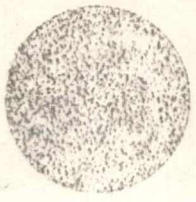
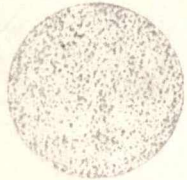


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Volume I

Contents for Spring 1946

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Inquire about our rates, won't you?

Circulation for Spring 1946, One-hundred and twenty-seven.

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"Time heals all wounds" - and so we can assume that any faults in Cepheid's structure have been by now ironed out. While it is purely a personal opinion, we believe you'll find this issue's shell paper more attractive than the white bond last time. Then, although our "grand surprise" did not materialize in the way of art, we have some improved illustrations this time, including a pretty fine cover by Van Splawn, and in two colors, too!

We like the idea of running fewer, but longer pieces of writing. In the end it is up to you, of course. In this issue, we have several very lengthy items, including Tucker's rather complete survey of freezines. Bob's article is filled with biting, caustic humor, of the variety we like - and it ought to be worth the amount of space provided for it. Then there is my own story, "The False Prophet". It is long, too, and a "different" sort of fanzine story. I'm waiting to see how the comment on it turns out.

Charles Burbee is present with what we believe to be the very best of the Hemmel Sorties. It is screamingly funny, in burb's own classical way, and recommended highly. "Why the Lord of Fantasy?" is opinionated, of course, and perhaps an unfair bit of reminiscing on my part. At any rate, it is controversy, and as such, should provide you with a certain amount of enjoyment. Stoy is present again, this time with two free-verse jobs which are quite good. We are decidedly against that school of thought that believes "everything that rhymes is poetry".

The usual features follow, with "The Prozine Parade" being crowded out for lack of space. "Cepheid-Chatter" has some items of worth in it, we think, and "Just Name It, Bub" is cut short because Tucker's report was oh-so complete. The letter department is a mere two pages for the same reason, and we'd like to thank all those who sent in helpful and desired criticism for their time. We'll give you more space in issue number three. Through your letters we've found that "Let's All Jump on H.P.L." by P. Schuyler Miller took top honors last time. The cover and illustrations were the weak spot, and Palmer's article was almost unanimously the most controversial, and - oh yeah, "The Dreamer" wasn't received too badly. Mayhaps I'm a success!

To all my unanswered correspondents: Aw, fellahs, give me a break, huh? I'm so busy with Cepheid, and all that, that some letters have gone unanswered. Comment again this time, eh, and I will answer. Let's start from scratch.

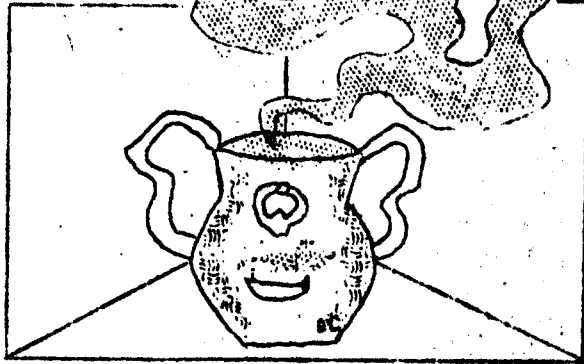
In this concluding paragraph we will voice the quarterly appeal for material. It is obviously necessary - 'cause we ain't gonna give you twenty-odd empty pages, or twenty-odd pages done by yours truly. So, send in those stories, articles, book-reviews, poems, what-have-you's - and we'll look 'em over - and either use them or send them back to you in perfect condition. And you get a free issue of Cepheid for each item accepted.

WHATEVER YOU DO, FEN, DO NOT FORGET TO SUBSCRIBE TO CEPHEID !!!!!

WHY THE LORD OF FANTASY?

By

MILT LESSER



When Abraham Merritt died in 1943 he had written but seven fantasy novels - yet he is generally considered the greatest writer in this genre of age has produced. Why?

It is very remarkable to learn that A. Merritt hardly had time to do any writing at all; he was editor of the American Weekly, a newspaper-magazine with a circulation of some twenty million; he was keenly interested in weird and rare tropical plants, often going long distances to procure some new and unusual items; and finally, he collected precious and semi-precious stones, considering their aloof beauty infinitely beyond the reach of any of Nature's other charms.

Thus Merritt is seen to be a man of many and varried ways. His two avocations seem oddly in line with his writing of fantasy, and his uncanny power of description may be immediately attributed to his wealth of knowledge concerning jewels and their myriad faceted colors. Merritt owes much of his fame indeed, to his unusual ability to weave colors into a word-tapestry of breathlessly glowing color. Thus he tells us of a Tibetan sunset in "The Metal Monster:

"As though a gigantic globe of crystal had dropped upon the heavens, their blue turned swiftly to a clear and glowing amber - then as abruptly shifted to a luminous violet. A soft green light pulsed through the valley. Under it, like hills ensorcelled, the rocky walls about it seemed to flatten. They glowed and all at once pressed forward like gigantic slices of palest emerald jade, translucent, illumined, as though by a circlet of little suns shining behind them.

"The light faded, robes of deepest amethyst dropped around the mountain's mighty shoulders. And then from every snow and glacier crowned peak, from minaret and pinnacle and towering turret, leaped forth a confusion of soft peacock flames, a host of irised prismatic gleamings, an ordered chaos of rainbows."

The magnificent colors which were portrayed by Merritt to their utmost are what fashioned for him the name, "Lord of Fantasy".

Another example of what he could do with the rainbow is his description of the Aurora, which, incidentally, was in the same chapter of "The Metal Monster" as the preceding quotation.

". . . The green lances had fallen back. The blackness gathered itself together - then from it began to pulse billows of radiance, spangled with infinite darting swarms of flashing corpuscles like uncounted hosts of dancing fireflies.

"Higher the waves rolled, phosphorescent green, and iridescent violet, weird copperous yellows and metallic saffrons and a shimmer of glittering ash of rose. . . ."

Merritt's earlier books ("The Moon Pool", "The Metal Monster") contained many such gorgeous pastels. In his later works the dream-like spell was not so apparent and in "Burn Witch, Burn!" Merritt seems to have lost much of his original charm.

