

DEC. '53 - JAN. 1954

Brevizine

TEN CENTS

Adventure

THE FINEST IN FICTION:

A ROSE THAT BLOOMS FOREVER
By Robert G. Warner

THE STORY-TELLING ORGANISM
By Alex H. Rothlands

SO PERFECT!
By George Brown

SOMEWHERE I HEAR MUSIC
By John G. Fletcher

SPECIAL FEATURES:

BY - HENRY MOSKOWITZ!
ART BY - LANE MARIN!

A
FANTASY
POCKETBOOKS
PUBLICATION



Illustrator: William Reins.

EXTRA!
Edgar A. Poe.
A SEQUEL TO POE'S "Tell-Tale Heart!" .

Reviewing

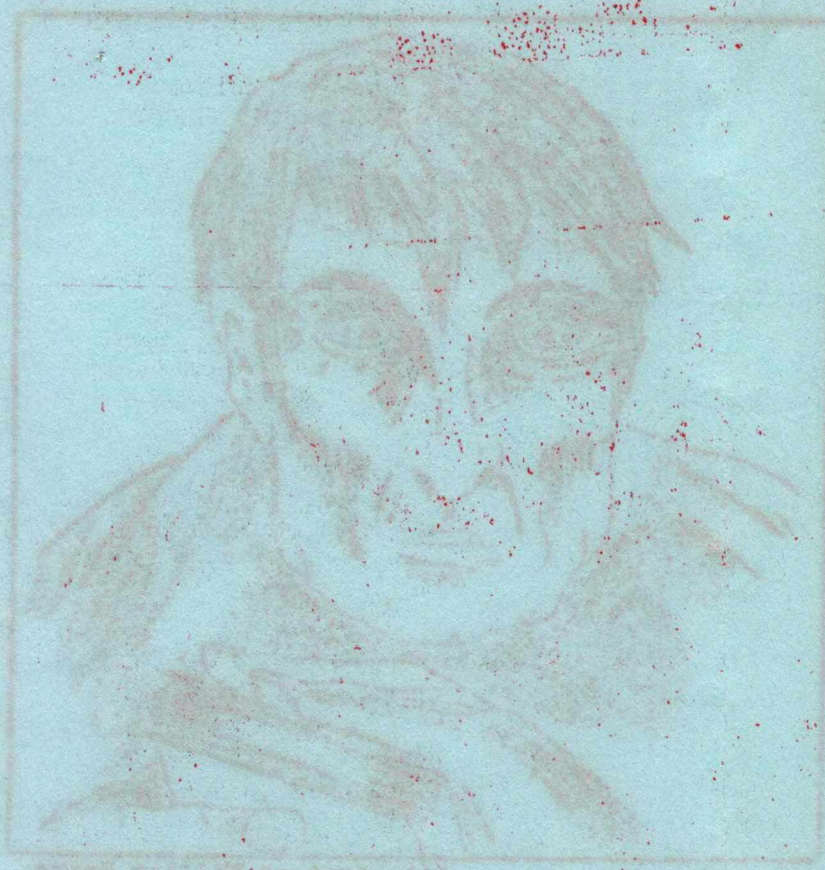


Illustration by William Turner

THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

A BOOK THAT SHOULD BE READ BY EVERY MAN AND WOMAN

BY JOHN G. BURNETT

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THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

Edgar A. Poe
A REVIEW OF THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD

Brevizine

A D V E N T U R E

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1

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A Fantasy Pocketbook

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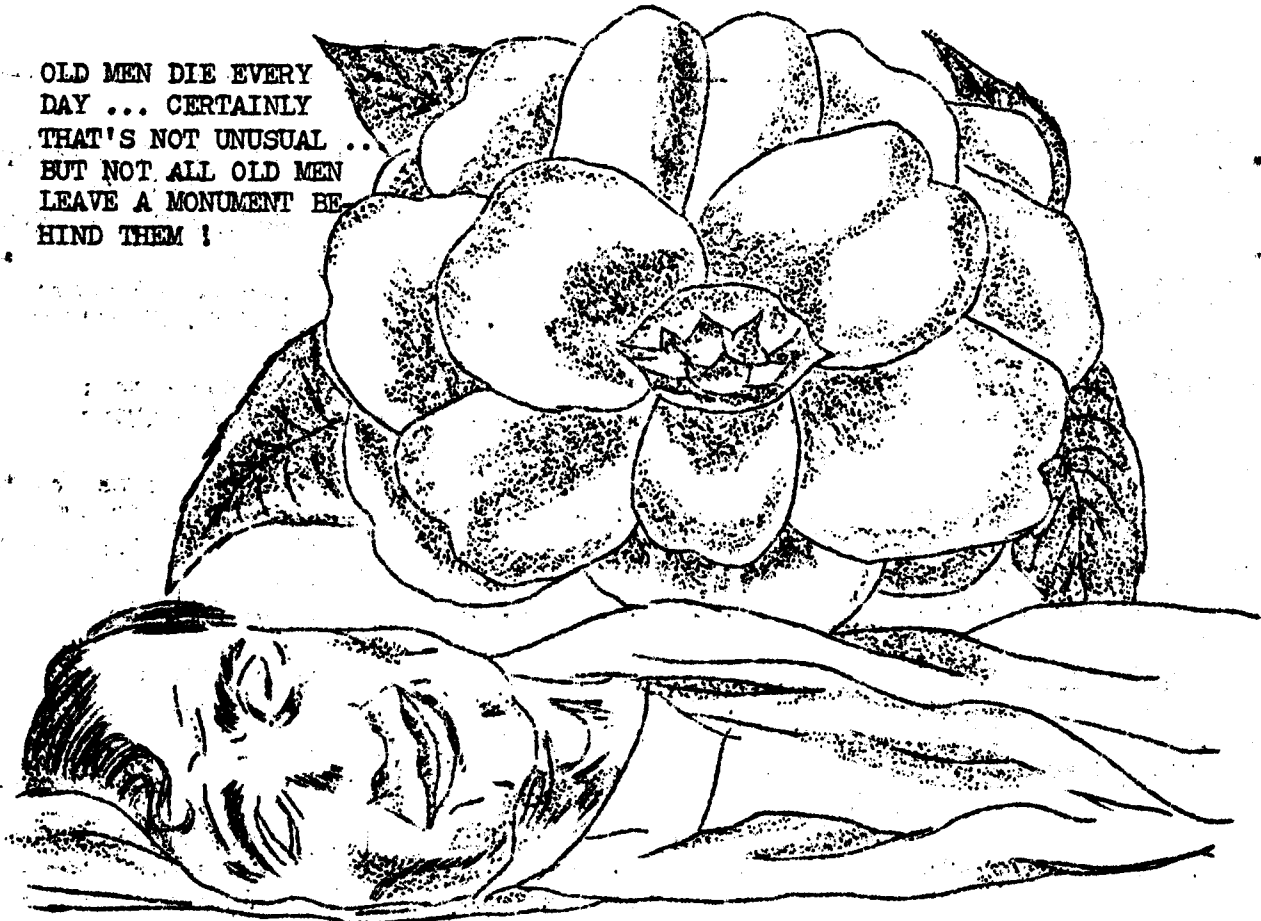
A Rose That

