

science fiction news

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Selectors: Kingsley Amis, John Carnell, Dr J. G. Porter

NEXT MONTH'S CHOICE

Time in Advance

by William Tenn

FOR A long time readers of sf magazines and anthologies have been enjoying William Tenn's short stories, and yet only one of his books has so far been published in this country. The omission is extraordinary because Tenn is a remarkable writer; a great deal of good work has come from authors who share his respect for logic and his capacity to surprise, but Tenn stands in a special category because of his extremely clear, sharp wit.

This collection of four long stories is an example of his work at its very best. He has created a splendid gallery of characters—some human, others very extraterrestrial: there are the ultra-alien aliens of the first story, 'Firewater', for example, who resemble nothing so much as large dots in large bottles. In the title-story a group of pre-criminals return from the Galaxy to Earth in a convict ship; they are survivors of a seven-year sentence in an interstellar hell, serving 'time in advance' for crimes which society will now allow them to commit. 'The Sickness' is a moving account of the illness which attacks a combined American-Soviet expedition to Mars and its strange result. The final story, 'Winthrop Was Stubborn', is a bizarre but very well worked-out picture of life in the world of the twenty-fifth century: one member of a group of people 'visiting' the future on an exchange basis decides that he does not want to come back to the present!

This is first and foremost an immensely enjoyable collection and an excellent proof that the best sf does not depend on superficial expertise or on pseudo-scientific jargon. One of William Tenn's main qualities as a writer is his sense of character and situation: the theme of each of these stories is in fact extremely serious but it is conveyed with the maximum amount of pleasure.

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

'Aliens who can duplicate anything by mere will-power but cannot invent the simplest gadget; criminals who serve their sentences in advance on the unnamed planets and return (the few who survive) free to commit one murder; spacemen who catch a strange Martian disease and old Winthrop who takes a time-trip to the twenty-fifth century and doesn't want to come back. . . . Mr Tenn is always entertaining.' *Sunday Times*.

Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

A NEW SF MAGAZINE

Zenith is a new amateur sf magazine. It is issued bi-monthly and costs only 1s per copy and it contains articles, short stories, reviews, advance information about books, news items of interest to sf enthusiasts, letters, illustrations and cartoons, all presented with a great deal of vigour and imagination. It is a magazine which deserves support and will, we feel, make good use of it. The editor's address is 9 Porlock Crescent, Northfield, Birmingham 31. SFBC members who write to him will be sent a free copy of *Zenith*, so that they can see for themselves what its achievements and its possibilities are.

Something Monstrous This Way Comes!

THE following extract comes from a letter we have recently received from a former editor of *SF News*:

'I came back [to New York City] via Washington, D.C., in September, where I went to the SF Convention. Pretty much like an English convention except there are more names present and they mix less with the fans. Most of the fans were actually monster fans. If you haven't heard about the monster cult, let me tell you it's a very serious thing among this section of American youth. It started with Forrest J. Ackerman's monster magazine, which is all about film monsters, King Kong and so on. I got friendly with the Ackermans and on the last day we took a picture of him stroking a stegosaurus in the Smithsonian Museum. Throughout the four days he was besieged by scores of boys begging for his autograph. These kids know all the dates of the monster films and all other details, just as jazz fans know the matrix numbers of their favourite records. I was completely amazed and bewildered by this cult, though I suppose one shouldn't be surprised at anything nowadays.'

WANTED AND FOR SALE

MR S. WOOD of 171 Balfour Street, Oldham, Lancashire, would like to sell SFBC titles Nos. 1-30 as a set.

Mr D. B. Cronan of 58 The Barley Lea, Stoke Aldermoor, Coventry, has the following SFBC past titles for sale: Nos. 49-79, excluding Nos. 55, 56, 68 and 72.

Mr R. G. Long of 10 Crescent Road, Truro, Cornwall, would like to sell the following SFBC titles: Nos. 9, 11, 17, 18, 41, 48, 61 and 71.

Mr M. Newman of 56 Aldenhorn Road, Watford, Herts, would like to obtain a copy of *The Second Foundation* by Isaac Asimov and of *Worlds of Null-A* by A. E. Von Vogt.

Mr C. D. Winstone of 71 George Road, Erdington, Birmingham 23, wants to obtain a copy of the SFBC edition of Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* (SFBC No. 2).

Mr G. Oliver of 98 Marguerite Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, would like to obtain a copy of Poul Anderson's *The High Crusade*.