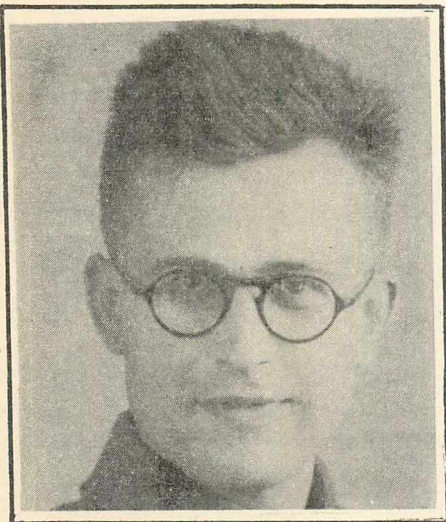


CANADIAN FANDOM

A "CAFP" PUBLICATION



No. 6



Gnr. Bob Gibson



Sgt. Ted White



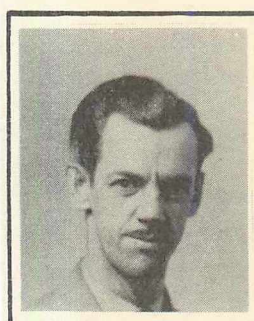
John Hollis Mason



Albert A. Betts



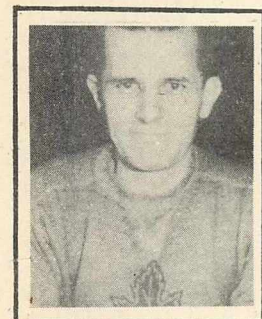
Alan Child



Ron Conium



Les Crouch



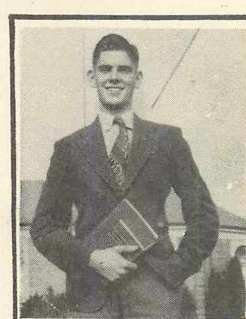
Spr Al Godfrey



Fred Hurten



Viola Kenally



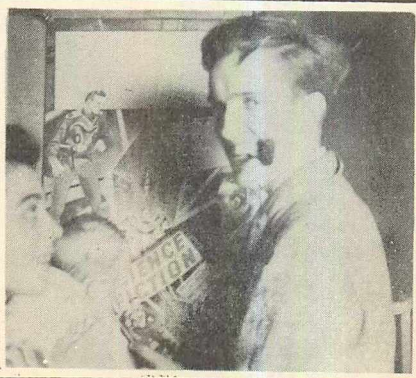
Al Macrae



Jack Sloan



Beak Taylor



John G. Hilkert & family



Mrs Jessie E. Walker

FICTION

COLUMNS

FEATURES

ARTICLES

VERSE

ADVERTISEMENTS

~~~~~boring isn't it~~~~~  
Last issue ratings (out of 10)                      coming soon (We hope)

The Mother - - - - - John Hollis Mason  
The Return of Pete - - - - - Les Croutch  
Science-Fiction!! - - Holden Blackwell  
Good Things from Strange Cabinets-HA Ack  
Light Flashes - - - - - Les Croutch  
Stuff & Such - - - - - Fred Hurter jr  
Cover by Albert A. Betts

At present I am very short of articles . You can be sure that anything in that line which is sent to me will be gladly accepted. Also needed - verse, cartoons, and short stories. Unless more ratings are received, this feature to the left will be discontinued in future.

\*\*\*\*\*

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## BEAK

- an editor's report -

**H**ELLO again, fans, friends, & Hurter. I prostrate myself in abject humbleness. I am in sackcloth and ashes. Why? Well, look at the facts. I promised an issue on January 10th, and here it is over a month later. I weep. (a la Tucker) Especial words of condolence and sympathy are extended to Les Croutch, for not only is **LIGHT FLASHES** somewhat belated, but a story of his - **THE RETURN OF PETE** - was crowded out of this issue. Look for it in the next, along with a sensational 7,000 word novelette by John Hollis Mason, entitled **THE MOTHER**. Believe me, this story is plenty good **enough** for pro. publication, and it was only by the grace of god that I was able to get it.

Speaking of space, which I was some-where back in the middle of the last paragraph, our regular feature, **CUES FROM SCIENCE**, was also evicted. It will be returned in number six. For those who haven't seen the first few issues of **CanFan**, I hasten to explain that **CUES FROM SCIENCE** is an open department. Jessie E. Walker supplied the idea - which is - Many fans like to write stories, but can't seem to get an idea for a plot, while still others have plots galore but can't put them down on paper. This department solves all (!!!). The latter type send in their pet brainwaves for publication, while the former read the feature, and immediately start erup-ting stories by the score. Get it? Now we'd like some suggestions.

The first thing that strikes your eye when you pick up this ish should be the cover. It usually does, seeing that it's right on the front. This mural of monsters represents fandom in Canada, for better or worse. Unfortunately, however, it isn't complete. I did all an editor could do. I advertised it in two issues, sent out plouding letters to all concerned, and the above is the result. To all those who sent fotos, and to Croutch for pics of Hilkert & Godfrey and Mason for White's, I extend a hearty thank you, and to the others, with the exception of Lamb, whom I wasn't able to contact, a most emphatic ffffffft.

Most of you who have written in suggesting improvements have mentioned

## BROADCASTS

more illustrations. I had intended to use quite a few this issue, but I just didn't seem to be able to get around to digging them up. I'm going to see Betts about doing some for the next, and Andy Anderson, Pismo Beach's gift to Sci-entifiction has offered to do a few, so things should be looking up very soon. (Dumb Dora at this point asks me if I'm an astronomer) In conjunction with more art will be a general toning up of the entire format, with neat, but not quite so severe headings and a more attractive set-up altogether. And now YOU, the reader(s) come in. Since I've decided to make some changes, why not let me know just what changes you'd like me to make - how you think headings should be done: whether you like two columns or one; anything! I think that if I get a response to this request, you should see some real improvement in the next few ishes.

