

Writer's Digest

MARCH, 1950, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

The news peg--
backbone of
non-fiction

My best friends
are Martians

Greeting card
verse writing



ROBERT HEINLEIN

ON A SPACE-SHIP SET IN HOLLYWOOD

Writer's Digest

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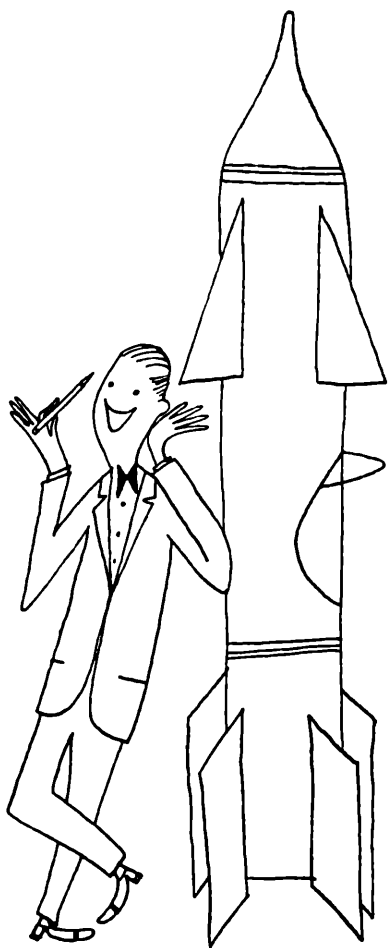
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Edited and published at 22 East 12th St., Cincinnati 10, Ohio. Twenty-five cents a copy; \$2.00 the year; \$4.00 for two years; \$2.50 the year in Canada, \$3.00 foreign. Subscribers sending change of address should allow thirty days for change to take effect and send both new and old address. Established 1913.

My best friends are Martians



AT A TIME WHEN some of the pulp markets are drying up, their sales sponged up on one hand by the pocket books and, on the other, by the comics, there is, brother pulpster, one oasis.

In the past year, which has seen the Street and Smith pulps fold up entirely, which has seen a few detective and western mags, monthlies for years, go bi-monthly or quarterly, the science fiction-fantasy field has been booming. All indications are that this is just the beginning.

Let's take a look at the record. Ten months ago, when I dropped my own attempt to break into the whodunits and started in on a new medium, there were exactly eight of these sci-fantasy magazines. Alphabetically listed in *THE WRITER'S MARKET*, they were *Amazing Stories*, *Astounding Science Fiction*, *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, *Fantastic Adventures*, *Planet Stories*, *Startling Stories*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, and *Weird Tales*.

Famous Fantastic Mysteries consists principally of reprints. *Amazing* and *Fantastic Adventures* were difficult to sell, since they seemed to be written largely by a "group of writers" in the Chicago area whose work, in turn, never appeared in the science fiction magazines published in New York.

That leaves us with, first, *Astounding Science Fiction*, which is considered classified-slick by Street and Smith. Usually thought of as tops in the field, its editor, John Campbell, Jr., who himself has turned out some of the best yarns in recent science-

Here's your introduction to the booming science-fiction field—an article, with markets, by a free lancer who read the Digest, then set out to join the boys in Taos.

fiction under the pseudonym Don Stuart, demands the best.

Next we have *Planet Stories*, published by Fiction House and coming out quarterly. Edited by Paul Payne, *Planet* is strong on action, interplanetary adventure. "Space operas," they are called, wild west stories laid on Mars instead of in Nevada. However, *Planet* has quite a following among the fans who want fast movement in their stories, and from its pages have come a good many of the excellent shorts that have been blossoming out in anthologies of late.

There are *Startling* and *Thrilling Wonder*, both bi-monthlies, both published by Standard Magazines (Thrilling), and both edited by Sam Merwin under Leo Margulies, editorial director of the chain. You might call *Thrilling Wonder* and *Startling* the average, or typical, science fiction magazines, not quite as slick in tone as *Astounding*, but usually tonier than *Planet*.

This brings us to the last on the list—as of a year ago—*Weird Tales*. You have to stretch a point, actually, to include *Weird* at all in the sci-fantasy group of magazines. It stands alone in the type of stories it runs, occasionally, by the way, printing some of the best-written pieces of fiction to be found in pulp today. If your masterpiece is too bizarre, too fantastic, too full of horror for the usual markets send it to *Weird*; it'll probably find a home there.