-3

BLOOMS FOREVER

BY ROBERT G. WARNER

OLD MEN DIE EVERY DAY ... CERTAINLY THAT'S NOT UNUSUAL ... BUT NOT ALL OLD MEN LEAVE A MONUMENT BEHIND THEM !



Magazine fiction usually follows a trend ... one month Spillane hard-boiledness is shown ... the next month sex is the key-word ... but here, in the smooth phrases of Bob Warner, lies what he (and ourselves) like to think of as "soft emotional value". And, perhaps from such simple words, comes the greatest stories.

- EJH.

THERE BESIDE THE narrow, winding garden path, where he walked every evening after the hot rays of the summer sun had finally vanished beyond the lip of the horizon, grew roses. Roses which were bright and red with the summer blush and roses which were soft and snow white -- and like winter snow, which were never pale in their whiteness. Roses blooming and full of life vibrant, fresh life. Roses who were his friends and to whom he went frequently when he found himself troubled.

Old, very, very old, he thought. Old and near the end of a span of life that hasn't been too bad, now that I stop long enough to look back over it. Old and wrinkled and a little sick, inside and out, but not too much so. And tired. Yes, more than a lit-

tle tired. The end of the road is in sight now, and I'll be glad when the final step has been taken. Then I can turn around and take one last look at that dusty, twisting path behind me that I've come over and say goodbye forever and a day to it. And after that I can just lie down there in the grass that's at the end of the road and sleep always, dreaming perhaps, and find rest. That is not just an old-fool complaint, either; it's the truth.

As he walked along the pathway on this particular evening a cooling wind sprang up and blew about him for a moment; and he paused as it tugged gently at him, wondering if it was really a wind at all. It felt so much like a sweet, cool breath,

and was like a deep lingering sigh that said, "It is about time, Old One." The wind passed on and he continued his slow walk, wondering.

Up ahead the willow tree was bent and weeping. He stopped and watched as it dropped its green tears upon the softness of the night, which lay upon the garden. He looked down at the roses on either side of the path and spoke whisperingly: "Is the old tree crying for me? Does the willow know it's almost time for me to say goodbye and leave it forever? Does it know that; and is it crying for me? I'm an old man, an old and broken man, and have lived far too long as it is. Why, I'm almost ninety-five years old! I have outlived all my friends, and I haven't any children, and I am -- except for all of you -- alone. The old willow tree shouldn't be crying for me. I'm glad it's almost my time."

He walked on to where the willow tree dropped its limp branches over the path. He paused underneath the tree and felt it shed its green melancholy leaf-tears upon his stooped shoulders. "Old friend . . ." he murmured softly.

Of a sudden he felt a tear in his right eye and thought: A tear? Old man is it possible? Old, run-down, dried up, dying old man, is it possible that you can still cry? Is there actually enough moisture in this sand-dry carcass to put together and make a tear -- even one small tear such as this one? I wouldn't have believed it.

He lifted his right hand (just look at those purple veins pushing out that dry, yellow skin! he thought) and put out a finger to feel the moist drop as it rolled down his sunken cheek. He felt it very moist on his fingertip, and was pleased.

He could still cry (Although he was not sure, exactly, why he had shed the tear -- probably the last one in him).... That is a God-given ability that so few realize the true value of, he thought, looking at the spot of moistness on his fingertip through his misty eyes. "A man never cries!" is the saying. But a foolish one. A man is never a man until he meets with something that can make him cry. All men cry sooner or later, and it is only the fools believing that a real man is as tough as nails all the way th-

rough and not susceptible to tears. I -4 have over ninety years of living on which to base my judgement. I should know, by God. I should know.

"Foolish old man with foolish thoughts," he whispered. I'm an old fool; and what is more I am a damned old fool, that's much worse. I'd always like to think of myself as being gentle and like one of those Saints in my old years. But I have to look back over my life and see that I've never been one and can't be one now. All I can be is an old man.

I should have married fifty years ago when I had the chance and had a hundred children to leave behind. As it is, I'll go on and leave only this little path in this lonely summer garden and the roses and my very good friend the willow tree. But, I suppose, that's really a lot, after. It's certainly more than many leave behind to show that they ever were.

He walked on with his old shuffles and felt the night falling about him like a very expensive, very exquisite, velvet cloak.