Somewhere in this issue you should find a lithoed ad. for Jike's **TOWARD TOMORROW**. I suggest you write away for this mag. I've seen the first issue, and it's well worth the dime he charges. 40 pages of excellent material, as well as six lithoes, one of which you see here. Also in this issue (I hope; it hasn't arrived yet) you will be confronted by the spectacle of a very sheepish-looking ghost making off with a copy of **LeZ**. That is an ad. for a mag which needs no advertising; the one and only **Le Zombie**, now in its fifth anniversary issue. Same may be had for 5¢ from Bob Tucker, Box 260, Bloomington, Illinois, for any of you new fans who haven't yet seen a copy. However, if you're reading **Canadian Fandom**, it is impossible that you haven't read **LeZ**.

Thus, fans, I draw to the close of another harangue on the whys and where-fors of **Canadian Fandom**. Before I finish however, I'd like to ask a few more of you to send in ratings. Surely it isn't too hard to form an opinion of what you read, and let me know. As it stands now that fixture will have to be discontinued unless more are received.

Beak



# JEST OF THE DIM GOD

Canadian Fandom

by Peter Young

3

HIS BODY LIES in a carven casket, side by side with the great dead of the nation. The exotic blooms of foreign climes perfume his last slumber. In a great and stately hall he rests while heavenly music softly swells and kings and dictators pause in long salute.

But I, crutching outside with the others poor and lowly, know only the hideous, unearthly laughter that drifts down those hallowed walls. The others hear nothing. But I was his wife.

My neighbours think me hopelessly mad. And I am mad. Mad with the terrible knowledge that is not of this world. Knowledge that would burst the brain of one less stoic -- even as it shattered that of my weakling husband, long ago.

He was an adept; a student of the mystic sciences, he called himself. But my parents loathed and feared him and when we eloped their curse was the downy they gave me. Too soon I knew my mistake but my parents stubbornness aroused my own and I set myself grimly to develop the genius that my husband claimed was his.

His brain was brilliant -- but warped. Before our marriage he had spent much of his life exploring the weird and fabulous corners of the earth and his talk was filled with outre references to alien beings, unhuman entities of terrible power that had walked the earth in the Beginning and whose incredible lore was yet preserved in certain secret places.

He spoke with especial gloating of an ancient priest who dwelt on a shrivelled oasis, forgotten in the flaming wastes of the storied Gobi. From him my husband had gleaned much of his sinister learning and from him, one black desert midnight, he had stolen that legendary accursed volume whose existence the great universities deny. The book itself he feared to keep but he had painstakingly copied the runes of one marked section over which he had secretly observed the old priest poring.

Then he had lashed himself to his camel, with the priest's animal tethered behind, and fled out over the endless sands. Through the cool of the night and through the parching heat of midday suns he had beaten his camel on, sometimes only half-conscious himself, until

the great beast swayed down on its knees and died. He tied himself to the other camel and fled on. When it, too, had fallen in merciful death, he cut himself loose a second time and stumbled forward by foot.

Through the hell of sand and terror and desolation he had driven himself, goaded by the thought of the dirty scrap of paper that lay inside his bosom and the secret that it held. And he had won through to civilization. From one scholar to another he had travelled, translating the manuscript phase by phase so that none might learn the whole. And when it was done he knew that he held in his hands an instrument of appalling power. But so terrible were the forces involved that he was unnerved.

BUT I DID not understand. The only fear in my life was the fear of material failure. And one day while I watched him brooding, as usual, over the manuscript, fretting away our lives aimlessly, the madness seized me. That same night I crept from the bed by his side to the room where the manuscript lay and unlocked the drawer which sheltered it.

I touched it and something like an electric shock passed through me. And suddenly I was consumed with desire. Because I knew this thing was evil and evil was all-powerful. Feverishly I read it through and, atheist though I be, I shuddered at the utter blasphemy of it.