A new reader of Merritt, swept off his feet by the sheer brilliance of the man's writing, most probably would not be aware that most of the Lord of Fantasy's themes are similar; so similar as to almost parallel one another in many instances. In "The Ship of Ishtar" Kenton is torn between the good and evil of the Ship, and there is a physical barrier between the two which only he can avoid. "Dwellers in the Mirage" finds Lief Langdon thrust upon two warring factions - one good and one evil. He alone can freely enter both, through himself on the one hand and through his reincarnated ancestor, Dwayanu, on the other.

This is in no way meant to condemn A. Merritt. Rather it is an attempt to discover just what there is to his writings which make him the undisputed leader in his field. Since his themes were often parallel, Merritt was careful in creating plot outlines - and here again one may see the amazing wealth of imagination the man possessed. That he could write such a classic novelette as "The Moon Pool" and then do a sequel so surprisingly different and so nearly as beautiful as the original throughout its entire novel-length shows indeed how well the man could write.

Merritt's characters, remembered as some of the most vivid in the entire history of fantasy, were not by any means normal human beings. Rather, many of them would have been adjudged insane and others were too incredible to have existed at all. And yet, in his stories they seem to live and to breathe. They are so alive, in fact that the average Merritt enthusiast thinks life vain indeed, when he reads some of the concluding words of "Dwellers in the Mirage":

"I walked to Lur, stiffly. Like a robot. The white wolf had crawled to her, dragging itself on its belly. It had dropped its head on her breast. . . ."

"The witch-woman looked up at me. Her eyes were soft and her mouth had lost all cruelty. She smiled at me.

"I wish you had never come here, Yellow-hair. . . ."

"Her hand crept up and dropped on the head of the dying wolf. She sighed -

"Ai. . . my dear lake, my Lake of Ghosts. . . ."

"Lur died.

"Stiffly I walked to Evalie. I took her hands, in mine. They were cold. . .

"I had closed the gates to Khalk'ru. . . I had beaten the Kraken. . . But the touch of Khalk'ru was on my heart . . . forever."

"Ai! Dark Evalie of the Little People! Ai! Lur- Witch Woman! I see you lying there, smiling with lips grown tender - the white wolf's head upon your breast! And Dwayanu lives still within me!"

Merritt's characters were vitally alive and unusual. Many were his enchantresses - Lur, Dahut, Adana, and each one more fascinating - more seductive - than the one before her. His simple-minded faithfuls are somehow immortal too. One does not easily forget Gigi or Tsantawu or Regor or Olaf Huldricsson.

Then there are Merritt's villains. Inhuman - most of them, and weird, uncanny, incredible - yet alive! Dyed-in-the-wool readers are almost convinced of the reality of the many-tentacled Khalk'ru, of Nimir, of the Shining One, of the ageless Nergal. We fight them side by side with Merritt's heroes - who are legion now - we grimace with Lief Langdon as he wields his mighty hammer against the Kraken. . . struggle up through the superb chambers of the Gods with Jon Kenton. . . fight the awful fascination of the Face in the Abyss with Nicholas Graydon. . .

Once one has read Merritt completely, he may pursue other books for a while, but he will find himself drawn inexorably back to the magnificent lost worlds and hidden Edens created by the Lord of Fantasy. Nowhere can one find so complete and barbaric a dream-land as Merritt's Yu-Atlanchi, nor can one see intense evil and elfin beauty so vividly side by side as Karak and The Shadow Land are in "Dwellers in the Mirage."

Of all Merritt's stories, Dwellers is, I think, the finest. . . which is like saying that among several almost identical tropical birds, one is most gorgeous. Merritt somehow seemed to have put a bit more into this than into all his other "greats". The character portrayal was outstanding. Dwayanu, in particular, I never can forget. . . nor his love for Lur, the Witch-woman. . .

"Dwellers in the Mirage" is rivalled, however, by the fantastic beauty and complete fantasy of "The Metal Monster" and by the wistful melancholy of "The Ship of Ishtar" and by Larry O'Keefe in "The Moon Pool."

This all may sound like so much personal opinion, and to some extent it probably is. However, one can see that A. Merritt owes his fame to his unequalled ability to weave colors into an enchanting tapestry, and to his vibrantly alive characters set in dream-worlds so far removed yet so close at hand.

To the old guard fan I can only suggest he take out his Merritt and read his books over and over again for their sheer beauty. And those new to fantasy should hurry and secure their copies of Merritt's seven great fantasies. Until they do, they don't know what they are missing.

Cepheid Chatter #2

Science and Science Fiction:

Of course the big news of the day is the army's radar contact with the moon. From this we surely can expect an early revolution in astronomy: possibly a complete revision of our estimate of the entire scope of the universe. And then of course is the very distinct probability of space travel, and a sfantast's dreams becoming reality. . . . The outburst of a long-period variable is being brought to the attention of the world by scientists who compare it with the atom bomb. Watch for it, say the savants, and see atomic power in the raw. These "parables" are becoming monotonous. . . . Russian archaeologists have finally proven that the ancestral Indians originated in Asia, and migrated here like all good nomads. . . . "Pic" Magazine recently ran an article on John W. Campbell as the "oracle of the atom". They said: "It was he who scooped" - and scooped is the word - "the world press on the atomic bomb, not by hours or weeks, but by years. Campbell talks of" they went on, "a weapon which could readily have been used against Japan, with smug nicety, as 'death dust'. Small but unbelievably potent particles of radio-active carbon would be sprayed over a city, making it completely sterile, killing every living thing. The particles could keep an area sterile for as long as 2000 years." . . . Then there are the new jet planes, doing coast-to-coast in four hours - now - and in a year or two, in two-and-a-half. Which means if a NYFA member were to leave New York at 9:00 o'clock, he could visit the LASFS club-room at 8:30 the very same morning. Laney, beware! . . . Will S-F have to turn exclusively to inter-dimensional affairs and that inevitable paradox, time travel, for lack of better material? . . .

Concerning a new fantasy novel:

"When one thinks of the world's great works of fiction - they fall into two groups: the great and solid portrayals of actual life and those of an entirely different order of creation: - 'Don Quixote, Gulliver, Erewhon, The Divine Comedy, Candide' - a poet's projection of his own imaginary world. It is to this last group that Franz Werfel's new" (and last) "novel belongs. It is an adventure in the author's world of imagination. Franz Werfel's book deals with a world closer to us and yet more remote than any other world of fiction, for it is our own land 100,000 years from now. . . . It is full of magnificent fantasy, erudite spoofing, a kind of gargantuan playfulness. . . ." - from The New York Times Book Review for February 3, 1946. . . . Werfel's fantasy appeared February 24 - titled, "Star of the Unborn". A must! . . .

