LETTERS

Science fiction —or only fantasy?

Sirs:

Regarding Mr. Campbell's review of my *Rogue Queen*: I am not complaining about Mr. Campbell's definition of what is and what is not science fiction.* He has a right to any definition he likes so long as he makes it clear to the reader (as he does in this case) what usage he is following.

I should, however, like to point out that Mr. Campbell's use of the term "science fiction" is not that which is current in the field. The *aficionados* divide imaginative fiction into two sections: fantasy, defined as stories based upon supernatural assumptions; and science fiction, based upon scientific (or pseudo-scientific) assumptions. Therefore stories about gods, spirits, witches, mythological beings, magic, prophecy, etc. are fantasies. On the other hand, stories laid in the future, or in the remote past, or on other worlds, or which deal with extra-terrestrial life or interplanetary travel, or time-travel, or the impact of some new invention or discovery, are all deemed science fiction, regardless of whether the story is primarily concerned with some gadget. Only rarely, as in the case of C. L. Moore's Northwest Smith stories, does a tale fall squarely on the boundary-line between the two classes.

According to general usage, then, *Rogue Queen* is properly classed as science fiction.

L. Sprague de Camp, '30

WALLINGFORD, PENNSYLVANIA

*Ed. Note—"*Rogue Queen,*"* said Mr. Campbell in *E&S* last month, "is not science fiction (but) a delightful bit of fantasy . . . In science fiction a plausible 'scientific' idea is developed, and the story is centered about the struggle of the characters with the logical consequences of the idea. In fantasy, on the other hand, the fantastic situation serves merely as a background for the development of a normal human problem."

Athletic schedules in E & S?

Sirs:

Why not put schedules of athletic events in *Engineering and Science*, so we can plan ahead instead of having to rely on the microscopic articles in the local papers?

William H. Proud, '50

LOS ANGELES

We'd be glad to run schedules if enough of our readers want them. Anybody else think *E&S* should make this a regular feature?—ED.

in the life and social sciences. But science has already pressed on us strong need for social reorganization. Part of the difficulty lies in attitudes. Problems and social crises are felt as annoyances hindering a state of enduring peace and progress. If one more hurdle could be surmounted, all would be serene. A more realistic attitude would recognize social dislocations as one of the inescapable prices of new knowledge and new techniques. A wiser social policy would recognize the recurrent need for social adjustment and prepare trained men to meet such needs.

A CENTURY OF TECHNOLOGY

Edited by Percy Dunsheath, D.Sc.
Roy Publishers, New York $5.00

Reviewed by Donald S. Clark
Professor of Mechanical Engineering

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN better to entitle this book "A Century of Technology in Great Britain." While the editor states in the preface that many of the advances presented in the book are of British origin, no attempt is made to restrict the story. As one might expect, since it is written by British "experts," the story is from the British point of view and reflects the influence of technological developments over the period 1851-1951 upon life and affairs in England.

Eighteen individuals, reported to be experts in their respective fields, have written the nineteen chapters with varying degrees of success. The fields include metals, nonmetals, chemicals, textiles, fuels, power, production, electrical engineering, petroleum, biochemicals, agriculture, foods, transportation, navigation, communication, printing, recording, and education. An adequate review of technological developments in the past one hundred years can hardly be given in the space provided for so many subjects. For example, the field of iron and steel is covered in seventeen pages, hardly sufficient for a field that has had such a tremendous development in this period.

This reviewer, being best qualified in the field of metals, finds some errors and serious omissions in the section on metals and, therefore, questions the complete reliability of the other sections in so far as accurate reporting is concerned. Most engineers outside of England will probably find this book of relatively little interest and certainly of little value as a review of technological development for the past century on a world-wide basis. The chapter on technological education is written solely about the English educational system, which further emphasizes the suggested change in title. The work of men in other countries is mentioned when it concerns developments in England, but otherwise they are given little, if any, attention.

SCIENCE IN PROGRESS 7th Series

Edited by George A. Baitsell
Yale University Press,
New Haven $6.00

AS IN THE SIX earlier volumes of this notable series, the subjects covered in this seventh book are based on material prepared for the Sigma Xi National Lectureships and were first presented to local groups of the Society.

This 7th series, of course, maintains the high standard of the first six and, if anything, covers a broader area of the science field than many earlier volumes.

Caltech is represented this year by Carl Anderson, Professor of Physics, who writes on "The Elementary Particles of Matter."

The other chapters:

"The First Heart Beats and the Beginning of Embryonic Circulation" by Bradley M. Patten, Chairman of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Michigan; "The Reproductive Cycle of the Rhesus Monkey" by George W. Corner, Director of the Department of Embryology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington at Baltimore; "Human Infancy and the Embryology of Behavior" by Arnold Gesell, Director of the Gesell Institute of Child Development, New Haven; "Radiation Damage to the Genetic Material" by H. J. Muller, Professor of Zoology at Indiana University; "Beyond the Gene—Two Years Later" by T. M. Sonneborn, Professor of Zoology at Indiana University; "The Macromolecular Structures of Biological Materials" by Ralph W. G. Wyckoff, Scientist Director of the National Institutes of Health, U. S. Public Health Service; "Atomic and Solar Energy" by Farrington Daniels, Professor of Physical Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin; "Atomic Structure and Energy" by J. R. Dunning, Dean of the School of Engineering at Columbia University; "The Theory of Braids" by Emil Artin, Professor of Mathematics at Princeton University; "History of the Fauna of Latin America" by George Gaylord Simpson, Chairman of the Department of Geology and Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History, and Professor of Vertebrate Paleontology at Columbia University; "The Physical Chemistry of Polymers" by Raymond M. Fuoss, Sterling Professor of Physical Chemistry at Yale University.