I remember that a portion of my consciousness shrank back in horror but it was overwhelmed by a sweep of occult sensations. Weird and esoteric convolutions were being worn into my thought patterns. And then I was performing the unholy ritual.

I was mouthing a jargon I did not understand and my arms were describing mystic symbols. I assumed the obscene postures, wore the macabre symbols and chanted the blasphemous litany. Suddenly a blackness that was not the blackness of our earthly night descended. A chill wind blew on me and then I heard it.

A sound like the roll of muted thunder filled my ears and the brooding dark was vibrant with a great and evil presence. Then my straining senses



caught the overtones of the thunder - an arpeggio of maniacal laughter, lilting, like echoes off the hills of hell. And, abruptly, the frightful truth burst over me.

The ancient priest of the Gobi had known of my husband's thievery. With grim amusement, no doubt, he had watched him fly for his life. Because that which he had stolen was worse than death. It was the incantation which summoned up the most dreaded of all those who dwell -- Outside. He whom the Elder Ones knew as the Jester.

I threw myself upon my face and for the first time since childhood I prayed. The dread overtones increased in volume and tempo. Somehow, there came to my mind the words the demon spoke to Markheim: "I do not object to a deathbed repentance."

And then alien thought impressions were impinging on my brain and I realized that the Jester was speaking:

"Mortal, know that once you have set your foot on that certain path, there is no turning. Not in this world nor what comes after. He who responds to the Dark Lords' call must pay the ancient price and of this forfeit we will not be cozened."

Then I knew that my doom was on me and from it there was no escape. A desperate calm came to me. I had sold my immortal soul and what was there left to fear?

"Dark Lord," I said " - a boon."

The muted thunder was shot through with notes of sullen discord. "Brazen earthling, from the intimate creation of infinity where the planets wheel I heard your call. From the hell beneath the hells I have come. And for what?"

Under that supernatural anger I was prostrate. But still, through all my terror, the thin flame of obstinacy smoldered, born of hopelessness. And, in some unknown well of memory, vague, age-old recollections stirred. I said in a shaking voice:

"Oh, mighty one, whose features no mortal may look on - the fetters are upon even you. The curse of those who drove you out dwells with you yet and forever. They who surmon you shall bow beneath your yoke in eternity but ere you may claim your homage you are doomed to fulfill one desire of he who calls you up."

The sullen notes were a low, sweet song of menace. "Mortals command and

gods obey. But say on."

"Glory," I whispered through numb lips. "Great glory for my husband."

Suddenly the overtones of insane mirth soared in a cacophonous symphony. "Glory such as none other has known shall be his! I, whom the Elder Ones dubbed the Jester, say it. And to their pledge the 'im Gods be true."

IN THE gray light of a cold dawn I came to my senses. A horrid gibbering was in my ears. My husband was stretched out on the floor beside me. A look of crazy horror was on his face and madness was in his eyes. He had crept out of bed after me but his brain had been unable to endure the burden of what he had seen.

Through the dragging months that followed I built him back gradually to a semblance of sanity. But in the end he was little better than the shell of a man; an animate hulk imbued with a conviction that he was ordained for greatness. We existed, waiting impatiently for the coming of the Day.

But first there were three signs.

We were walking one day beyond the outskirts of town when I noticed, through a clump of trees which grew by a bend in the country road, a gypsy encampment. And in that moment, around the bend, came an old gypsy queen.

I watched her, awed. Certain ones of the gypsy tribes have the second sight. The loud fools who proclaim their scepticism merely cry their own ignorance. No one can foresee the crass, infinite details of life but for some the curtains are parted briefly and they glimpse the shadows of the things to be.