He walked along and thought: I'm as old as the hills, and still as wild as the hills. I guess I'd have gone long before this if it hadn't been for these daily walks, and this garden. By God (here now; is this any time to start swearing by Him? Watch your step, old fellow!), I couldn't keep myself going if I didn't get to come out here every day and walk and watch the sky as it grows dark. That's the Cardinal Sin of the old -- they let themselves die while they're still living. They sit back and moan and complain and allow their old age to shackle them and cripple them hopelessly so they'll have to be waited on hand and foot. No wonder the young are so thoughtless of us -- we're so damned thoughtless of them first! It's we who demand all the pity and attention, while they should be getting an equal share of it. Damned us, we make slaves of them!

He looked up at the darkening sky above him and felt the night coolness against his shallow cheeks and scolded himself. That's not the kind of thoughts to be thinking now. You've had all the time in the world to think harshly and be a number-one heel. You should have gotten plenty of that in the morning, noon and afternoon years. This is twilight, old man,

and the end of the day that's been your life is rapidly drawing near. Think of something pleasant.

He reached up and felt the scar on his left cheek, and so doing let his mind wander back into the past to a very unpleasant time. "You were a foolish young whelp then," he said aloud, but softly. "You shouldn't have quarreled with that fellow seventy years ago, especially since he was drunk and armed with that six-inch jack-knife and a hundred pounds heavier than you." He stopped abruptly and started to scold himself for again thinking of those wild years; then he shrugged inside and thought: I'm what I am, and it's too late now to try and change it. The time to change will be when I make the passover. When I lay me down to sleep forever I'll change. I'll change, all right. But not until then.

He had come to the end of the path, and to the old lawn swing there. It had been once painted white, and it had the most pleasant squeek of any swing he had ever known. And it, too, was old and worn and about gone. Its chains were rusted and about gone. Its paint was worn and peeling off and there was a strip or two missing from the back.

"You and I are a lot alike, old fellow," he murmured, sitting down in the swing and closing his eyes for a long moment. He felt the pain in the tired muscle that throbbed stubbornly in his chest.

"If I had one wish, just one," he murmured. "If I had just one wish, I know what it would be."

He sat very still, not swinging at all.

If an angel dropped out of Heaven this very moment and said, "Old man of Ninety-Five Years, I have come to grant you one wish this night," well, I know what I would say. If the Angel said, "Well, Aged One, what is your wish?" I would reply: "Look at those roses there beside the path. Do you see the red one there that is just a little larger and just a little redder than the others? Well, I wish you would make it as large as the largest head of cabbage there ever was and as red as only true red can be, and let it bloom there forever. That's my wish -- to leave an ever-blooming rose behind to know that it is something that will never fade aft-

er I am gone, something that I have left behind to show that I was here, once? And that's what I would say.

He sat and did not swing, and he thought about it for a long time. He thought about it while the summer night grew much darker, and the stars popped out and blazed away above him. He thought about it as the muscle that was his heart thumped laborously and pained him, but he did not notice the pain.

And he thought about it until a blue-white light fell from far, far above, lighting the garden in soft light which fell like fine, fine powder and filling him with a wonderful song.

He stopped thinking about it only when the Angel stood before him and whispered, "I have come to grant this wish of yours."

* * * * *

IT WAS MORNING, and in the trees metal-feathered birds sang their songs and preened themselves dutifully.

It was morning, and someone was whispering softly, as though afraid the new morning were only a dream and that to speak loudly would shatter it.

"A pity, but not too much of a surprise if we find him dead. He's over ninety years old. Couldn't have gone on much longer."

The three of them walked along the garden path, between the red and white roses, turning their heads from left to right, trying to penetrate every green bush of the garden looking for the old man who had not been in the house.

An elderly woman said, brushing a tear from her eye, "That's right, Mr. Thompson. You know, I've been expecting to come over some morning and find him dead in the garden. I've been expecting it for a long time now." After a moment she added, "I come over every morning and fix his breakfast and tidy up for him, you know. I didn't mind doing it at all." Mr. Thompson nodded.

They came to the weeping willow, and it seemed to be bent more than usual, and the elderly woman said, "Oh!"

"Do you see him?" asked the other two, looking.

"No. But look there." They let their eyes follow her pointing finger. When they saw, they sighed deeply. For a long while the three of them just stared, and were silent and half unbelieving.

They stared at the rose. The rose that glittered with the morning dew. The rose that was as large as the largest head of cabbage that had ever grown and red --- oh, much redder --- than true red. They stared and they did not say anything. What was there to say?

But there was a feeling all of them shared: Someday the garden might die and crumble into dust and be blown away on a gentle breath of air. But that rose would be there, blooming forever; and it could never die or be killed. Then they thought of the old man, and they looked at the rose and drew wondering breaths.

When they found the old man a few minutes later, he was sitting in the swing with his chin resting on his chest; and at first they thought he was only asleep. But when they shook his shoulder and raised his chin, they saw that his sleep was much more than sleep. In the early morning sunlight dew drops glittered like precious stones on his small, drawn body, and they all thought: "Sleep well."

They all stood for a long moment thinking about the rose and looking at the smile on his thin-line lips and the way he had folded his slender hands complacently in his lap. The sun laid out its golden blanket of warmth and birds sang and the world lived its vital summer life.

But as they stood there, looking down at the old man and wondering, they were silent ...and it was a long while before they said anything.

The Bone of CONTENTION

I have long felt that fiction and not reader correspondence should appear in the pages of BREVIZINE ADVENTURE ... and, too, many of our ardent supporters felt the same way ... feeling justified, therefore, last issue marked the end of a regular Reader's Page.

...And that is when the roof fell in! While the general readership accepted this move heartily, and I might add, they make up the bulk of our consumers; we found out just how many fans were in the audience! Plenty! Enough to make us see the partial-error of our ways...

Please note, fellas, the word "partial". While we must go along with the majority we like to keep all of our readers happy! Therefore, a compromise is very clearly evident...And it works out this way:

Each issue as an "added attraction" there will be a limited amount of excerpts from the month's mail on a 'filler-page' such as this.