In conclusion:

The Eastern limelight has been captured by Moskowitz's A-men. . . watch for their convention. . . the NYFA is in a state of vacuum - which means it is inactive to the nth degree. . . . Dagmar's Maxim # 2 out, and as "mysterious as ever" . . . Which for now is all.

The Trend Towards Free Fanzines

by

BOB TUCKER

The definite trend towards free-gratis fanzines, those published and distributed entirely without charge thru the courtesy of the proprietors who pay the bills, is the direct result I believe of a steadily-growing desire to be done with the petty, irksome details of bookkeeping and the attending subscription-taking headaches, as well as the very real spectre (on the part of conscientious owners) of not being able to fulfill a subscription contract.

A part of the movement is caused of course by some genuinely altruistic-minded fans who publish for the sheer pleasure of putting their product into the readers' hands - and to hell with the cost. Just as the opposite of this forces many publishers to demand money for their efforts because they simply cannot meet the entire expense, yet gain as much fun in fanzine publishing. It is possibly this last element entering a more prosperous stage which brings the free fanzines.

To my knowledge only two fanzines ever made a profit, altho many younger (and brand-new) fans rush into print with something every so often, laboring under the delusion that they can make a financial killing. They are quickly awakened.

Several weeks ago it was reported that the Speer-Ackerman Fan-cyclopedia had made something like a hundred dollars and was still climbing. It is planned to re-invest this money into some different facet of fandom, thus eliminating the conception of an out-and-out pocket-profit at fandom's expense. At an earlier date, the 1939 Science Fiction Yearbook, published by myself, made a profit, not very large, when it ran thru two editions at 20¢ per copy. A third example, Harry Warner's excellent Spaceways, managed to break even thru careful budgeting. And there you have the secret of getting rich from fanzines.

It is to be regretted that a something-less-than-complete record of early fanzines exists. The really prehistoric fanzines we know so well because they were so few and so famous. But upon reaching the falsely-labeled "golden age" of fandom: 1936-38, it is something else again. Magazines reviewed other magazines; a complete index of all publications does not exist.

Almost all fanzine prices were, and are still, ten cents per. One cent, two cent, three cent, four cent and five cent jobs were known; fifteen and twenty cent magazines were rarer. Where quality fanzines aren't drifting toward free-gratis circulation today, they are nearing the fifteen and twenty cent price.

I believe Robert Lowndes' Le Vombiteur to be the very first fan publication that sold for exactly nothing, openly circulated, exclusive of club organs going to dues-paying members which in fairness cannot be classed as free. Called Levi, the hektographed fanzine began publication in November 1938 and continued until sometime in 1940, printing some thirty to forty issues.

Le Zombie followed just one month later, December 1938, but published only nine issues before a subscription price was charged. So mark down two free fanzines for 1938.

In 1939 a believed-to-be-complete record shows only nine gratis publications; really seven if you deduct Levi and Lez, already mentioned. Donald Wolheim published a single issue of Zzzzzzzug's Gazette, which had no reason for existence other than the desire to be the very last title listed in a check-list published by R. Swisher in the F.A.P.A. In Australia, Bert Castellari published one issue of Australian Fan News. It may or may not have been intended for gratis circulation; at any rate, no price was mentioned.

The other five fanzines were convention publications, distributed without charge at the October, 1949 Philadelphia Con. They were - The Futurians & New Fandom, from the Wolheim delegation; Pallas Athene from Jack Speer; Moskowitz's Farewell to His Greatness, again from the Wolheim faction (so don't send Moskowitz a nickle for a copy); Souvenir from Mark Reinsberg; and Novaj Horizontoj, a notification from Robert Lowndes that he was learning Esperanto.

Climbing upwards, there were seventeen in 1940, including four distributed at the Chicago Convention. To list them first: Ted Dikty's Epilogue # 1, a tasty thing calculated to drive censors mad; The Burocratic Bulletin from Fred Shroyer, a travesty on Technocracy; The Science Fiction Song Sheet and Le Grande Bal Masque, both from Speer and Milty Rothman.

Tick off Levi, still publishing, and another Zzzzzzz monstrosity from ink-happy Wolheim, still striving for the bottom of the check list. The year was notable for an honest-to-Ghod long-run free fanzine: Jack Robbin's Looking Ahead. In a publishing world where, with the exception of Levi, gratis magazines saw only one or two issues, this eight-issue publication was something of a marvel. It began as a propaganda magazine designed to steer the coming Chicago Con along desired channels, and rapidly opened into a free-for-all, worthwhile convention pumping organ. Its appearance thoroughly squelched my dreams of becoming the dictator of the convention, demanding as it did, democracy for all delegates.

Elmer Weinman brought out a single issue of Voice of 8 Worlds - apparently unaware that Pluto had paid its back taxes and had been admitted into the union. The Voice was circulated and bound with a weird fanzine entitled Outre, which cost money. Trudy and Louis of the Kuslan clan authored an issue of The Miscellany. At this late date we have no idea of what it was all about. Another free fanzine bound up with a subscription sheet was the first issue of Van Houten Says, (his first name is Raymond) which appeared with Fantasy News. A double feature.

There were the usual souvenirs: Walt Daugherty brought out a lithographed reproduction of a phoney newspaper page, one of those newspapers the novelty stores sell three for a quarter or so. The headline, probably concocted by Daugherty, was something concerning the Los Angeles Science-Fantasy Assn. The item carried no title. The other souvenir was entitled in part: Stf Stickers, and by litho reproduced hundreds of fan stickers, letterheads, envelopes and rubber stamps. It was published and distributed free by someone named Ackerman who was attempting that year to cop the honor (?) of # 1 fan for himself. I wonder if he ever made it?

Larry Farsaci of Golden Atom fame issued a free poetry supplement to that magazine, named Stars. And Jim Avery, about to retire from fandom by request because he rubbed a pro editor the wrong way, published funtasy supplement # 1 to wind up the affairs of his money magazine which failed to make the grade. The remaining American

free-gratis fanzine of 1940 was easily the best bargain of the year - Ted Dikty's large-sized Who's Who in Fandom, containing short biographies of 59 well-known fans. ((That would cost a tidy sum now we'd wager!)) - ML.