Well, that was the field, and most writers were ready to say, "You're welcome to it." The rates weren't particularly good, and

the editors were more than usually demanding, if that's possible.

About then the boom began. Popular Publications started things rolling by reviving *Super-Science Stories* which had been a war casualty. Ejler Jakobsson took over the editing job, immediately setting a high standard. Said he in last August's issue of WRITER'S DIGEST: Payment is one cent a word and up, on acceptance." Jake must be paying a good deal of "and up" since he's drawing the best writers in the game.

Not long after this, it was announced by Mystery House that they would attempt in the fantasy field what their *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* had accomplished in the realm of whodunit. Edited by Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McComas, and devoted to classic reprints as well as current material, *The Magazine of Fantasy* hit the stands in the late summer. A quarterly, *The Magazine of Fantasy* was issued in much the same attractive format as the Ellery Queen book, and cost thirty-five cents, a new high in sci-fantasy. The stories were top grade and by the elite writers in the game. Rates, obviously, were higher.

Hot on the heels of *The Magazine of Fantasy* came *Other Worlds Science Stories* published in Evanston, Illinois, by the Clark Publishing Company, and edited by Ray Palmer. A typical science fiction magazine, *Other Worlds*, also went on the stands at thirty-five cents a throw, and promised to move worlds in the attempt to become the biggest value in the field.

Evidently, there had been an upset in the Ziff-Davis sci-fantasy publications. Ray Palmer had been the editor of their *Amazing* and *Fantastic Adventures* for a long stretch. He resigned to take over *Other Worlds*, evidently taking some of his editorial policies with him, since his new magazine, up to the end of 1949, continued to buy stories only from the group of writers who supplied the Ziff-Davis books, to the exclusion of the authors who contribute to the rest of the field. Recently, Palmer, in his editorials, has asked the better-known sci-fantasy writers to give him a try at their manuscripts. Meanwhile, Howard Browne, mystery and sci-fantasy writer of no mean ability himself, took over the editorship of the Ziff-Davis *Amazing* and *Fantastic Adventures*. This market is now open to all.

A few months ago, Popular Publications announced a new book, *A. Merritt's Fantasy Magazine*, consisting principally of reprints of the classics written by this star in the science fiction firmament. While no market for the free lancer, the Abraham Merritt magazine is an indication of the rapid growth of sci-fantasy.

The Thrilling group has also announced a publication, at this writing unnamed, to reprint classics of science fiction. For some time, their *Startling* has run one "Hall of Fame" story in each issue. These consist of yarns from issues of ten years or so ago.

Still in the planning stage at this writing is a new pulp science fiction mag to be issued by Avon. Information is scanty but it seems that the rate will be one cent a word and that science-adventure stories will be stressed.

Nor is the expansion of sci-fantasy to be found in the ranks of the pulp chains alone. Without doubt, the reader has been aware of the growing number of instances in which such stories have been run by the slicks. One issue of *Saturday Evening Post* had two stories belonging in this category. *Collier's*, *Esquire*, even *Charm*, are listed among the many slicks to take up science fiction. And a February *New Yorker* carried a piece by E. B. White in the sci-fantasy field.

Greater still has been the expansion in the book publishing field. In the past,

science fiction novels and short story collections were printed in small editions by houses specializing in that category; Shasta, Gnome Press, Prime Press, and Fantasy Press, for instance. Now the larger houses are edging their way into what is becoming a lucrative line.

Doubleday is early in the field with Max Ehrlich's *The Big Eye*, and promises future novels by Hal Clement, Robert A. Heinlein and Isaac Asimov. Dutton has taken a flier with *What Mad Universe*, by Fredric Brown, whose novel first appeared in *Startling* as a 40,000-worcer. Hailed by science fiction fans as one of the best magazine stories of the year, it now is gaining considerable critical acclaim throughout the country in an expanded book form. *The Humanoids*, a classic by Jack Williamson which first appeared in *Astounding* a couple of years ago, is being issued by Simon and Schuster.

