

September

METHUSELAH'S CHILDREN

by Robert Heinlein

Many critics have said that this novel is the best in Heinlein's 'History of the Future' series. It is the story of a group of people who belong in secret to the 'Howard families'—so called because they have all benefited from a trust set up in 1874 to encourage marriages between the children of abnormally long-lived parents. These people all have a far longer life-span than has been known before, and civil peace is threatened when the fact of their longevity becomes known: it is thought, wrongly, that they have discovered an elixir that rejuvenates them. Public opinion turns against them, and in their danger Lazarus Long, who is 213 when the story begins and the oldest member of the 'families', becomes their leader. They hijack a star ship and, travelling almost at the speed of light, they leave the solar system behind. The second part of the novel pictures the experiences of the 'families' when they try to settle on different planets. The first one is inhabited by the Jockaira, who are like humans and yet certainly not human. At first life among them is pleasant and friendly, but in time the Jockaira want the 'families' to integrate with them and join their gods, whose slaves they are. When the minds of the earth-men will not submit to the ruler-gods, the humans are expelled. Their star-ship takes them to another habitable planet, a temperate paradise, inhabited by little creatures like rabbits—friendly, telepathic and possessing a group mind. The 'families' have found a new kind of lotus-land, but after a little while crises happen: one of the humans joins the alien group-mind, and a baby is born, different from the human norm. Although it is still human, it is changed, structurally, for the better. The little aliens are interfering in the lives of the humans. It is now that Lazarus Long persuades most of the 'families' to return with him to Earth, taking a chance that time will have eased the antagonism against them. . . .

'Not before time, Robert A. Heinlein's greatest of his 'Future History' series, *Methuselah's Children*, is now reprinted. . . . Superlative fiction on the grand scale.' *New Worlds Science Fiction*.

'I enjoyed every light-year of it.' *Daily Telegraph*.

Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

and in September, too, an Extra title . . .

SPECTRUM III

selected and edited by Robert Conquest and Kingsley Amis

Another excellent collection. The early *Spectrum* has become an established part of the sf scene; it also, valuably, appeals to a far wider audience than the regular sf readership in this country. Once again, in *Spectrum III*, the editors have made no attempt at all to conciliate the non-enthusiast; part of their reason for making these selections is their belief that sf has its own qualities and they do not seek out stories which simply echo the standards of 'orthodox' fiction. *Spectrum III* contains work by Theodore Sturgeon, J. G. Ballard, Arthur C. Clarke, Poul Anderson, Alfred Bester, Damon Knight; it shows the originality, vigour, imaginative power and freshness which the greatest sf demands, and which, in the editors' view, is all too rarely found at present outside it.

'An excellent balance of English and American writers.'

Daily Telegraph.

Gollancz 18s; SFBC 10s 6d, post free

October

THE JOYMAKERS by James Gunn

A world of the future, entirely dedicated to pleasure! James Gunn has worked out his telling sf satire in three parts: first of all, Josh Hunt, a business man, becomes aware of the advertising of Hedonics Inc.—'Your Happiness is our Business'; he decides to investigate and realizes that Hedonics is rapidly gaining financial as well as psychological control of the whole country; he resolves, then, to fight its influence in court and then finds that he is already too late.

Part II moves forward half a century or so; the whole world has become hedonistic, ruled by the Hedonic Council. It appears to be happy. Hunger and poverty have been eliminated; death has lost its terrors. The Hedonist whose story is the basis of the novel is dedicated to his work and his role, but he is appalled when he is summoned by the Council and learns that everyone can now be provided with total happiness—at the expense of free will and individuality.

Part III leaps further into the future. The pleasure principle has been carried to its logical (and monstrous) conclusion through the New (Reformed) Hedonism on Venus. There has been no communication between Earth and Venus for many years, and an envoy is sent out for consultations. He arrives on an apparently lifeless planet and is mystified to find that the rooms in many buildings are sealed. He breaks into one of them and immediately experiences feelings of intense security and happiness. He escapes, by a great effort of will, and realizes that the Council, although it is still all-powerful, is no longer composed of human beings; it is a Building, a giant power-house, generating feelings of ecstasy. It attempts to enslave the envoy, to make him mindless. In a last, despairing outburst of rage he breaks free, and discovers that anger is the final weapon against enslavement.

Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s

FOR SALE

THE following members all have a number of past SFBC titles which they would like to sell:

Mr J. G. Reid, Law Hospital, Carlisle;

Mr M. Myers, 4 The Drive, Gaynes Hall, Great Staughton, Hunts.;

Mr A. Morrison, 3 Carmyle Place, Stevenston, Ayrshire.

Will anyone who is interested please contact these members direct.

THIS MONTH'S CHOICE IS
TIME IN ADVANCE

by William Tenn

(Gollancz 15s; SFBC 6s)

NEXT MONTH'S CHOICE IS
ORPHANS OF THE SKY
by Robert Heinlein

(Gollancz 13s 6d; SFBC 6s)