I said American because two English publications appeared without charge. Mike Rosenblum, soon to become famous for his Futurian War Digest, brought out the Psuedo-Futurian, which was the father & forerunner of the digest. And C.S. Youd, still active in F.A.P.A. circles, published five free issues of the fantasy WarBulletin, usually circulated with his Fantast.

And that was 1940.

The following year was noteworthy for a number of things in the fan publishing field. For one thing, Claude Degler's name appeared for the first time on the masthead of a magazine. Let's not dwell on further details of the event. In 1941 that sterling L.A. crud sheet, Shangri-L'Affaires, came out for the first time - and for free. It still is. There were fourteen issues the first year. Now it has just reached the 26th issue.

Another remarkable magazine was the soon-to-be-dead Earl Singleton's all-poetry effort, Nepenthe. It was beautifully hekto'ed and contained fifty or sixty pages. Its life-span was just two issues, after which Mr. Singleton probably grew weary of the burden, indeed, of supporting a free fanzine - and shot himself. Shortly afterwards he moved to Washington D.C. and took a government job.

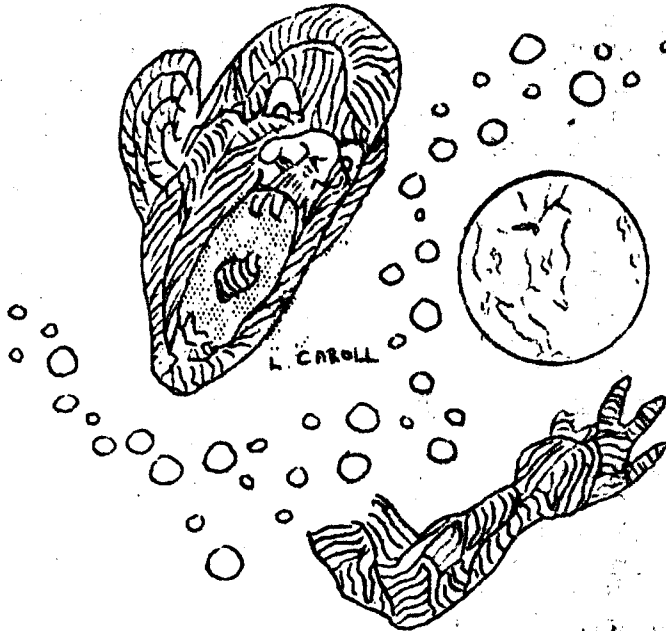
Charles Hornig, former teen-age editor of the ancient and honorable "Wonder Stories" as well as one of the best fanzines of all time, the Fantasy Fan, jumped back into the publishing field with 2 brief splashes: Hornig's Bulletin. Up in Michigan some new fan named Ashley issued a free booklet upon the occasion of the first Michicon. They titled it simply Michifans. They made so much cash that they've repeated the conference each year since. Taking the hint, Walt Daugherty began pumping for the (thought-to-be) coming Pacificon, and distributed three issues of the Pacificonews. In an effort to find out what fandom was thinking, if indeed it was thinking at all, Art Widner started the Poll Cat. There was but a single issue, containing 17 pages of interesting material.

Dennis Tucker of England, no doubt which to atone for the money sucking antics of his American namesake, gave fandom two issues of Interplanetary. (A note scribbled on the back of a laundry ticket reminds me to mention an Australian Newsletter in the 1941 crop but research thru my files reveals no such magazine. Perhaps the laundryman stole it/them.) And of course there were the usual Denvention magazines. To my everlasting regret I have no Denvention publications other than the usual subscription and club organs. Somewhere along the line my contacts failed me. Can anyone supply the missing data?

1942: Br-r-rack! is the first name on the list. To pronounce a sound like that you simply protrude your tongue between your lips & blow. Manse Brackney thought it up. It may have been a habit of his. In California, Art Joquel issued Circus Day Is Over, a propaganda sheet. Also from Joquel was Fanfile and supplement to same.

The Los Angeles fan society, in a despairing effort to rope new sheets into the fold, published a Visitor's Pamphlet. They succeeded only too well; a visitor named Claude Degler arrived. I presume the pamphlet was hastily withdrawn. And as before mentioned, Ashley & Co. again sponsored a Michicon, issued a Michifan Conference Book and called the bank to arrange for an armored car. Meanwhile, E.E.

The FALSE PROPHET



"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night - for ever and ever."

---Revelation 20

By MILT LESSER

The villagers say I am insane, wicked and vile, and their more intellectual brothers would call me, I think, esoteric. Alone I have dwelt these many years in a house not worthy of the rats that infest its crumbling walls. Alone - and heedless of the scorn, of the pointing fingers, of the adult-snickers and the frightened child-cries. The natives do not like me and I have returned their lack of affection with a stolid indifference which has set them to talking all the more.

And when I probe among the ruins where tradition tells them Darago the Fearful lurks among his cauldrons of lava, and where when the constellation Balatik first appears over the rim of the horizon - they sacrifice a pig, or something other than a pig when no strangers are about - they are angry indeed.

I was young when first I came to the island, a small one, surrounded by its myriad companions in the Philippine Archipelago and dwarfed into obscurity by the larger ones so that it was free almost entirely of the tourist trade. Now I am old - old, and it is my appearance more than anything else that has bred hostility in the natives. But I have found that which first brought me to Mantor! The crypt of Darago, with all its treasures, and secrets so ancient and terrible, and a promise of wonders multiple and fantastic, primitive sorceries, and a darkling world of hidden beauty.

The first white man I have seen in many years came to Mantor alone, to do some routine surveying for United Mines. He was young, and rather handsome, I thought, although that may have seemed so because I had not seen a man of my kind in so long. Be this as it may, I wish now that he had never come. His work has

taken him down into the caverns and hidden caves where I am ready to do - what I must.

"Doc," he said, for he considered me nothing more than an archaeologist lost in his work, "you should neaten yourself up a bit. You're enough to scare the native gods back into hiding!"

I turned on him snarling, my dirty, broken teeth showing in an ugly leer which he considered distasteful. "Mr. Carson, I am very busy and you are in the way."

I should not have said that. It only served to arouse his curiosity so that he was after me like a hound, watching my every move. Down he followed me into my caves and passages, nor would he leave until his ridiculous curiosity was appeased. I shrugged and decided that he would have to fare for himself once I opened the door beyond the crypt.

We were in darkness now, a somber, awesome region where weird shadows were cast grotesquely by my torch. The natives themselves had never penetrated the lair of their superstitious fear this far, and Craig Carson seemed to sense that, for he grew uneasy as we proceeded.