Frederick Fell has recently issued the first of a series, *The Best Science Fiction Stories of 1949*, and expects to continue the series indefinitely. *The Best of Science Fiction*, published by Crown Publishers and edited by Groff Conklin, was such a success that it was followed by *A Treasury of Science Fiction* in a few months. Other anthologies and collections are too numerous to mention. Even the pocket book publishers are beginning to issue them.

Nor have the book clubs failed to climb upon the band wagon. In recent months a rash of clubs devoted to science fiction and fantasy have broken out. Among others we find the Fantasy Book Club, Stephens Book Service, Fantasy Fiction Field Book Club, and Reader's Service Book Club. All offer the usual book dividends, lower prices and so on.

And so, naturally, Hollywood is looking into science fiction. Along this line, an item in the August 8th issue of *Quick* told of the film capitol's interest in pseudo-scientific fiction and revealed that story editors are on the lookout for suitable material. L. Ron Hubbard, who also writes under the pseudonym Rene Lafayette, has recently sold his Doc Methuselah series, which runs in *Astounding*, to the picture market for a five-figure sum.

Capsule Report on a Stf Convention

A NEW YORK CITY publisher, thinking of breaking into the stf field with a pulp, asked his partner to attend the 1949 science fiction fan magazine readers convention to see what was what. We were given a carbon of the report he mailed back to the home office, and since no names are mentioned we are showing it to our readers. Here's the report:

"The convention was held at one of the smaller hotels frequented by what we used to call commercial travelers. About 150 fans attended. The hall for their meetings was covered with science fiction magazine illustrations and posters done, in really bad taste with no sense of art form, by artists who probably think Renoir is a planet. Two or three well-known writers in the field attended and were besieged. When they spoke, it was *The Word*. The fans issue a daily paper full of "jolly" business luncheon type sallies and most of them seem to know each other. A Chicago editor attended and his registration was the banner headline news of the day. No other editor showed up.

"All around was the same sort of slanguage talk you hear at a stamp convention. Want to trade a so-and-so from 1922, bound but uncut, for a 1930 copy of so-and-so with only the front cover torn.

"I was asked to a cocktail party. About 40 people came and it was held in a single bedroom and a small parlor. They served crackers out of a Zesta box, straight whiskey, ice and water. No one drank to excess. The men dressed mostly in sport shirts (it was summer) and no ties. They took off their coats. The women wore out-of-fashion clothes. No good figures.

"The next day, all sorts of stf books were sold in the banquet hall. You left your money, made your own change, and took what you wanted.

"The people were middle-class, bad dressers,

not well-educated, no culture, little money. After you got to know them, they were likable, friendly, and very sincere about the whole thing. That's fine, but I'd hate to live with them. They were all a believing sort, uncritical, anxious to please and be pleased; the led, not the leaders. These people lack affectation and there is just none of the phoniness you find at any Eastern literary tea party.

"The fan magazines are without professional editorial sense. The fans know what they like and talk about their likes and dislikes, but you could be misled listening to them as they cannot always analyze what they really want. You can learn tremendously from them, though, if you take your time and hear them out. Probably the N. Y. crowd of editors didn't show because these people write them all the time anyway and the eds know in advance (or think they do) what they have to say. Within the stf field are all sorts of schisms. Give these people color, good typography, fine creative photography (not studio ham stuff) and they'll probably die in an agony of delight.

"As an advertising market, they are nil if this convention means anything. Probably that's why the books are so tasteless. No publisher has the dough to spend on good art as the chief revenue is newsstand sales. One stand in town gives these books a display, the rest bury 'em. Probably a 75 per cent sale is the nuts.

"The newspapers here treat the fans like wayward children. They hesitate to call them for what they are—wondering what their own readers would look like assembled. These fans really enjoy their hobby and they take it seriously, just like the stamp crowd. Only they are much more easy going and open-countenanced because there is no sharpening and palming off of 'duplicates.' The market for old stf books is strictly make-believe. A few items are rare with a few people; the rest is just talk for the fun of talking. They have a wonderful time. Beats embroidery any day."

Sounds good, doesn't it?

Are you about to dash to the typewriter with visions of pounding off a piece on time travel or a trip to Alpha Centaurus? Wait a minute. Write the type of story you read and write what you know about.

