by a sf author that can be judged by the highest standards. . . . The setting is among the super-tropical swamps, lagoons and jungles that, as a result of an increase in the sun's heat, now cover most of the Earth's surface. Plant and animal life is reverting to the giant bamboos and reptiles of the Triassic Age. Among the members of a survey team, sent south from Greenland to determine whether parts of Europe may some day be reclaimable, a parallel but far more complex and disturbing regression can be glimpsed. . . . The main action is in the deeper reaches of the mind, the main merit the extraordinary imaginative power with which whatever inhabits these reaches is externalized in concrete form. The book blazes with images, striking in themselves and yet continuously meaningful. [The author] triumphantly achieves his object, set out in a fascinating article of his in a recent *New Worlds Science Fiction* of "exploring inner space".' KINGSLEY AMIS, *Observer*.

Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

March

THE DARKEST OF NIGHTS

by Charles Eric Main

An outbreak of plague, caused by an unknown virus, begins to attack the human race: it is possible that half the world's population may die. Governments set about preparations for this in different ways; the British Government elects to save the 'Establishment', to segregate those in all walks of life whom it considers vital to the national interest, even at the cost of terrible casualties among the less privileged. But perhaps there are two kinds of virus . . . Perhaps only one of them is lethal. Once immunity is guaranteed, the survivors become all powerful. Revolution is succeeded by counter-revolution; the prisoners of one day become the hunters of another and there is chaos everywhere. Charles Eric Main has worked out his terrifying and all too credible theme in terms of people caught up in a maze of danger and fear which they are almost powerless to control. The story mounts in tension to one of the most skilful and unexpected climaxes in any sf novel.

Hodder & Stoughton 15s; SFBC 6s

April

TIME IN ADVANCE by William Tenn

There are very few sf writers who share William Tenn's gifts of wit, logicity and imaginativeness. This collection of his stories, the first to appear since 1956, shows his work at its most scintillating. Perhaps his strongest power as a writer is in his characterization: even the ultra alien aliens of the first story in this book, 'Firewater', who look like nothing so much as large blobs in large bottles, have a definite 'personality' of their own, and a thought-out, credible one. Then there are the pre-criminals in the title story, who return to earth from a seven-year sentence in an inter-stellar hell for a crime which society will now allow them to commit. And Winthrop, the leading character in 'Winthrop was Stubborn', a time traveller, who gets held up in the future, five centuries ahead and finds that he prefers the sensational pleasures of the twenty-fifth century to the realities of his squalid life in the present. The whole collection is a proof that good sf does not depend on slick, 'scientific' expertise and pseudo-scientific jargon. William Tenn is first and foremost a craftsman in writing, and his work gains a great deal of pleasure from its ease.

'Tenn is first and foremost an ideas man, and his style is effective in its staccato rhythm . . . matching the torrent of original ideas and concepts.' *New Worlds Science Fiction*.

Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

And yet another new Optional for December . . .

SPECTRUM II, edited by Kingsley Amis and Robert Conquest

A brilliant successor to *Spectrum I*, perhaps even improving on its high standard. None of the authors in this *Spectrum* appeared in the first volume: among them are James Blish, Brian Aldiss, Philip K. Dick, Isaac Asimov, Mark Clifton and Henry Kuttner. Nearly every story is published here for the first time in volume form, and once again the editors have not played safe with run-of-the-mill successes, but have given an exciting cross-section of the range and variety of sf. A feast of enjoyment for enthusiasts and a welcome surprise for newcomers to sf.

Gollancz 18s; SFBC 11s 6d, post free

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER

Further details in the next column

POETRY COMPETITION

We shall publish the results of the SFBC Poetry Competition in the November issue of *Science Fiction News*.

WANTED

MR ALAN KAY, of 44 Elswick Street, Dingle, Liverpool 8, wants to obtain a copy of *City* and of *Strangers in the Universe*.

Mr J. Drew, of 30 Coleherne Court, London, S.W.5, wants to buy *The Lord of the Rings* (complete).

Mr C. Westgate, of 59a High Street, Polegate, Sussex, wants to obtain copies of SFBC past titles, Nos. 1-7.

Will anyone who can help please get into touch with the above members direct.

MENACE FROM THE EAST

More details about a very important book

The Other Side of the River

by Edgar Snow

As you know, from our letter in the August issue of *Science Fiction News*, we are offering this outstanding book to members of all our clubs in November. It has so much importance for everyone in the Western world that we want to bring it to your attention as strongly as we can. People with a real interest in sf are particularly concerned with the future—not only a fictional future, however skilfully it may be imagined, but the future which lies primarily in the hands of scientists and depends on the terribly precarious 'balance of power' in the nuclear age.

China is now, as she has been in the past, the unknown quantity in international politics. At one time, before the changes brought about by all our modern systems of communications, it was feasible to feel that the intricacies of diplomacy had very little relation to matters of everyday life. We know now, from harsh experience, that that is no longer so: the 'Cold War', the maintenance of the very shaky 'balance of power', are matters which directly affect us all. It is no longer possible to think of China merely as a large and remote area on the map of the world as distant from our lives as another planet: this vast country is not remote from us any longer, either geographically or politically; since she became one of the chief contestants in the struggle between the great powers, her future is bound up with our own.

One of the greatest dangers in dealings between China and the West at this time is ignorance. We know terribly little about the Chinese Republic and yet at the same time we have the uneasy sense that there is a great deal to be known. And this knowledge is not just a necessity for our own personal survival—it is supremely interesting. Mr Snow's book, together with all its other qualities, has great excitement, not only because he is a very skilful writer, but also because he is picturing a great nation in a state of upheaval. There is tremendous tension simply in the contrast between the antiquity of many of China's traditions of thought and life and the ideas which are at the root of her present struggle.

The Other Side of the River is a unique account of present-day China. Much has been written and spoken about the country from the outside, but this book describes it *from within*. Mr Snow knew China well before the revolution; he was in close contact then with the rebel leaders—men like Tse-Tung and Chou En-lai—now he is able to report on long discussions with them as leaders of their country and men who may very well alter the course of the world's history. His book does not claim to solve the tremendous problems and dangers which the very existence of China creates at this time for the countries of the West; its greatest value is to look at these problems clearly, calmly and in perspective, and in doing so to give every reader a real understanding of what it is like to be a member of the Chinese nation at this crucial time.

We are convinced that this is a vital book, of the very greatest interest and importance, and one that deserves to reach the widest possible public. It is not an entertaining book, in the ordinary sense of the word, but it is tremendously interesting. Mr Snow is a famous journalist and he writes urgently, vigorously, so that the people, the places, the events he describes, become real and immediate, with a relation to one's own life. *The Other Side of the River* is a book which shows beyond all doubt that the writer still has a place of the greatest influence in the modern world. We are privileged to be able to offer it to all our members and we are sure that they will respond to it, so we do urge you to order your copy at once. This is not simply a good and interesting book: it has vital information for everyone.

Gollancz 63s; SFBC 38s, post free

STILL AVAILABLE

LISTED below are the past SFBC titles which are still in stock. The details will give members who may have missed any of the books another opportunity to make their SFBC 'Library' complete: simply fill in the order form at the end of this column and return it to Letchworth.

Aliens for Neighbours by Clifford Simak

A vintage collection of nine of the maestro's stories. 6s 9d, post free.