He put a hand on my shoulder. "Sure you know the way out, Doc?" he demanded.

I was in no mood for his company and thought if I told him at least part of the truth he might turn back. "I don't intend to leave here at all," I replied and watched his face.

His eyebrows raised at that, but he said nothing, only grunted something unintelligible under his breath, and followed me. Now indeed was his curiosity aroused. It looked very much as if he were with me - for good!

We came at last to the crypt where Darago had slept many long centuries. It was in an alcove, rather small and bare and I could tell that Carson was impressed by it not in the least. I withdrew the crystalline key from my wraps and glanced again at my companion. He stood watching, a half-smile on his face.

"You had better leave," I said.

"Aw, Doc! And miss this party of native taboos you have in store for me? Never!"

Wordless, I gave him the torch. Then, I put the tiny key in position, and mumbled a name that was old when the world was yet a part of its flaming mother.

Carson was puzzled, wondering about that odd word. He smiled, though, and said something about such a tiny bit of hocus-pocus being able to summon the native gods.

For a few moments, the awful silence of the place closed down upon me and was maddening in all its hideous aspects. Presently, it gave place to a slight sighing, hardly a sound at all, like the chant of the Druids intent upon their unholy business. It grew until it was like the rushing of water over a boulder-strewn bed, only there was something of music in it, a lulling discord of unearthly notes. Carson stepped back, and dropped the torch from nerveless fingers. He watched with me in petrified fascination as the small alcove was overrun with color. Pale at first, it increased, until the incredible luminosity was almost blinding to the eye. Carson cowered in a corner, shaken and afraid, as the timber of the otherworldly music increased, came out, rose shrilling, to a monstrous crescendo. Lustrous, prismatic gleamings patterned themselves to the wild intonations. Gems of cer-

ulean blue flashed and played on a delicate lavender tapestry; meaningless, yet etereal. There were malachite green and purest emerald prisms soaring above, crowned with haloes of aureate and lances of richest saffron crossing in cadence with the weird music; sanguine red drops coalescing and shifting and dropping into a pool of palest vermilion.

The sounds were now a roaring that was unberable, and I hid my eyes behind a raised forearm to shield myself from the terrible glare of the incomprehensible light. Yes, it seemed meaningless - but, it was a means to an end! Carson groped forward, reached me - and fell. I felt a wave of vertigo sweep over me, and around, whirling me like a chip on the crest of a great wave, spinning and twisting, and remoulding me - somehow that word came to my mind - much as a potter kneads his clay. The roaring drew closer and the gleamings stabbed into my brain as if they were sentient beings bent upon blinding me. The color and the awesome sound circled and crashed about me, within me, and I tumbled head-first into an unthinkable abyss.

I awoke with a splitting headache, as if the wild, surging waves of sound were confined within my skull and trying desperately to break out. Carson was nowhere in sight. In fact, I was so utterly alone that I shuddered involuntarily as I looked about me. For as far as I could see the terrain was flat and lifeless. There was a beclouding dusk in the air - a dusk which faded away into a seething, smokey, lurid redness which became impenetrable with distance so that the horizon seemed absurdly close and seemed, indeed, to be a solid wall enclosing me. The landscape, if such it can be called, was cluttered with naked boulders, ugly and distorted in the half-light.

"Carson!" I cried to the wilderness. "Carson! Where are you?"

My voice was so lacking in resonance that it was frightening. Moreover, it brought no results, and so I gave it up. My headache left me in a remarkably short time - and soon I picked myself up, and - a bit unsteadily - walked haphazardly in one dirrection -- realizing that it was as good as any and far better than circling aimlessly about.

I was somewhat disappointed in the new world that anyone who knew the word and had the key to the Crypt of Darago could enter. I had the key - and I named the Name - and now I was alone in a ridiculous, somber emptiness, which held promise of nothing very inviting as far as I could see.

Came a swirl of tiny red spheres. Buzzing, shrilling, they circled close to me, malignant, deadly - alive. I stepped back and watched the swirl approach me, gliding effortlessly, a myriad of tiny forms. The entire strand of them wrapped itself around my body - and each one of its tiny, component parts, no bigger than a pebble - pulsed with the warmth of life! The strand rose, and carried me up into the murky gloom! We sped in a nightmare journey over the monotonous vista below us - a vista that seemed changeless and infinite. After what seemed to be several hours, the tiny globes, still buzzing shrilly, rose higher, into the opacity of the red mists. I lost all sight of the ground and did not see it again for quite some time.

When I did, it was with quite a start which shook me swiftly from my lethargy. We were circling over a spire of elfin beauty! No longer were the mists about me. Instead, the air was all aglow with a delicate pearly haze. The strand of red globes carried me down - down to the base of the spire. It was translucent, milk-white, and graceful. We passed close to it - and then within! The wall seemed to offer no resistance, and as we went through, I felt a warmth, tempting and restful, tinted somehow with a strange new ecstasy which attracted - attracted!

O Lord, if only I had never found the Key, never uttered - the Name!

There was a stairway within the spire, straight and as graceful as the column itself. The globes, which appeared vermilion and streaked with metallic silver in the new light, left me and floated upward, shrilling loudly, happily.

Upward they went and upward. I felt a constricting pain hit me all at once - throughout my entire body. I fell to the floor writhing in sudden and unbearable agony, wrenching horribly. It soon passed, and I floated up after the tiny spheres. Floated! I was one of the red globes now, no more human than any of them! My head spun and I think for a moment I went completely mad. Then, following an unknown impulse, I continued upward, after my - fellows.

On the top stair stood a woman - human - and of such exquisite beauty that I knew indeed why the globes were rising in such contentment. Her hair was deepest midnight with almost a sheen of blue in it. It reached down almost to her slim waist, and bordered her lovely face, enhancing its beauty, highlighting the depths of her green eyes - green like the deepest tropical sea, and as enigmatical. Her lips were red, inviting - to such a degree that I almost forgot my age - and forgot too, that I was a buzzing red globe. Her body was clothed rather fetchingly in palest green translucency so that every seductive line was revealed to me.