Never were these fundamentals so true as in science fiction. If you don't like the stuff, if you don't read it yourself, if you aren't familiar with it—forget about it. You'll never crack science fiction. The fans

want the notion story, the gimmick story, the snap ending, preferably with some scientific principle worked into the snap. They don't like rehashes of some yarn you wrote for some other mag three years ago.

The fans are apt to have read every science fiction publication of the past ten (or twenty!) years, and even to have kept files of them. If your tale is a bit too similar to one of yesteryear, they will climb all over you in letters to the editor.

Which brings us to the fans, a phenomenon almost unbelievable. There is absolutely nothing like it in any other fiction field. Among other things:

1. The science fiction fans publish something like thirty or forty magazines, newspapers, and newsletters in this country alone, dealing with news of the sci-fantasy world, comments upon recent professional stories and writers, reviews, their own attempts at fiction, illustrations and articles, etc. These fan mags (called fanzines) are occasionally elaborate and well-done. Although most are mimeographed, some are printed or planographed. Some sell for a small price; others are distributed free.

2. There are thirty-five science fiction clubs organized throughout the United States and Canada. Some of them have over fifty members and meet monthly.

3. Ten years ago the first science fiction fan convention was held in New York City with about 200 persons attending. In 1940 Chicago played host to the convention and Denver, in 1941. The war postponed things until 1946 when Los Angeles was the convention city. In 1947 Philadelphia took over, and in 1948 the international aspects of fandom were emphasized when Toronto was chosen as the convention town. In 1949 Cincinnati took over and drew fans from as far as England. This year, the convention is to be held in Portland, Oregon.

What does all this mean to the writer?

If you do a yarn dealing with time travel, they want the details of just how your time machine works. For *Astounding*, in particular, you practically have to draw a blue print.

If you do a piece on space travel to a star, the fans want to know how you managed to exceed the speed of light so as to accomplish the trip within a few weeks or hours.

Perhaps you've dreamed up a story about some character who lands on Saturn. Possibly you are familiar with the fact that Saturn, the second largest of the planets in the solar system, has a mass ninety-five times that of earth; so you work in some bit of business about the tremendous grav-

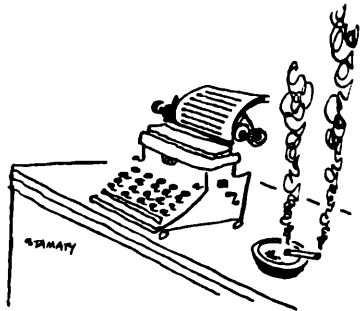
ity. That's where you're stuck! A score of fans trip you up. They happen to know that Saturn's gravity is almost the same as earth's.

Suppose you are a bit weak on the science in your stories. So what? So in each of the science fiction mags the editor runs an astonishing section devoted to the fans and their letters. I have before me, for instance, an issue of *Thrilling Wonder*. In it are twenty-nine pages of small type devoted to the fans, their letters, and the editor's response to their compliments and beefs.

If your science is a bit weak, if your story isn't up to snuff, if your gimmick doesn't snap, you get a first-class working over. And don't think that the editors aren't conscious of the reactions of these ardent fanatics. Writers and illustrators in the field are made and unmade by the fans' vitriolic comments.

If you have it in you, the field's wide open. Here's my own story: Toward the end of the war I was waiting for Uncle Sam to assign me to some ship as navigation officer. For reasons the Navy knows best, I had nothing else to do for three months except sign my name twice a day at the New Orleans Port of Embarkation.

Sure enough, I wound up spending a considerable number of hours each day in the library and it was just a matter of time until I ran into *that man's* book. I opened it idly and the moving finger wrote. I haven't been able to cancel half a line of it since, and all my tears haven't washed out a word. I read the passage which has been the downfall of so many of us: "Anybody who can read without moving his lips can



write stories that will sell." My lips had moved only slightly in the reading. "He must mean me," I told myself, and proceeded to take Jack Woodford at his word.

My first story, a short short, sold to *Esquire* and gave me illusions of grandeur. I had sold! I had sold a slick! I was a writer!

After the war, I came back to New Orleans and settled down to full-time writing. I turned out short shorts wholesale, hardly stopping long enough to stash them into envelopes and rush them off to the editors.

They returned with all the verve of a whirling dervish in a revolving door. I couldn't even sell them to the syndicates that pay five bucks apiece. A few months of this and I decided something was wrong. I took stock of the field, determined to aim in another direction, and began doing whodunits.

