

The obvious explanation is that it's mostly a roster of youthful literary recruits from the old *Unknown* and *Astounding*, with some more recent eager wisps of volunteers, none of them able to stand up under the fire of modern competition.

Unfortunately, it's more than that. The themes are scholarly trivialities, pounced on with all the joy of a naturalist who has found an ancient skeleton—and they are just as meatless. The characters are composed of the effluvium of Latin tomes.

As editor, Boucher demands more of his writers. It's regrettable that he can't make the same demands on himself.

STAR GUARD by Andre Norton.
Harcourt, Brace & Co., \$3.00

IT'S remarkable how Miss Norton can take the standard ingredients of space opera on the grand scale and still manage to come up with a believably personal yarn.

Like her fine *Star Man's Son*, this future adventure is viewed

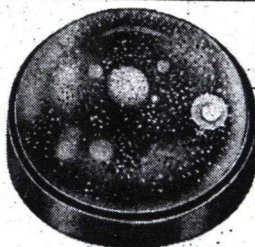
through the eyes of a youth, coming into manhood in a time when Earth is subject to Galactic Empire rule, deemed too barbarous to deal with other civilizations, fit only to export mercenaries.

A really good adventure.

VENUS BOY by Lee Sutton.
Lothrop, Lee & Sheperd Co., Inc., \$2.50

THIS month's juvenile is so exciting that my kids grabbed it and fought over the pieces. I didn't get a chance to read it until just now. As you can see, it has appeal. It also has lessons to teach, both moral and scientific. But it doesn't permit them to get in the way of the story, which concerns a boy and his pet, a native bear cub whose species' curse is that their claws become jewels at maturity. Plastics treated with this material acquire fantastic properties. Johnny's attempt to hide his pet's maturity and his acceptance as equal by the fauna of Venus make splendid reading for any kid my age.

— FLOYD C. GALE



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