And that should take care of that!

Dennis Murphy, of Cromwell, Conn, writes: "I didn't believe in flying saucers, either, when the first reports popped. Man, I had to see to be convinced. So, I saw -- and I was! There hasn't been many sightings of 'em this summer, as compared to the summer of 1952. I, myself, haven't seen one for over a week now." ... This office gets many "crank" letters, however, from the lengthy letter of Mr. Murphy's, we believe he is not talking through his hat! We believe he knows things that might shed light on these flying disks. If it is possible to get more information from him, it will be printed in this magazine!

Contributor George Brown writes: "I greatly enjoyed reading the stories that BREVIZINE puts out. In the current issue, "My Lorelei" by Warren Allen Freiberg was tops. Enclosed is \$1.00 to start my subscription."

...So much for our idea of a letter column. Let's hope we haven't put our foot in it, again!

- Erwin J. Hughmont,
Managing Editor.

THE

STORY TELLING ORGANISM

A SEQUEL TO THE "TELL-TALE HEART" BY EDGAR A. POE.

BY ALEXANDER H. ROTHLANDS.

No story has ever made a more lasting impression on literature than Edgar Allen Poe's immortal: "The Tell-Tale Heart." It is with understandable pride that the editors of this magazine can bring forth "The Story-Telling Organism" a sequel to the aforementioned masterpiece, by Alexander Rothlands, an author destined to take his place beside Poe as a creator of everlasting fiction.

- E.J.H.



THE NEARLY ANCIENT rocker creaked with the strain of weight, as the rather gaunt man lowered himself into its folds. It had been ever so long since he could perform this action without the great strain of complex worry.

There had been a time, long, long ago that he could easily comfort himself in that rocker, a time when he could easily slip away into restful, if not utter bliss.

Hands that had not often seen the toils of labor reached up to rub a deep encased brow of lines. Prematurely grey hair waved along his forehead as a somewhat restful breeze came forth from a withered window. Tonight was his night. . .

The moon shone down on a face that now ceased further anxiety, that was free

from anymore bothersome decisions ... he had made his own great decision.

It was almost a joke, a colossal joke to look back on it now; to think of the times he had suffered so needlessly. His was a proud line, his name one which was known as a Wall-Street power ... his name, but not him.

Charles Collingsworth was nothing but a much hidden nephew of his millionaire uncle: Harrison. It had been so ever since he was a boy of nine. It was at that age his father, the poorer member of the Collingsworth relations, passed on and he became the ward of his wealthy uncle.

It had never been a relationship of 'love', young Charles was willed on the old man ... and Harrison regarded him in much the same way as he would a dog ...

with complete contempt.

A somewhat long-forgotten smile found its way to cracked, hard lips. To all outwardly manners Uncle Harrison had given him a decent home, fine education, and a good background ... yet, there remained a deep, unspoken hatred between the two.

Like something from one of nature's unwritten laws it had sprung, like a vine clinging to the Earth it had grown, and finally matured.

All these years it had been there, hidden behind outward politeness fondled in the guise of toleration, but there nevertheless ... and just last night, that growing hatred, the mutual bond of contempt, had blossomed!

The young Collingsworth's mind wandered, somewhat aimlessly, to the night of just twenty-four hours ago. Uncle Harrison had been ailing for the past few weeks, and the family doctor told Charles might be up quite shortly.

A peaceful tranquility formed itself over him, and perhaps even a slight touch of sympathy appeared ... for Charles was Harrison's only living relative, a relative that could, as easily as a heart stopping, acquire ten million dollars.

His mind recalled with a now lackadaisical attitude that as soon as the doctor left he had went into his Uncle's room to tidy up, and see if the old man had gone to sleep.

He remembered how he found him sitting bolt upright in bed, as if he had been waiting for Charles . . .

A blunt, sharp cackle came forth from the withered form. "Sit down, my nephew," his words were still clear in Charles' mind.

"You seem serenely happy tonight," he continued, "could it be that the news of my forthcoming departure from this lump of sod has reached your ears? Could it be, my dear nephew, that you think in terms of my fortune? ... A fortune that will never reach your miserable paws!"

Oh, he made his plans only to clear to the younger Collingsworth. Not a penny of

the money would he ever see ... all these years he had raised Charles on a lap of luxury so that now when the old man died he could have the satisfaction of knowing his nephew would be thrust into a world he knew nothing of. A world filled with hard toil, and sweat, and labor, a world which the spoiled Charles could never cope with.

And with that the old man drew in a breath filled with wheeze, and slept soundly for the night.

Of all of Charles's some thirty-odd years of nights, that fateful one on which the old Collingsworth had his vengeance was the hardest to take ... but it was not taken without the knowledge of final conquest!

In the deep recesses of the warped mind come the most devilish plans of men, and Charles had a plan -- of murder.

It had come to him while rocking; rocking in that chair which even now comforted him in its cushions. He remembered as he rocked how he had set the date, the date which was this night.

Through that day which followed his first tormented night he remembered Uncle Harrison's many little thoughts of fun:

"Job-hunting yet, Charles?" and "Have you tried the want-ads!" and on, and on, and on

But that day past, and Harrison finally retired as the evening came ... retired without changing his will in anyway but Charles' favor. His night, Charles' night, was comfortably dark, just the night for a disappearance.

He would say Uncle Harrison, in his demented state, wandered off. A long, long way off . . .

He rose now, rose from the folds and warm comfort of the rocker. His work was awaiting him . . . and had any man ever been so richly rewarded for such little labor?!

Walking through the portals of the large library door he wandered aimlessly through the spacious luxury of the long hallway corridor. He passed several paintings of ancestors long since deceased ... and

soon another member of the Collingsworth line would join those ancestors.