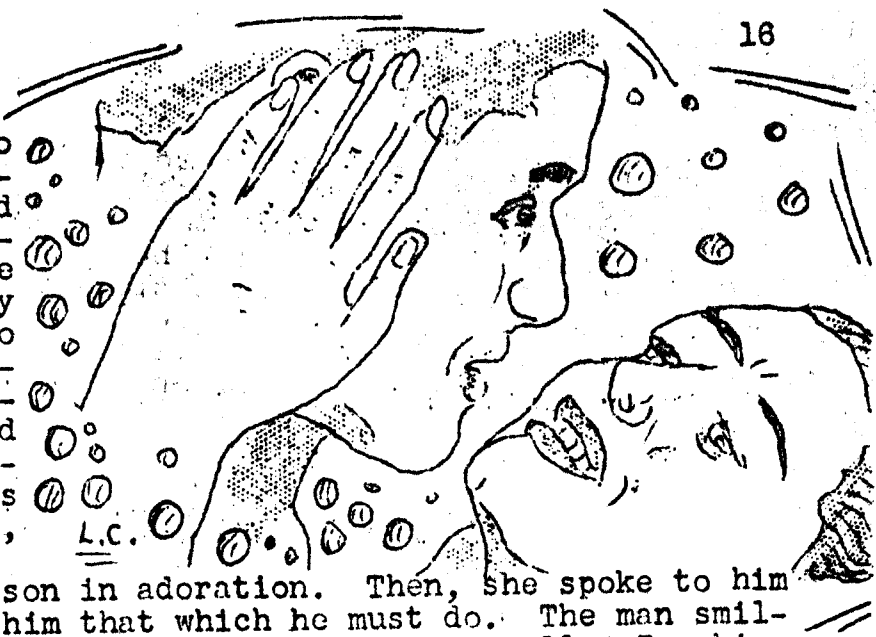
The other globes had reached her now, circled about her, playfully. If she noticed them - us! - she did not show it, but had eyes only for a figure behind her. And that figure was human - familiar - was Craig Carson! She smiled at him, said something I could not hear and drew his face down to hers. She planted a kiss on his lips - such a kiss as would have made Helen of Troy seem puny indeed.

I watched now, angry - somewhat suspicious - I knew not why. The woman turned languidly, strode back through delicate curtains and into an alcove, followed by Carson, and also by her host of red globes.

For an instant, the pale white glow disappeared, and in its place was the lurid ugliness of the barren wilderness. I recoiled horribly from what I saw. The woman was not. . . . but I suddenly knew it all - knew what lay beyond the key and the Crypt and the Name for anyone who sought it - and knew horror, stark, terrible, maddening. . . .

There was an old native legend about Darago the Fearful - and the different forms he could assume at will. . . . and the manner in which he had been imprisoned in a warped dimension. . . and what he could do if his eternal shackles were released. . . .

Or if a man came to him to fulfill a dread prophecy - a prophecy known to old and new religions alike - and mentioned in the Bible I tried to cry out, to warn Carson - to tell him - I could utter no sound but the helpless shrilling! I circled wrathfully about the wondrous creature - which was not what she seemed to be, but she paid me no heed.



She only looked at Carson in adoration. Then, she spoke to him in a soft voice, telling him that which he must do. The man smiled at her, turned and reached for a lever upon the wall. I whirled over to him, attacked him savagely helplessly. Could he not hear me! O God in Heaven, he must! For I am the False Prophet - and the Beast lurks in an incredible disguise - lurks! -

In a moment it will be too late. My Lord - Carson! He doesn't hear me - he can't help! There was a screen there on the wall. It pictured the earth - our world - and two billion human souls heedless of tragedy. . . .



Carson depressed the lever! I looked again at the screen. For an instant - nothing. Then the globe that was the earth trembled, shook - and burst - like a bubble, and disappeared; emptiness was left behind, a horrible, infinite emptiness. . . .

Laughter shook the pale air - laughter that was inhuman and never meant for human ears! The pale glow faded completely and

only a lurid light prevailed. Carson stood aghast on the stairs, and saw - what had been the exquisite woman of the raven hair, the woman whose lips had been his moments before.

It is Darago or Mandragan or Lucifer or Satan - or the - Name which I cannot bring myself to mention even now. Where were the green eyes of beauty are now two fiery orbs of hate and lust and triumph; the delicate white breasts have given way to a horrible ridge of boney cartilage. Carson turns to run. The creature, for such I can only call it, pushes savagely - and Carson, whimpering like a damned soul - falls at my feet - writhes - and floats away, a little red globe!

The prophecy is complete. The lurid mists have closed in, and the heat is something palpable - and eternal. I can see the long line of damned souls streaming here now - and I can hear the wailing - and the seething, bubbling cauldrons of lava. And HE stalks once again, free, evil - unfettered.

- ATOMIC POWER

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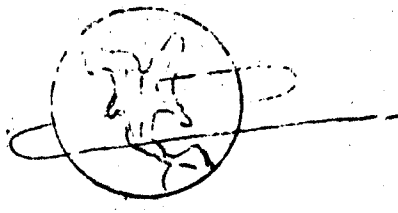
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Hemmel's Scientific Sorties ---- Number Six

LOVE VERSUS *Science*

by Charles Burbee

Much has been said and written about the struggle, one might say, between love and science. That is to say, the battle that goes on within the scientist as he is attempting to isolate a germ or photograph a valence electron and meanwhile is also thinking about a puzzling thing some female has said to him recently. If she is an attractive and clever female (and they all seem to be these days) she is adept at making remarks that can be interpreted at least two ways and one of the ways is pleasing to him and the other is highly displeasing, not to say disquieting. The poor scientist, then, with this struggle going on and these random thoughts and this horrid battle raging in his breast and causing aberrations in his metabolism, is not at his best.

It becomes quite easy to understand, then, how he might neglect to trip the camera when the electron comes into focus and thus lose a lot of knowledge he has gained up to this time, for the experiment may have to be repeated before the opportunity for photographing an electron comes again, and often this is a matter of painful preparation that might take a week or fortnight or a month. So science might have lost out by a considerable margin there, because if this particular scientist had photographed this elusive electron the first time he could have published his results one month sooner and perhaps some other scientist, working elsewhere, could then have used the benefits of his research and develop whatever they had in mind just that much sooner, and so somebody else could get a product on the market or another one off the market just that much sooner and people who would have done one thing either will not do it or will do something else, and there is no telling where this terrible chain of events ends or if, indeed, it ever does stop - and where did it all begin? Right in the alert brain of some roguish and attractive young female who has intentions of disturbing some particular man's thoughts with the intention, perhaps, of intriguing him still further in his pursuit after her or her charms, as they are ambiguously called in popular songs.