Some of them sold. Daisy Bacon, of Street and Smith, for example, took two 3,000-words. Shortly after, her *Detective Story* magazine folded. In spite of what you're thinking, I had nothing to do with that.

But, I didn't particularly like detective stories. Oh, I read them occasionally; usually novel lengths rather than shorts. I actually had to drive myself to read the pulp detective mags to be up on the market requirements.

In the evenings, after working all day writing whodunits, I'd relax by reading science fiction.

In spite of all the books and all the articles on writing that I'd read dealing with the subject, I wasn't writing the type of yarn I liked to read myself, and I wasn't writing on a subject with which I was particularly familiar.

I made darn few sales.

Once again, I came to the conclusion that something was wrong, switched and settled down to writing stuff I liked to read. I began knocking off shorts for the sci-fantasy market.

A few sneers from New Orleans free lancers greeted my statements that I liked to read and liked to write science fiction. Both pro and tyro writers are unaware of

the field's possibilities. For instance, they might have read the hilarious best seller of a couple of years ago, *Mr. Adam*, without realizing that it was typical science fiction. They might have read James Hilton's *Lost Horizon*, or have seen the movie, without realizing that this too was sci-fantasy. A short list of great figures in world literature who have written science fiction would include Daniel DeFoe, W. H. Hudson, Aldous Huxley, Edgar Allen Poe, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Jonathan Swift and H. G. Wells.

But what are the advantages of writing science fiction, that I should think so highly of it? There is one tremendous one: the comparative freedom from taboos.

I don't have to go into detail on the workings of the taboo for the readers of this magazine. We're all more or less familiar with that crushing institution. The larger the circulation of the publication, the more numerous the taboos. Science fiction has less in the way of taboos, and more in the way of intelligent, broad-minded readers than any fiction field with which I am familiar.

To illustrate, the first sci-fantasy story I sold was a short to *Planet*. It took a stiff crack at racial prejudice. In the slicks, a suggestion that a Negro, for instance, is anything other than a clown, a servant, or a simple soul, needing the guidance of the master race, is on trial. It might well lose them hundreds of subs down south of the Mason Dixon line.

You get a different deal in the science fiction mags. Somehow or other, if you set your scene a thousand years in the future, or in the past, or on some other planet, almost anything goes.

I've seen stories for and against every type of governmental system I've ever heard about: Democracy, Dictatorship, Monarchy, Theocracy, Fascism, Nazism, Communism, Statism, Technocracy, Feudalism, Chattel Slavery, Industrial Feudalism. I take it back; thus far I haven't seen a story based on a real Marxian Socialism, or DeLeonism, as it's often called in this country, but I have no doubt that eventually I will.

I have seen stories whose fundamental theme was an anti-religious one. Lay them a thousand years in the future, on Mars, change the names about, and bingo, you can express almost any opinion you want and sell to the science fiction market. It's wonderful!

I have seen stories that indicated that crime sometimes pays, that virtue doesn't necessarily triumph, that the meek won't necessarily conquer all. I'm not suggesting that the science magazines are hotbeds of atheists, Marxians, vegetarians, free lovers and anarchists. I'm just letting you know that there is more freedom here than in other spheres. It does your soul good.

Almost immediately after I wrote the first few editors in this field, I noticed a change in atmosphere. The sci-fantasy editors were different. Sure, they rejected my manuscripts, but almost invariably a letter came with the rejection giving the why and wherefore, asking for more submissions, and wishing me luck on future efforts. It makes a difference. The coldness of a printed rejection slip can take a lot out of any of us.

I found out the reason for this changed atmosphere eventually. There is a real scarcity of competent sci-fantasy writers. When one begins to emerge, he is seized by manuscript-hungry editors. I realize this is true of all types of fiction, that is, that editors are looking for new talent; but in a field expanding as rapidly as science fiction, the need is more desperate.

Often an editor, to fill his book, has to run in the same issue two or more stories by one of the more prolific old timers. This leads to veteran science fictioners adopting whole sets of pseudonyms. Lewis Padgett, for example, is also Henry Kuttner, Keith Hammond, and Lawrence O'Donnell, among others.