On he walked as his steps echoed hollowly among the marble work. Past the sitting room, and up the flight of stairs to Uncle Harrison's room.

The deep soft carpet let his slight shoes imprint upon finely woven threads... up he climbed; reaching the second floor.

He walked past his bedroom, past the guest room, and to the door of Harrison's room ... Uncle Harrison.

Slowly an extended right hand reached forth, groped a moment in the still darkness, and found the doorknob, it turned rhythmically against his firm pressure.

He listened carefully, listened to the morbid creaking of a time-worn hinge, and listened oncemore. There was another sound. Uncle Harrison was breathing.

It was a nasty sound full of wheezing, cackles and long, low moans. No man had a right to go through such agony, he would remedy it. Gentle footsteps made their advancing presence into the bedroom. Close now, very close ...

The breathing stopped . . .
"Charles!"
The word rasped itself out, through pipes that should have long since decomposed. His uncle had awoken.

He remained in the darkness, he remained silent and without movement.
"Answer me! By the powers of the damned answer me!"

He dared not make a motion.
"I warn you, I'll persecute you for such inane folly!"

Charles' hands encircled each other, waiting, very patiently, for the moment they could still his croaking.
Harrison turned over, coughing and sputtering, mumbling deep curses. He was going back to sleep.

SUDDENLY CHARLES was upon him, like hell in all its frenzy, beating, bruising with insane hatred. The old man lunged upward at his young foe, both intent upon the other's death.
"Damn you, you ancient bitch!" yelled

Charles.

Relentless fists pounded against the old man, agile fingers crept against his neck; intent on ceasing all life from withered windpipes.

"You shall never quiet the beating of my heart!" yelled the ancient creature.
Rasping, choking noises emitted from Harrison's dying form; proving no match for the younger Collingsworth.

It was minutes later that Charles stopped his beatings, making sure no life yet remained in his Uncle's personage.

"You are dead!" he spat out. Charles had proved triumphant.

* * * * *

LONG HOURS passed before any decision was to be made concerning the body's disposal. It was an old house, with many rooms, many panels, many dark places where the warm sunlight of day never found a spot to cling to.

Naturally Charles wanted to follow all the rituals of 'Death', and so it was that his decision to bury Harrison was made.

Throwing the slumped figure over his shoulder, the young Collingsworth made his way from the bedroom and went through the various rooms and corridors that led to his final destination: the dank, musty cellar.

Somewhere in the morbidness of his crime an amusement found its presence to his face. Charles was very fond of mystery stories ... and wasn't his crime in the best tradition?

Silence reigned as he opened a long-since closed door, to what was once known as the wine cellar. Carefully and slowly the figure of a man with another human on his back descended stairs worn by time.

Familiar signs of age stared before Charles' eyes ... dust encased on objects rose to the air in an attempt to escape the oncoming disturber. Low rumbling noises of settling went through the atmosphere ... high-pitched squeeks of unfamiliar rodents indignant upon being evicted from their dens ... all these sounds were picked up by ears that had suddenly become sensitive to

the 'strange.'

Upon reaching the soil-filled floor Charles let out a sigh of relief and literally through down in disgust the form of his older relative.

"And where would my dear Uncle like to be set to rest?" inquired the young man. There was no answer.

With a slight touch of mirth Charles found a long-abandoned packing-case and flung the light body of the old man into it. Upon doing that he lowered the cardboard lid; in like manner as an undertaker closing a coffin lid.

"May you sleep well ... and long," Charles spoke in a rather high-pitched voice.

Acquiring a rather large spade the young man set about the task of digging a shallow grave. A spot ... a good spot must be found. Perhaps ... perhaps next to the heating apparatus.

The grave site had been chosen.

* * * * *

FOR A MAN not accustomed to physical labor, Charles Collingsworth accomplished his burial task in a relatively minor time. The clock's hands reading well past midnight, his task done, he had only to retire and wait for the morrow when he would report an incident of foul play.

The long climb of steps seemed easier now, easier without the burden of his Uncle's form. Reaching the top he was careful to replace, and seal the bolts on the heavy door. His mission wasn't hard at all. . .

Feeling exhausted, but not in the least ready for bed, Charles sank his body into the well-worn rocker. Ever since boyhood that rocker had comforted him in times of sorrow and happiness. This was a time of happiness . . .

Blood-shot eyes took a well-known tour through the comfortably large room, the long rows of book titles extended well-past the customary point; extending toward the ceiling.

As suddenly as water coming from a tap his eyelids became heavy and his limbs weary from the labor of his beatings.

Sleep overtook him with a careful, al-

most precise drowsiness . . .

Thump ... Thump ... Thump ...

Suddenly the young Collingsworth was stirred into awakening. A short, slow, dull sound disturbing his restfulness.

Thump ... Thump ... Thump ...

It was a heavy sound, like a drummer without rhythematic melody. Coming at regular intervals. Heavy sounding...

Thump ... Thump ... Thump ...
almost like . . .

Thump ... Thump ... Thump ...
A human heart!

The thought ocured to his over-wrought mind somewhere between semi and full consciousness. A human heart, beating at regular intervals . . .

Thump ... Thump ... Thump ...

He listened. It was not his own. But he was the only living soul. Except for ...

Thump ... Thump ... Thump ...

Uncle Harrison! And Uncle Harrison was dead!

With the startling revelation that only a thought can have Charles was thunderstruck by the possibility of his losing his mind!

Impossible! Charles was as sane as anyone except for ...

Thump ... Thump ... Thump ...
An imaginary heartbeat!

His hands reached up and rubbed his brow, and then his eyes, ridding himself of all possible sleep. The sound remained. Somewhere, in the back of his mind, he thought, all this was familiar ... so very familiar!

Almost in a loss for what to do tired eyes perceived the bookshelves ... wandering in an aimless, confused state ... resting on ...

"The Tell-Tale Heart and Other Stories," by Edgar Allen Poe.