Barbaric finery adorned the old crone and against it her brown, wrinkled skull of a face stood out. She moved towards us slowly, her black eyes roving over the ground. She was searching for four-leafed clover. As we watched, she spied a little patch of green which had sprouted through the gravel near the center of the road.

She made her way to it, grunting softly to herself. Then, with a little exclamation of pleasure, she stooped and plucked a tiny plant. Symbol of good fortune but it was to be her funeral bouquet. In the same instant a long, black hearse came swiftly and silently around the bend.

There was a deep blast of warning and the old gypsy straightened. She

screamed once as death bore down upon her, then stiffened. There came a screeching of brakes, the whine of slithering tires, a stinging spray of gravel - and then a swift figure was leaping to the gypsy's side. My husband.

He seized her arm and jerked her towards safety. But he came too late. The rear end of the hearse swivelled around violently under the terrific pressure of its brakes and it caught the gypsy broadside in her last step of escape. For a long moment her body seemed to hang in the air.

Almost before she struck the earth a babel of wild-eyed gypsies was surrounding her. They fought for the honour of succoring her and then suddenly she opened her eyes. What they saw there caused her followers to hush and draw back slightly.

"I am dying," she said quietly. "Where is the stranger who risked his life to save me?"

I realized that I was standing in the road, clutching my husband's arm. I pushed him through the circle till he stood in front of her, open-mouthed and drooling. She took his hand in both of hers and carried it to her wrinkled lips. Then she looked into his face and, slowly, a frown deepened on her brow. She caressed her forehead as if bewildered.

"Strange man thou art," she whispered, "And strange is the future which lies before thee."

She searched his face again. Her black eyes seemed to dilate. She took her hand from her brow and raised it till the trembling forefinger was pointing straight at my husband.

"Stranger," she said in a voice of prophecy and the hush around was breathless, " - you are a man of destiny. I see kings and emperors saluting thee . . . and yet . . . ."

"Yes?" I heard my strangled voice say. "Yes!"

But the gypsy queen was dead.

SOON AFTER the world stage began to tremble to the roll of the drums of war. Louder and louder they throbbed till all of Earth vibrated to their dread cadence. One night in my sleep the Jester came. "The prologue is ended," he said. "Let the play begin."

Then I knew that in this titanic conflict lay the road to glory. And so my husband went to meet his destiny.

One night I lay dreaming. I was gazing down at a desolate land, earth that I felt had once been fair and green but which lay now torn and mangled, like the hulk of a once-beautiful body after the cold kiss of the vivisectionist's knife.

The grass of the rolling meadows was beaten down and dead. Caping, watery holes dotted the landscape. In one of them a wounded soldier lay. Now and then he screamed and the horrible sound of it cut through the dull booming noises that deafened my ears. A gentle hail was falling; a hail of man-made death.

This was no dream. This was a battlefield of France.

I was looking into a crude trench lined with men. They were facing toward a graying officer who stood with his hands on his hips and a question in his eyes. He was looking at the men in turn and one by one they glanced away or dropped their eyes to the ground. And then one shambled forward. My husband.

"All right," he said.

The officer regarded him and I knew he was really seeing him for the first time. He said, curiously, "What do you hate about life, soldier?"

My husband didn't smile. He just said, in the patient voice one might use to a child, "I cannot die."

The officer looked at him stupidly. My husband shrugged his shoulders and turned and then he was gone - over the top. He moved upright through that thin rain of death in an easy, slouching walk, as if he were strolling down Main Street. And he came back with the wounded soldier.

The men gathered around him incredulously. There was no scratch upon him. "What did you mean," asked the officer in a voice which he strained to make natural, but which was tense and dramatic instead, " - when you said that you couldn't die?"