My science fiction stories began to sell almost from the beginning. *Planet* was the first market I cracked. Shortly after, Sam Merwin bought two for *Thrilling Wonder* and *Startling*.

About then I read Walt Sheldon's "Oh for a Tenor in Taos" in the May, 1949, issue of the *Digest* and began to wonder what I was doing in New Orleans. When

the summer heat began in earnest—and it really gets earnest in New Orleans—I loaded wife, dog, and luggage into my Crosley and set out for the mountains of New Mexico.

Taos has been known as an art colony for some decades. More recently, it has begun to attract writers and I found myself in an atmosphere to be envied by any tyro. Veteran writers Fredric Brown and Walt Sheldon took me under their wings and put me in touch with Harry Altshuler, their agent, who is a considerably better representative than could ordinarily have been expected to take on a writer no more experienced than I.

Walt Sheldon and especially Fred Brown were already well in the science fiction field. In a matter of weeks they taught me more about the process of turning out a salable story than I'd learned in the long months I'd been devoting to full-time writing.

Fred is a master of the narrative hook, the clever twist, the gimmick. He drilled away on my need to cut out that first five hundred words with which I'd been cluttering up my stories, and get right into the action with some angle that gripped the reader's attention.

Time after time, I'd come to him with a yarn that I'd slaved over until I thought it a veritable masterpiece. He'd read it, cock his head with that quick movement that is Fred Brown, and start giving me pointers, beginning with the title and working on through. He'd think up half a dozen bits of business for the body of the story, and then give me a final paragraph that doubled the value of the punch.

Walt slaves. His research is endless. When he picks a subject on which to write, he studies it until he's virtually an authority. I've tried to imitate him in that respect.

Evidently ten years of writing shorts have given Walt an instinct for spotting a weak point in a yarn. I can think of a dozen times when a few words from him turned my tale from a clunker into a salable piece. Once, for example, I took him a time travel story I wasn't happy about. It dealt with Jim Bridger, a mountain man who did con-

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My Best Friends Are Martians

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siderable exploring of the Rockies in the early 19th Century. While in the mountains, Bridger ran into a spaceship that had managed to stumble its way back in time, and he helped the occupants take off again.

Walt read it, paced up and down the room, pulled his ear twice, and said, "Look, Mack. This is a science fiction story but half the wordage tells about mountain men and the West. It's no go. Readers who buy science fiction magazines want plenty of pseudo-science. Why don't you add a lead paragraph filled with science fiction gobbledegook just to keep them going until they get to the part about the spaceship?"

This suggestion doesn't sound like much, does it? But, I'm convinced that the lead paragraph made the difference between a sale and a rejection. *Startling* took "Tall Tale" on its first trip out.



Of course, the stories began to go better. Besides continuing to sell the markets that had already bought my stuff, Harry opened up new ones. Howard Browne, the new editor of Ziff-Davis' science fiction magazines, bought several for *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Adventures*. Ejler (Jake) Jakobsson of Popular let me into the pages of *Super Science Stories*.

The steady sales are just beginning now, but I have the feeling that this is it. I feel I'm on the ground floor of a field that is expanding almost unbelievably fast, a field in which writing can be interesting and even fun, instead of drudgery. Then, too, I'm secure in the knowledge that as my writing technique improves I can go on to the more lucrative markets and into book lengths without leaving the field of science fiction.

Science Fiction Magazine Markets

Harry Altshuler, Mack Reynolds' agent, supplied the following market notes which were checked by the science-fiction editors before publication:

Amazing Stories and *Fantastic Adventures*, Ziff-Davis Publishing Co., 185 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago 1, Illinois. Howard Browne, editor. These two bulky magazines eat up a lot of copy. They are in the market for science-fiction stories of all lengths up to 50,000 words. Browne is particularly interested in good stories of 15,000 words and up, although there's plenty of room for the short stuff, too. He wants much purposeful action, fast meaningful dialogue, strong characterizations and strongly-motivated personal problems. The "science" element must be there, of course, but secondary to the human element. Plenty of sex, but nothing that will offend the sensibilities of the post office inspectors. Off-trail yarns are his meat; Browne says the author should write the story he wants to write—"since writers know more about this business than any editor." Basic rate is 1¼ cents a word, but he'll go somewhat higher when he thinks the story is worth more.