Eager hands reached for the thick volume. Wonderous eyes scanned the book's content ... It was such a similiar story. Fact and Fiction so very closely related. Today's murder, and yesterday's imaginings inter-

mingled ...

The hero so very much like himself!

Going insane by the beatings of an un-real figment of the imagination!

His eyes darted over words going ahead to after the murderer in the story first heard the heartbeats.

He read aloud to himself: "When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock, -- still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open with a light heart, -- for what had I now to fear? There entered three men who introduced themselves with perfect saavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises."

The shrill sound of a doorbell went throughout the ancient mansion. Charles, jerked upright from the reading matter, still hearing the thumping heart.

So, he thought, our true piece of murder is following to the pattern of the fictional one. A warped mind became fascinatingly amused.

He quickly read on to the ending paragraphs: "The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. They sat and chatted of familiar things. No doubt I now grew more pale, yet the sound (of the heartbeat) increased. I gasped for breath -- and yet the officers heard it not. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of these men; but the noise steadily increased. O God! what could I do? I foamed -- I raved -- I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting but the noise arose over all and steadily increased. It grew louder -- louder -- louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God -- no, no! They heard! They suspected! They knew! They were making a mockery of my horror! -- this I thought and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer!

I felt that I must scream or die! -- and now -- again! -- hark! hark! louder! louder! louder! louder!

"Villains!" I shrieked, 'disemble no more! I admit the deed! -- tear up the planks! -- here, here! -- it is the beating of his hideous heart!'"

THE DOORBELL and the thumping heart continued sounding in Charles Collingsworth's mind as he finished the story that paralleled his own true life one.

"The murderer was clever as I am," concluded Charles with a touch of mad mirth, "but his insane imaginings tripped him up! Therefore even though these impossible heartbeats continue to sound ... I must pretend not to hear them!"

Laying the volume down he crossed the hallway and opened the massive front door. As he suspected, two uniformed police officers stood outside.

"Mr. Collingsworth?" A suave young officer addressed him.

"Yes. And what can I do for you?" A coy smile played upon his face.

"A neighbor of yours down the road was passing by earlier this evening, and heard sounds of struggle from your bedroom window."

"But I was not asleep yet tonight ... so that would be quite impossible," foiled the now cleverly mad Charles.

"Do you mind if we step in and have a look around?"

"Not at all. I was just wishing for company."

* * * * *

THE OFFICERS, following true to the Poe story, searched quite carefully, without uncovering anything. The heartbeat still continued ... and, as in the tale, they stayed to chat a few moments in the warm study.

"We're sorry for any inconvenience this might have caused you."

"It's nothing," the cheerful Collingsworth said, "I was having difficulty in sleeping."

The heartbeat continued.

"It's surprising how warm your mansion keeps in this weather."

"We have modern gas heating," Charles said; now slightly irritated. "Haven't

you noticed the ventilators?"

The heartbeat continued!

"You usually won't find that in these old houses," observed the officer.

"N-n-no, I suppose you won't," Charles was becoming uneasy.

THE HEARTBEAT CONTINUED!

"You know we were out on a case---"

On and on they rattled. Imaginary or not the heartbeat -- the damned infernal heartbeat drove him over any last brink of insanity. His thoughts were muddled--confused! Better to repent, die, give myself up, but to go through the rest of a life with that imaginary heartbeat!

"DON'T YOU HEAR IT?" screamed the mad Charles.

"I beg your pardon?"

"THE THUMPING! THAT DAMNED THUMPING! DON'T YOU HEAR IT!?" Charles knew they didn't. He was completely mad.

"Oh, yes, now that you mention it! It seems --- It seems---"

THEY HEARD IT? But Charles knew he was insane. Like the character in Poe.

"It seems," the officer continued, "To be coming from your ventilators!"

Charles dashed madly to the other side of the room ... pressing his ear close to the ventilator. It was the ventilator!

"I say, Mr. Collingsworth, do you feel all right?" inquired the officer.

"It's him!" screamed Charles. "Harrison! He's going to haunt me! It's NOT my imagination! He wants to haunt me for killing him!"

Two puzzled police officers listened to the wild ravings of the sobbing Collingsworth. How he had murdered his Uncle for the money rightfully his ... how he had buried him next to the modern heating system.

Continued On Page 15

The AUTHORS



EDGAR ALLEN POE

An orphan at birth Edgar A. Poe became the adopted ward of John Allan, a wealthy merchant of Virginia. This association continued until Allan, disgusted by Poe's conduct at a University, left him stranded. Poe's literary career came to view shortly after that authoring such masterpieces as "The Tell-Tale Heart", "The Gold Bug", and "The Raven." He had a brief editing venture as director of the Southern Literary Messenger. It is interesting to note that both critics and fans will admit Poe was a master at his chosen career of unusual writings.

ALEXANDER ROTHLANDS

While hardly following in the footsteps of Poe's social life, Alex H. Rothlands finds himself deeply encased within the pattern Poe has set for fantasy. His admirable sequel to "The Tell-Tale Heart" was read with deep interest by Poe authorities who found it to be "an engrossing example of weird literature."