Now, it would be nice or pleasant if this phenomenon could be stopped in some way so science supreme could crowd along the path of progress much faster, or at an accelerated rate of speed. We would all achieve Nirvana, so to speak, if this item could be cleared up to the satisfaction of the scientific world. Most people who do not give anything a second thought and this includes most people, think that scientists do not care for the more mundane things, but only what they can see thru a microscope, but this, I might say at the moment, is incorrect, and is without basis.

At one time I thought of a ray that would negate emotions in the bit of protoplasm it was focused on, but I found that protoplasm, when deprived of emotion, or love, does not care to exist any more and quickly subsides or fades, and separates into its component parts, or elements, which consist of carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, and oxygen, though not necessarily in that order.

SATAN'S SNARE

JOE KENNEDY IS PRESENT WITH SOME RATHER PERTINENT REMARKS.

The first issue of CEPHEID arrived today, and was indeed welcome. The mag as a whole exceeded my expectations. Gaulin's mimeo job was excellent - this was a big boost to the 'zine's neatness. -(Bob Gaulin mimeographed five pages of the first CEPHEID - then y'rs truly purchased his own machine, and did the balance, as well as this issue, of course.)- Perhaps a few comments are in order. The cover - hrmpf. Very nice bem. Rather repulsive, admittedly but that's the general idea! Didn't find Rap's piece impressive - he continues to pat himself on the back, as per usual and even disregarding the generous serving of ego-boo, THE TRUTH ABOUT THE SHAVEN STORIES seemed too trite to be considered an article. CEPHEID-CHATTER: a good feature which is well worth keeping. It is reminiscent of "The Trash Basket in de la Ree's "Sun Spots". THE DREAMER: above average fan fiction. -(So lengthy a comment!)- PROZINE PARADE: Lesser, you rat, you've swiped a title from a column written for the now defunct fanzine STELLAR. The writer was one (hrmpf) Joe Kennedy -(Hrmpf!)- who had intended to use a similar title in FANTASY REVIEW. Bah. Methinks I'll sue. -(On bended stencils we beg the forgiveness of Kennedy and Austin Hamel.)- CHANT OF DIABLO anonymous, eh? Who did it, the Happy G? -(Nope, anonymous!)- LET'S ALL JUMP ON H.P.L I thought the best item in the issue. Miller wrote it well, consequently, the article

was extremely thought-provoking. Here's hoping there will be many more issues of CEPHEID. You have made a swell start, Milt - and you should be able to make the mag one of the really important fanzines extant. And that's about all for now. -(All! Yipes! Three pages is - three pages.)- 84 Baker Ave., Dover, N. J.

"YOUR BACK COVER REMINDED ME OF DEGLER!" - FELIX WILSEY.

You asked me for a critical letter concerning CEPHEID. So - Palmer is trying to make himself a candidate for the booby hatch. Let's see some facts. And more - the Shaver Stories stank! As far as fan fiction goes, THE DREAMER wasn't bad - as an actual piece of fiction it was pretty crummy. (What difference exists between fan-fiction and fiction?)- THE PROZINE PARADE was childish and silly. At one time I did a prozine review for Shaw when he was publishing NEBULA, and while it was far from the best in the business, it illustrates what I think a review should be like. -(Modest cuss, is he not?)- Jay Chidsey lets us know the atom bomb is dangerous. Three cheers for him! Bill Stoy's bit was far and away the best thing in the issue, but he could've used a greater range of characters. I was somehow reminded of Degler by your back cover. -(Huh?)- I hope I haven't been too damning in this letter -(think nothing of it, cur!)- but you've quite a way to go. -(Many thanks, old lad, for all your constructive - verily - criticism. Sniff, sniff and stuff.)-

BILL STOY, AUTHOR OF RHAPSODY IN S-F, HAS HIS SAY.

CEPHEID came in the other day, and proved to be a fanzine pretty far above the average. It is not quite another FANTASIA - but then, what has been? And speaking of that magazine of the dim past, you're about the first fan I ran across who thinks as highly of it as I do. -(Why not? It had the best format ever, and boasted neatest mimeoing, superb artwork, good material, etc...)- THE PROZINE PARADE brings back memories of a carbon copy dep't in Goldstone's mag. -(Yup, that is exactly where we obtained the idea!)- I still can remember the Maninthebluetopper, Djinn Fizz, and all the others. Getting myself back to your fanzine, nearly everything was uniformly good though mebbe LET'S ALL JUMP ON H.P.L. was best. Miller makes a very good point about obscure fictional atmospheres. Even the general set-up and mimeograph job were pretty good. Can't say as much for the art, but then, fanzine art is never magnificent ---140-92 Burden Crescent, Jamaica 2, New York.

-(And while we're at it, Felix Wilsey's address is 87-22 252nd St., Bellerose, New York.)-

THYRIL L. LADD LIKES OUR TRADING DEPARTMENT, AND OTHER THINGS.

Yesterday I received a copy of CEPHEID # 1, and have already read it through. I hasten to write and congratulate you on the excellence of this magazine. I fell you have a right to be proud of it. Physically, it is attractive; the type is clear and readable, and the illustrations, though the meaning of a couple of them rather puzzle me - are well done. Naturally, I

enjoyed the article by P. Schuyler Miller, and find myself quite a lot in accord with his views. I have always felt there has been too much adulation of HPL - tho he be unquestionably a genius among the writers of the genre. Your own story is interesting and so is your article on what is wrong with fandom. Your trading department is an excellent idea, if you don't find yourself snowed under with material for it! -(We did!)- Just contemplate this! I have a personal want-list running actually into hundreds of titles. All in all - an excellent magazine - to prove my interest, I herein enclose a dime for the next issue. -(Thankee, sir!)- I am aware that it lies ahead considerably in the future, but I want to make certain of receiving it when it does appear. - 33 Cuyler Ave., Albany 2, N.Y.

HENRY ELSNER, JR. LIKED RAP'S BIT - AND THEN AGAIN, HE DIDN'T!

For a first issue you had quite a good magazine. The format leaves nothing to be desired. I hope that in the future your material will come up to it. -(What about this issue?)- Palmer's bit was interesting. If he can present some really substantial evidence, I'll believe what he says - but not until then. As long as he's got nothing but voices he's heard, and location of some caves - I'll continue to regard the entire affair as a lot of bunk. THE DREAMER was quite good. When I started reading fanzines, I had an abhorrence for fan-fiction and it never left me completely until several months ago. I think this was caused by several very long and very bad serials I read in the old VULCAN. Chidsey's article was about the best written thing in the issue. - 13618 Cedar Grove, Detroit 5, Mich.