Astounding Science-Fiction, Street & Smith Publications, P. O. Box 489, Elizabeth, New Jersey. John W. Campbell, Jr., editor. Shorts from 5,000 to 7,000; novelettes, 8,000 to 15,000; serials any length. There's also a current need for some short-shorts between 1,000 and 3,000 words. Campbell feels that short-shorts are very difficult to write in the science-fiction field, but that good ones are done once in a while. He'd like to get his hands on some. His magazine is read by a great many engineers, technicians, etc., and in all stories based on known scientific facts, the details should be accurate. Many of the stories are more adult in type than those found in other stf magazines; future sociology, rather than inventions alone, form the basis for quite a few of them. First-class writing is required. One writer, Bob Heinlein jumped from *Astounding* into the *Saturday Evening Post*. Rates are around 1½ to 2 cents a word.

Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, published by the publishers of the *American Mercury*, is edited on the Coast by J. Francis McComas and Anthony Boucher, 2643 Dana St., Berkeley 4, California. This is a classy pocket-size job similar in format and style to *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. The editors are buying for just one issue at a time but expect to hit a regular quarterly publication schedule very soon. They use only short stories, about 40 percent of which are reprints of classics in the field. The great need is for some solid science fiction shorts, which are in idea, style and handling way above the common run. First two issues were mostly fantasy but future ones will run more heavily to science-fiction. They want quality stories. Rates: \$100 for originals, \$50 for reprints. The editors are familiar with the files of sf magazines; the things they'd like to consider for reprint are the occasional gems of science-fiction which were published in general magazines. Make sure the rights to these are available.

Other Worlds, Clark Publishing Co., 1144 Ashland Ave., Evanston, Illinois. Raymond A. Palmer, editor. Palmer says that his book is going nicely, in fact, so nicely that early in June he expects to have another magazine, as yet untitled, using exactly the same kind of material on the stands. For both, he's looking for everything in the science-fiction line, except "the usual corn that's been overdone." He can use all lengths from 3,000 to 45,000 words. Rates begin at 1 cent a word and go up to 3 cents and occasionally higher.

Out of This World Adventures, Avon Publications, 119 W. 57th St., New York 19. Donald A. Wollheim, editor. First issue of Avon's first venture in the regular pulp format will be out by mid-April. It uses the action-adventure type of science-fiction. Stress on colorful exciting adventures on other planets, in the far future, etc. Easy on science. No supernatural elements. Lengths from 2,000 to 12,000 words. Payment is 1 cent a word, at least for the first experimental issues; may go a bit higher in some special instances.

Planet Stories, Fiction House, Inc., which has a new address now: 130 W. 42nd St.

New York 18. Jerome Bixby, editor. Any lengths up to 17,000 or 18,000 words. The stories have to get off this world, to live up to the magazine's title, and they are a fast-paced action type with an adventurous cast. The magazine comes out quarterly and not very much is being bought at present. But the editors are always looking for a good story. No matter how much is on hand, they're proud to admit that they can't turn down a script that hits them hard. Pay at usual pulp rates up to 2 cents a word.

Startling Stories and *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, Standard Magazines, Inc., 10 East 40th St., New York 16. Sam Merwin, Jr., science fiction editor. All lengths from 1,000 words right up to 50,000. There are three shopworn themes: dictators, the menace to earth, and mutants. Merwin prefers that writers avoid these themes, unless they can come up with some absolutely fresh angle. But otherwise, anything goes. The editor says he needs material and is wide open on all lengths. He likes as high quality writing as he can get. On the top lengths, an outline in advance is a good idea. Good pulp rates.

Super Science Stories, Popular Publications, Inc., 205 East 42nd St., New York 17. Ejler Jakobsson, known as "Jake," is editor. With the exception of the rather awkward length of 6,000 words, he can use shorts and novelettes of any length up to about 20,000. Above 14,000, though, the story must be an unusually strong and attractive one. Jake says he hasn't much of an inventory, particularly in shorts, so he's buying steadily whenever he can find a story he likes. The themes should be definitely science, not fantasy or the supernatural. The stories should have enough adventure to keep things going, but the adventure shouldn't run away with the science. He doesn't care for free-wheeling monster-chases which make the story a jungle story or a two-gun-western-sheriff-marching-around-on-Mars kind of thing. Usual pulp rates.