

THIS MONTH'S CHOICE IS

REVOLT IN 2100

by Robert Heinlein

(Gollancz 16s; SFBC 6s 6d)

NEXT MONTH'S CHOICE IS

ALL THE COLOURS OF DARKNESS

by Lloyd Biggle, Jr

(Dobson 16s; SFBC 6s 6d)

THE AUGUST OPTIONAL IS

THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JONATHAN HOAG by Robert Heinlein

(Dobson 18s; SFBC 11s 6d, post free)

RU Optional Books

Here are the Optional books which will be available in September to members of SFBC

THE LIFE OF PLANTS

by E. J. H. Corner, F.R.S., F.L.S.

The September Extra

It is some time since we have published any work in this field of natural history, and so we hope that *The Life of Plants* will be especially welcome.

'A plant is a living thing that absorbs in microscopic amounts over its surface what it needs for growth. It spreads therefore an exterior, whereas the animal develops, through its mouth, an interior. The definition is vague but it gives the reason why the limb of a tree ends in leaves, not fingers, and it helps to explain how in the long run of evolution a monkey came to sit in the tree and a cow to ruminate in its shade. Nevertheless what the plant absorbs, how it grows, what it becomes and how it reproduces are properties so various that seaweeds, fungi and bacteria, as well as flowering plants, ferns and mosses, must be enrolled in the plant kingdom. The problem is where to begin thinking about this host of vegetable life which thrives without intention, builds without circulating blood, feels and responds without sense organs and muscles, summons animals without contriving, and serves in its over-production their food supply.

'... Flowers, fruits, animal-pollination, grazing, uprooting and cultivating are late events in the interplay between plants and animals and plants and men. For a long while during the earth's history plants were fashioning themselves and building into their environment with no concern for animal life. They were experimenting in spreading their sunlit cells with varying rigidity through the waters and over the land, and their deal with animals, which led to our civilization, was not begun until the manner of vegetation on land had been approved in the struggle for existence. To understand plants therefore it is necessary to think right back into their most unfamiliar beginnings and, because there are no fossils to prompt, the inquiry into the nature of plants must be opened with a searching question. . . . What are the plants on which sea animals feed?' From the opening chapter of *The Life of Plants*.

314 pages. Plates (some in colour) and drawings. Glossary, references and index.

Weidenfeld & Nicolson 55s; SFBC 32s, post free

THE SEA

by Rachel Carson

The September Additional

IN THIS one volume are collected together three of the most famous books to have been published in our lifetime: *The Sea Around Us*, *Under the Sea-Wind* and *The Edge of the Sea*. Rachel Carson was trained as a scientist and this trilogy deals, in fact, with marine life, but what makes it so magical and so full of the excitement of new knowledge is not its subject, wonderful though that is, but the personality and the gifts of the woman who wrote it.

She has two great qualities as a writer: a craftsman's pleasure in language and the power to make one wake up out of the slothfulness of habit to a realization that the natural world is full of magnificence, and that a knowledge of it is one of the best of all possessions. The only sure way to convey something of the depth and vision of *The Sea* is through Rachel Carson's own words:



From *The Sea Around Us*:

'So in all lands we may sense the former presence of the sea. There are outcroppings of marine limestone in the Himalayas, now at an elevation of 20,000 feet. These rocks are reminders of a warm, clear sea that lay over southern Europe and northern Africa and extended into south-western Asia. This was some 50 million years ago. Immense numbers of a large protozoan known as nummulites swarmed in this sea and each, in death, contributed to the building of a thick layer of nummulitic limestone. Eons later, the ancient Egyptians were to carve their Sphinx from a mass of this rock; other deposits of the same stone they quarried to obtain material to build their pyramids.'

From *Under the Sea-Wind*:

'Just before dusk one of the younger sea-trout had discovered the third of the large predatory creatures that lived in the wreck. The third hunter was Lophius, the angler fish, a squat, misshapen creature formed like a bellows, with a wide gash of a mouth set with rows of sharp teeth. A curious wand grew above the mouth, like a supple fishing rod at the end of which dangled a lure, or leaf-like flap of flesh. Over most of the angler's body ragged tatters of skin streamed out into the water, giving the fish the appearance of a rock grown with sea-weeds. Two thickened, fleshy fins, more like the flippers of a water mammal than the fins of a fish, grew from the sides of its body, and when the angler fish moved it drew itself forward by its fins.'

In his Introduction Brian Vesey Fitzgerald has said: 'The book is poetic in treatment—you smell the sea, hear the waves, feel the force of the wind, taste the spray—yet, at the same time, it is a strictly factual book. In Rachel Carson imagination was allied to knowledge, but never allowed to outstep it. . . . The truth of the matter is this: that Rachel Carson, a scientist by training, never lost, as do so many scientists, the sense of wonder.' That is a fitting tribute to a woman who was so much concerned about the natural world and about mankind and who added to life through her books.

611 pages. Line drawings. Index.

MacGibbon and Kee 45s; SFBC 29s, post free

The September Supplementary Titles

A Visual History of Modern Britain:

Industry and Technology

by W. H. Chaloner and A. E. Musson

The House and Home by M. W. Barley

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

This volume deals with the development of British industry from the Middle Ages to the present day with industry as a whole and not only its major forms. The text and the many illustrations cover the textile trades, baking and brewing, the building crafts, pottery, iron manufacture, mining, leather and leather crafts, alchemy, alum and salt preparation, shipbuilding, paper-making and printing, motor manufacturing, the rubber and oil industries and many more; and discussion of the industries themselves is put into the context of matters like the sources of power, the social effects of industrialization, the growth of foreign competition. All the illustrations have detailed captions and are linked closely and clearly to the text. They are an invaluable part of this comprehensive survey of economic and social history.

202 pages. 238 illustrations. Index.

Studio Vista Books 35s; SFBC 25s, post free

THE HOUSE AND HOME

The oldest surviving houses in Great Britain go back to the twelfth century: like the 'skyscraper' flats of today, they express a certain concept of shelter and of domestic life. It is the factor of environment and of the pressure which the events of history exert upon the individual and upon his relationship with his family, upon which this book is based, and so it contains a much greater diversity of interest than the customary history of architecture in itself. The book's starting-point is the Middle Ages; it deals with housing and all that is connected with it in both rural and industrial areas—with matters like furniture and fittings, floor coverings, wallpaper, water-closets, examples of 'do it yourself' (an idea already at work in Victorian times), and with the standards of housing in Scotland and Wales as well as in this country.

208 pages. 239 plates. Index.

Studio Vista Books 35s; SFBC 25s, post free

Ancient Peoples and Places:

General Editor: Dr Glyn Daniel

The Six September Special volumes at 27s each, post free

'In the last five years the handsomely produced volumes of the "Ancient Peoples and Places" series have become familiar to all intelligent readers. Each one is a compact, informative account of an ancient civilization, written by a leading authority on the subject and illustrated by photographs and drawings of the highest quality.'

'This imaginative undertaking has won the recognition it deserves.' *Daily Telegraph*.