(The Trend Toward Free Fanzines - Continued)

Evans brought out one issue of the Midwest FFF Newsnotes for the fun of giving it away. Walt Daugherty was still at work with Pacificonews.

Joe Fortier distributed Past Present & Future of Twilight. It wasn't a scientific lecture but an explanatory circular on the item mentioned in the title. Shangri-L'Affaires rolled along, getting out five issues this year. And Jack Spcer told fandom all about his geographic adventures in a True Tale of the Spiritrip.

Van Houten managed to Say once more this year.

Britain finished the year: an issue of Cosmos from J.E. Rennis-on and an issue of Cthulhu & Supplement from Doug Webster. (Of passing interest: in Virginia, Russell Chauvenet experienced one of his periodic fits of resignation and sold his entire collection of fanzines at 40¢ per pound.)

The 1943 output dropped off, there being but ten free ones.

Ed Chamberlain issued a twelve page Catalyst, which gave promise of becoming a fine fanzine, but no other issue than the first appeared. And that fan from Indiana, somehow we don't recall the name at the moment, launched a crusade with the Cosmic Circle Announcement which he subtitled Cosmic Digest. It was extremely digested, having but one page. We are still recovering from the, ah - crusade.

Fandom, Awake! by Art Sehnert was an attempt to awake fandom, just why we don't recall at the moment. Perhaps he was laying the groundwork for the coming Lemuria stories. The British Fantasy Society published the Midvention Booklet upon the occasion of a wartime convention, and someone in Michigan did the same with the thrid annual Michicon Booklet. Old-time fan Walter Marconette brot out a single issue of Morpheus while home on leave from the army.

In the meantime, the unpredictable antics of a distinguished L. A. Club-Room visitor, he of the digestable digest, caused T. Bruce Yerke to view with alarm his conduct, and publish a Report to S-F Fandom. The visitor is reported to have not appreciated t h i s kindly act, and promptly issued several reports of his own. He was canny enough to charge a small fee for them, thereby outsmarting Mr. Yerke. All this time Shangri-L'Affaires is spewing from the clubroom, chalking up another five issues for the year. It is at this point I am beginning to entertain a terrible suspicion. Here, at the end of 1943, I find 24 issues of the magazine at hand. And yet, two full years later (the date of this writing) the 26th issue has only just appeared. Can it be that the club members are all wrong in their bookkeeping?

Jack Speer is back with The Uninhibited Electrode, a masterly essay on the subconscious workings of persons with an electrical turn of mind, a real live-wire little paper. That man Ackerman, apparently making still another bid for the number one spot, put out a Vomlet, without eggs.

Which brings us to 1944, the final full year to be covered here in this report. The amateur publishing crop for this year is a reflection upon the heart of this discussion - and gives a definite dirrection to what was before a trend. 1944 saw the deluge of free-gratis publications, many of them already having long histories under a subscription system, and many of them being of t o p-flight quality.

During the year there were forty-five free fanzines. They were either handed out freely, or obtained by exchange with others, or secured by writing the editor a letter of comment. Because of the

great length of the list, and because this report is already over-long, most of the titles are listed below without comment. The top quality fanzines lead off: -

Bill Watson's diablerie, easily among the first five; The Knave - something that should have lasted longer, from Yerke; Lou Smith's Fantasia, a collector's delight; Luna Pono and Cosmic Dust, with bright futures from Fred Warth and Walt Kessel respectively; Pan, Wilsey and Shaw's humorous one-shot; Polaris, the Ackerman-printed Paul Freehafer Memorial; Mari Wheeler's new Rosebud; de la Ree's Sun Spots; Lora Crozetti's thick Venus; and the printed What Is S-F Fandom?

Bearing out our earlier suspicion, Shangri-L'Affaires (which we should really classify in the above paragraph) prints eight issues more during 1944, making a total of 32. What the devil is the matter with you guys out there, can't you count?

There was also: Elsnor's Arcturian Annual; Ebey's Bay Area Le Fout; Shaw's Beulah's Scrap Book; Krueger's Buffalocon Booklet and Perry's Buffalocon Bklt Reprint; Watson's Chaos; Holbrow's Cosmic-Cuts from England; Gaffron's Eastercon Bklt, also from England; Futurian Concept by Sinn; another Britisher, Ron Holmes with the Irregular Comet; Let's Swap, from Crutch of Canada; the single-shot Steve Roberts zine, L'Inconnu; a Little Chicon Souvenir from Dunkleberger, as well as his Nuz Frum Home; the Ashley Michicon; Kepner's Midge Newssheet; Marlow's Moloch; Mike Rosenblum's Norcon affair; Ron Lane, still another Britisher, with Parnassus; Art Sehnert's Personality Pamphlet.

Loren Sinn again, with Space-Time; Ackerman's Staplecon - Booklet; Unger published a Supplement to the Imagi-index; Jack Riggs - flirting with censors, put out Spicy Tellus; Kennedy had a one-shot belly laugh in Terrifying Test-Tube Tales; Holbrow, mentioned above with Transactions of the Cosmic Club; Jack Wiedenbeck's Ty-dings; & five unspeakable things from the Newcastle Indiana Junior - Ray-gun Society.

Yes indeed. The trend is toward free fanzines.

#####

J U S T--N A M E--I T--B U B

Fantasy-fandom's want-ad service, cut short this time because Tucker was quite pedantic. And don't forget to send in your requests.

Mrs. Margaret Nicholas, Bartlett, Ohio wants FFM's of pre-'42 vintage.

Mrs. Carl Wolf, 2227 West Iowa Street, Evansville, Indiana is interested in obtaining "Jungle Girl", "Apache Devil" and "Tarzan and the City of Gold", all by E. R. Burroughs.

F. Lee Baldwin, Box 187, Grangeville, Idaho will pay \$2.00 for two copies of "Detective and Murder Mysteries" for November '39. Also Charles Fort, cheap.

Joe Kennedy, 84 Baker Avenue, Dover, N.J. will trade pocket - book EDGE OF RUNNING WATER by Sloane for a copy of FFM with "Ark of Fire" by Hawkins.

- CEPHEID Spring, 1946 -