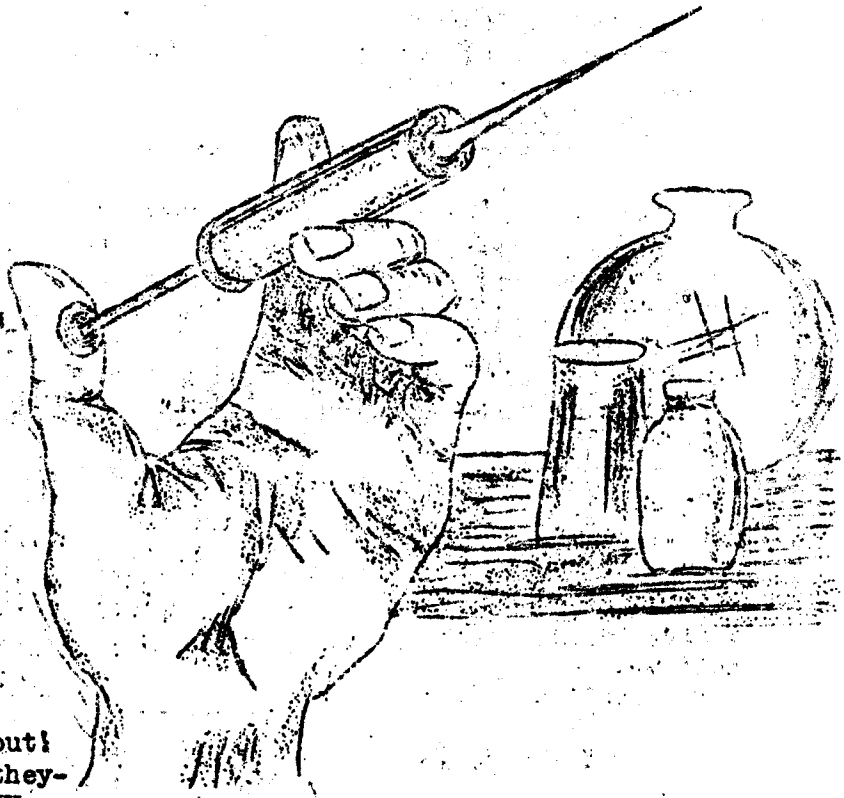
The noted publisher Warren Allen Freiberg, foremost follower of Edgar Allan Poe, said, "Rothlands has definitely captured the Poe style of writing. It is a piece of craftsmanship down to the last paragraph, and should rank beside its already famous forerunner."



So PERFECT

BY GEORGE BROWN

Homo Sapiens is on the way out!
They're bothersome, feel pain,
have terrible tempers, and even
eat regular meals!
Now you take the mechanical man
author George Brown tells us about!
A robot has only one fault ... they-
're just not human! - E.J.H.



RICHARD KANE WATCHED Dr. Lawson, the famous mechanical scientist, with envy as he sat at his desk working at the plans for a machine that would revolutionize the home. A mechanical manservant. Dr. Lawson was a perfectionist, he did not, and would not build his machines until he was positively sure that everything would work out just as he planned.

Dick, as the Dr. called him, was Lawson's assistant ... but whose work consisted of keeping the great Doctor's records in order, seeing to it that the Doctor's budget was kept, and cleaning his lab. Dick's only hope was to one day learn enough from him so that he could go out on his own. Yet the way the Doctor kept his important things from him; Dick figured it would be a long time. For the time he was more interested in Lawson's secretary, Marty.

"It might work, it just might work," mumbled the Doctor to himself.

"What sir?" questioned Dick, hoping to gain a shred of information.

Lawson looked at Dick over his shoulder, with cat-like eyes. A silly grin passed

over his lips, "Nothing Dick, nothing at all."

"Sorry to interrupt you, sir," Dick said, knowing how much he hated to be disturbed.

"It's all right," Dr. Lawson said, wetting his pencil point.

Dick picked up the wastebasket and walked toward the door. He opened it, then paused and looked back at Dr. Lawson, who was writing frantically. He grumbled and closed the door behind him. For a moment he stood looking at the door, wishing that he was six feet tall and shoulders like an ox. Then he would show the old buzzard who was boss.

"Hi Dick," said a soft voice.

Dick spun around, she stood right in front of him, so close that a pin wouldn't be able to have come between them. He had to look up into her warm blue eyes, his dark-colored glasses sliding down his thin nose. His twisted tongue finally loosened itself, and he said:

"H-Hello, Marty," He felt the curve in her leg, and he moved back. Her soft blond hair bunched on her shoulders, her pert little nose, and her firm red lips. That's

what Dick liked about her. Then of course there was the figure. It was smartly outlined in a fine tight plaid skirt and wool jersey. Which Dick summed up in one word, "Wow!"

"Wow?" questioned Marty.

"Yeah, that's you, baby," Dick said, pushing his glasses back up his nose.

Marty's red lips parted in a warm smile, "Wow," she said. She looked at the door to the Doctor's lab. "The Doctor busy?" she asked.

"Yeah, very, you don't want to see him. Come along with me; we'll see if there's a moon out."

Marty smiled, "I don't want to see him, anyway. Let's look at that moon." She linked her arm in his and they walked out onto the lawn. They sat there, Dick putting his arm on Marty's shoulder.

"Sit closer," said Dick, "it's a bit chilly." Dick choked a bit; she almost sat in his lap. "There's the moon," he said pointing through the trees.

"It's pretty," Marty cooed.

"How do I look?" asked Dick.

Marty looked at Dick, "You're pretty," she said. Dick blushed.

He wanted more than anything to take Marty into his arms and kiss her, but he thought it best to wait. "How come a nice girl like you gets herself mixed up with a guy like old man Lawson?"

Marty tilted her head, "I needed work," she said, shrugging her firm shoulders. "How did you, Dick?"

Dick laughed, "The same way you did. I needed money." Dick felt Marty's hip press hard against his. He grasped both her shoulders.

"Marty I'm not going to waste any more time or pretty words," he said, "I love you and I want to know how you feel about me."

There was a pause, Marty's eye lids fluttered. "I love you Dick," she said.

He felt like jumping up and down. Taking her in his arms he lowered her gently

to the ground. She looked up at him her lips drawn together.

"I'm glad we feel the same way about each other," he said. "We'll get married." He looked into her eyes, they grew big and he heard her sigh.

"Yes," she said.

The way she lay there made Dick want to kiss the life out of her, but the only thing he could think of was telling old man Lawson. Tell him that despite everything, he had finally taken something away from the Doctor.

