

Year. If there had been no other books on rocketry and the rocket program, this would be a "must" for anyone interested in the field. It is sound, it is thorough, it is well written—but really, behind it all, nobody is willing to talk.

Hermann Oberth, in his introduction, says that in the book he found information that is nowhere in the technical papers on rockets. If so, it must be because of the governmental morass of secrecy which grew so sticky—Bergaust and Beller reveal—that two parallel satellite programs got well into the planning stage, one—"Orbiter"—a joint Army-Navy endeavor undertaken with much backing and filling and many misgivings about inter-service repercussions, the other the "Vanguard" program proposed by the American Rocket Society, taken up by the National Science Foundation, adopted by the Defense Department, and announced by the President. It seems incredible that, with Defense involved deeply in both programs, it should have kept the existence of the Vanguard project from the Orbiter group, and vice versa, but that is what happened. Once the President's public announcement was made on July 29, 1955, the Office of Naval Research withdrew Orbiter and merged with Vanguard, but the secrecy mania had already resulted in a good deal of wasted time and effort. How many other duplicate research programs are being carried on under these conditions is something about which you hear scientists making muttered guesses under their breath.

The book does, as Professor Oberth says, bring together a lot of odds and ends of information that you won't find elsewhere. The authors have an imposing background in aeronautics, and they seem to be most at ease when they are talking about high-altitude flight rather than about interplanetary space. They have written a sound, very readable book that you can put in the hands of any scientifically-minded layman who wonders what the satellite program is intended to accomplish, and what is involved in putting a "bird" permanently outside the atmosphere. If you've kept up with the other rocket books, you may find only bits and scraps of new stuff yourself.

SPACE POLICE, edited by Andre Norton. World Publishing Co., Cleveland & New York. 1956. 255 pp. \$2.75.

Marty Greenberg may have invented the "theme" anthology, but Andre Norton has certainly taken it over and made it all her own. The nine stories in this collection—four from this magazine—hang another scalp on her war-belt.

The title explains the theme; it is developed in three sections of three good stories each. In the first, we on Earth police ourselves—in the future. Roy L. Clough's "Bait" shows a cop involved in a politically ticklish case of impossible robbery, with a delightfully backhanded solution. Kendall Foster Crossen's "The Closed Door" is an ingenious but not quite convincing locked-room mystery, set in a hotel full of extraterrestrials whose highly peculiar characteristics are neatly employed in the crime and its solution. And James Blish's classic "Beep" you'll remember as the story whose title contains the secret of a precognitive galactic police system, the solution to an espionage mystery, and a few other nuggets of useful information.

In Section Two we're being policed by outsiders. In George Longdon's "Of Those Who Came" there is a British contribution, in which an agent from Sirius tracks down and destroys two outlaws with the ruthlessness of a Micky Spillane or Peter Cheyney operative. "Police Operation"—here in

1948—is one of H. Beam Piper's excellent stories of the Paratime Troopers, keeping tourists in line in a system of parallel time-worlds; Verkan Vall must destroy a Venusian nighthound, ravaging a time in which it shouldn't exist, without giving away its extraterrestrial source. Ralph Williams' "Pax Galactica"—here, 1952—points up the unexpected results of putting the lid on a vigorous society.

The last section, "Galactic Agents," has some of the best stories in it. L. Ron Hubbard demonstrates his skill as a story teller in "Tough Old Man," a yarn about the breaking-in of a Frontier Patrol greenhorn which telegraphs its gimmick without at all spoiling the story. James H. Schmitz's "Agent of Vega"—here, 1949—is that fantastically involved counter-espionage story about Zone Agent Iliff and the Lannai woman trainee on a set of most unpleasant worlds; it makes Eric Ambler's best look simple. And, finally, Jack Vance's "The Sub-Standard Sardines" is a lightweight, amusing Magnus Ridolph yarn about a problem of industrial policing in an extra-planetary sardine cannery.

These are police-action stories, rather than mysteries of the "Caves of Steel" variety. Perhaps Andre Norton will put together one of those too.

MEN, MARTIANS AND MACHINES, by Eric Frank Russell. Roy Publishers, New York. 1956. 191 pp. \$3.00.

This has the characteristic smell of a book printed in Great Britain—will Ted Carnell or Arthur Clarke please explain?—and, I hope, is the first of many such American reprints of good British science fiction. From all reports, the hosts for the 1957 World Science-Fiction Convention now have the world's healthiest market for hard-cover sf.

These are the four stories about the spaceship *Marathon* and its crew of men and Martians—and Jay Score. Most or all of them first appeared here: in fact, the Day "Index to the Science-Fiction Magazines" gives us "Jay Score" in May 1941, "Mechanistra" in January '42, and "Symbiotica" in October '43, with no source for the final episode, "Mesmerica." Since my memory doesn't place it, and the book gives no credits, we'll let it go.

These are straight, unostentatious space-adventure yarns of the vintage popular in the early '40s, breezily written and good fun to read. "Jay Score" introduces the crew who will later man the *Marathon*, trying to save the old tub *Upsydaisy*—beg podden, *Upskadaska City*—from plunging into the Sun. It has a classic twister at the end. In "Mechanistra" they are all aboard a Flettner-drive experimental ship, on man's first adventuring into the far corners of the universe. They become involved with a race of machines and need all their mental and physical powers to get out intact. "Symbiotica" finds them on a symbiotically organized world, whose "people" have a strange partnership with trees and other plants. And in "Mesmerica" they have tangled with critters which hypnotize them into believing they—the critters—either are something else, or just aren't there.

In every case, Jay Score's peculiar abilities—which I won't reveal, in case you come green to these tales—and those of the pleasantly unpleasant Martians are used in full to save the day. It's an old and popular formula, happily applied.