

nearly the total sum and essence of Man's knowledge and place it within anyone's reach, at home or in the library.

**SF, THE YEAR'S GREATEST SCIENCE-FICTION AND FANTASY**, edited by Judith Merril. Gnome Press, N.Y., \$3.50

**I** STATED, in my commentary on Clifton Fadiman's fine *Fantasia Mathematica*, that an anthology can be greater than the sum of its parts. Miss Merril's third annual collection proves that the reverse is likewise true.

The real trouble is that her literary tastebuds are too few, too far apart, and too overdeveloped, so that sharing an anthologized meal with her causes gagging, about half-way through, to those who don't share her affliction. She serves very much too much of what she likes, and everything else is spinach.

This is a disservice to the individual items on the menu. Many of them are good — though certainly not *greatest* — but they are all dessert.

Using a large section of the book for Sputnik articles is surely one of the great editorial blunders of our time.

**THE YEAR WHEN STARDUST FELL**, by Raymond F. Jones. John C. Winston Co., Phila., \$2.00

**T**HIS latest addition to Winston's admirable juvenile SF library is also one of the best to date. A facile writer, Jones also is a credible plotter.

For story development, he accomplishes the breakdown of civilization by having Earth capture colloidal particles from a passing comet that have such affinity for metals that all machine parts weld to each other. The ensuing contest pits ignorance vs. knowledge, good vs. evil, with the ultimate survival of mankind as table stakes.

The characters are drawn in black and white, but primal conflict *does* remove most shades except blood-red.

**STAR GATE** by Andre Norton. Harcourt, Brace & Co., N.Y., \$3.00

**M**ISS NORTON is justly famous for her juvenile fiction, which has — at its best — few peers but no betters. Her present effort is not her best. It runs heavily to action, an ingredient always in plentiful supply in her works, but here preventing a full development of an alien picture.

The "Star Lords," presumably Earthmen who have bollixed up the lives of Gorth's inhabitants, finally leave after hundreds of years. Spaceships long gone, they resort to dimensional travel via the "Star Gate," winding up on an alternate Gorth where their counter-

parts have made an even greater mess of the planet.

In leaving too much to imagination, Miss Norton has made identification next to impossible for the youngsters.

**THE ROCKET PIONEERS ON THE ROAD TO SPACE** by Beryl Williams and Samuel Epstein. Julian Messner, Inc., N.Y., \$3.75

**F**EW scientific pathfinders find easy acceptance of their theories or inventions; none have had rockier rows to hoe than the pioneer rocketeers.

For centuries, rockets were either toys or wildly inaccurate artillery. Sir William Congrave greatly improved range and accuracy, but for a century longer, almost no experimentation was done despite Verne and his immense impact on public interest.

Ziolkovsky, Russian; Oberth, German; Goddard, American, were the architects who made the V-2,

Sputnik, Vanguard and Explorer possible. This is the fascinating story of these men and those who followed.

Although our efforts have already pierced deep space, most of the rocket pioneers are alive today!

**Notes:**

**ADVENTURES IN SOUND AND SPACE** by C. E. Crumpacker. RCA Victor, \$1.98. The kids will love this realistic LP disk. Blastoff, Space Station, Moon Crash and Mars are highlights. **FLOATING CITY: FIVE WEEKS IN A BALLOON: THE BEGUM'S FORTUNE** by Jules Verne, \$3.00 each. The leadoff three in the noted new Fitzroy edition of these former collector's items. More to follow. From Gnome Press, P.O. Box 161, Hicksville, N.Y.

Correction: Dr. David H. Keller, referred to in this column as "late," is still very much with us.

—FLOYD C. GALE

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