"Let's tell Lawson," Dick said, helping Marty to her feet.

"All right," she said, following him into the big house.

Dick could imagine the surprised look on old man Lawson's face when he told him that he was taking his secretary away from him.

He pushed open the door to the lab, "Hi, Lawson," he shouted, then turned to look at Marty who stood grinning behind him. He winked at her and she winked back.

"What's the meaning of this?" Lawson demanded.

"We just dropped in to tell you that Marty and I are going to be married."

Lawson sprung from his chair, his mouth gaping, "You can't take Marty," he bellowed.

"Wrong, Doc, I have taken Marty," laughed Dick.

"So you love Dick?" Lawson asked Marty.

"Yes," she said.

"Joke's on you, Doc. I guess you'll just have to get yourself a new secretary."

"But you can't have Marty, she's mine." Dr. Lawson shrieked, his face turning red. "She loves me."

"Oh, brother, that's rich," laughed Dick, unable to control himself. "That's really rich. Prove it!"

Dr. Lawson walked past the laughing figure of Richard Kane and stood in front of Marty. Dick stopped laughing.

"You love me, don't you Marty?" he asked.

ed.

Marty's lips twisted into a smile as she looked at Dick. "Yes, Doctor I love you."

"Huh?" gasped Dick.

"You see Dick you can't have Marty because she's mine."

"I don't get it," Dick said looking at the two.

"Of course not, I'm a perfectionist, and you've proven it. Sorry I did such a good job."

Dr. Lawson lifted Marty's wool jersey. Dick just looked.

"There you can see for yourself," Doctor Lawson said. "Marty's nothing but a machine."

"THE STORY-TELLING ORGANISM" (Continued from Page Twelve).

A careful, quick investigation showed a badly shaken old man buried in a shallow grave, almost dead from suffocation . . . except for the fortune of his heartbeat being magnified by the heating system ventilators.

And so it stilled in Charles' demented mind . . . "the beatings of that hideous heart."

- Alexander H. Rothlands.

"MARS IS HEAVEN!" by
Lewis Gaff

The spaceman descended from the slim needle of a rocket and stood regarding the empty street with sunlight glinting weirdly from the glass ball encircling his head. So this was Mars! It wasn't at all the way he'd pictured it. The street looked like any street he'd ever seen back on Earth. The buildings shot into the clouds not unlike those on Fifth Avenue. The air was too thin to breathe, of course, but that wasn't the strangest thing . . . the city seemed to be lifeless.

Perhaps because it isn't yet dawn. Sure, that's it. If Mars is this much like Earth, then they probably sleep at night like we do . . .

Something moved ten feet before him.

The Spaceman's mouth flew open and his hand freed his blaster from its scabbard. He squinted in the dim light of near-dawn at the place ahead and waited for something to happen.

A circle of steel, like a manhole cover, was removed from beneath and slipped aside. The Spaceman stared. The Bem appeared.

"My MOTHER-IN-LAW!!!" screamed the Spaceman, and leaped into his ship and blasted off.

Mars is Hell.

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Raymond Bradbury.

A BREVITY ADVENTURE



BY JOHN G. FLETCHER

Here, in the unusual prose of John Fletcher, is a story of tension ... of the climax! It is a tale about which little can be said because it defies description! ... It is an excellent short-short. - E.J.H.

*Some where
I hear Music!*

I AM ALONE.

But I am not alone.

I hear the words to a long forgotten song somewhere in the recesses of my mind. When I was young I used to hear the voices and music, shouts, without really hearing them.

My mother talked to me without moving her lips or even opening her mouth. My father always moved his lips when he talked.

ONE DAY WHEN I was quite young, I was startled by a bright flash, the walls tremored, plaster shook loose from the ceiling. Then I was left alone for a long time.

THERE, THAT MUSIC again, like my mother humming a ballad. It's fading and dying away again, like it always does.

WHEN I GATHERED enough nerve I wandered around the house.

I saw my mother then for the last time.

She was sitting in the big, red chair, but she wouldn't move no matter how hard I coaxed her.

I sat and cried until I could cry no more.

Finally I realized my hunger.

A BREVITY ADVENTURE

Remembering a food store down the street where Mother used to shop, I walked in, took my supplies, and walked out.

It was just dusk.

I noticed two cars tangled into a pile.

Both drivers strangely still.

Mrs. McGillicuddy was lying on the steps to her front porch.

Not wishing to see more I dashed down the street.

Breathless, I pushed open the door to another market. The customers were standing around as if in wait for something to happen.

Some were lying on the floor.

I ate some of the meat behind the counter, but it didn't taste very good. I became sick, as sick as I could ever remember being. I yelled and screamed for my mother, until I lost all I ate.

Still hungry, I pried open one of the cans on the counter. Beets.

I ate my fill and drank the juice from the can.

There! Music! Like a young woman singing. This time it's closer! Stay! Stay! STAY! It's fading. It's gone. Come back, come back!

I LEFT THE store. I ventured as far as I could go. I learned to eat only canned food. I learned to drink only boiled water.

I have met only one other live person in my travels.

He was an old man.

He only lived for a few minutes time. Just long enough for me to ask if he had ever seen another living thing.

No. Not a soul.

He talked with his lips.

I HAVE been alone ever since.

Sixteen years of loneliness.

There! The music again. A young girl singing. Only ... only singing without really singing!

And it's closer! Much closer!

I am coming!! I'm coming!!

- John G. Fletcher.

A CHRISTMAS

SONG

The following number of copies of this song book has been prepared for the use of the churches of the denomination.

It is the hope of the publishers that this book will be found useful in the churches of the denomination.

It is the hope of the publishers that this book will be found useful in the churches of the denomination.

It is the hope of the publishers that this book will be found useful in the churches of the denomination.



THE PUBLISHERS, CHURCH OF THE SOUTHERN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE, 1900.

A CHRISTMAS BONUS

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