"I meant that my time hadn't come," said my husband. "I've got a destiny to fulfill."

The men looked at each other. One of them tapped his forehead. But nobody grinned. They were awed. The march to glory had begun.

THE THIRD and last sign followed swiftly. I dreamed again. I was looking down on the trench once more. The first streaks of dawn were breaking across the Eastern sky. The men were crouching a-



long the length of the trench like runners on a mark.

The officer was standing with one hand half upraised, staring at the watch on his other wrist. His hand came down and the soldiers poured out of the trench. In a stooping run, with bayonets fixed, they went for the enemy lines. My eyes were on my husband, running beside his officer.

They reached a barbed wire barrier and they hacked it, swiftly and efficiently. They went through but ten yards beyond my husband stumbled over a body and fell across it. He got to his hands and knees and was reaching for his gun when suddenly his attention was caught to the man who lay beneath him. And for the first time I observed that the fallen Hun was not dead.

His eyelids were lifting slowly. Then he was regarding my husband with a steady, compelling gaze. My husband stared back and I could sense some strange horror mounting in him. Suddenly, with a frightful scream, he hurled his rifle away, leaped to his feet and began to race back toward his own trench. And all the while he was screaming.

The thin line of advancing men wavered and seemed about to break. The officer shouted after my husband but he ran on in his mortal terror and he pitched headlong into the barbed wire. He fought like a maddened beast to free himself and still his screams shrilled up to the sky, and in their echo it seemed that I could hear the mad laughter of the Jester.

I struggled with hopeless desperation to wake. Hopeless because I knew the struggle was futile. I was locked in the grip of a stronger and more terrible force than sleep. I could do nothing but watch the tragedy below.

The enemy had roused. Cuttural cries and curses were plainly to be heard. Then a concentrated, withering fire began to pour from their lines. My husband's company broke in wild confusion and made a pitiful retreat. But they were marked men. Less than one-quarter of them returned to their trench.

My husband was not one of those who returned. As the comrades he had betrayed fled back, the officer raised his service revolver and deliberately shot through the back the screaming thing that hung on the wire. A sudden quiet fell. And I knew my husband was dead.

MERCIFUL blackness engulfed me. For a long while I knew not the passing of time. I existed, like one of the dead-alive. But with the fringe of consciousness I clung to life, because I knew instinctively that the ending was not yet.

Then, one evil night, while I lay drunken in my hovel, I felt the call of an urgent summons: "Rise and array yourself. From across the sea your husband comes on a great ship of state."

I rose mechanically and dressed myself. Dimly, I remember boarding a train. For a long time I rode passively, then we rolled into a large city and I knew I had reached my destination.

Large crowds were moving through the streets and I was struck by their air of silence and respect. I wandered through the streets and a fever of excitement began to grow on me as I observed that the stores were closed and that many of the people wore mourning and were grieving. I heard women quieting their children: "Hush. A great one has come from over the sea."

I reached a mighty thoroughfare where the road was lined deeply with people on both sides and the sidewalks were crowded impassably. I wormed my way to a position of vantage and there I waited, tortured and trembling.

Presently, I heard a tremendous shuffling sound, as of a vast army marching, and soon there appeared the van of a great and silent procession. An honour guard of picked soldiers, the heroes of the nation, walking the dead march, walking silently and with arms reversed. To the rear I could see sleek limousines bearing the country's leaders.

But between, to the roll of muffled drums, paced six stallions, black as midnight, drawing a gun chariot on which reposed a mighty coffin, draped with the national flag.

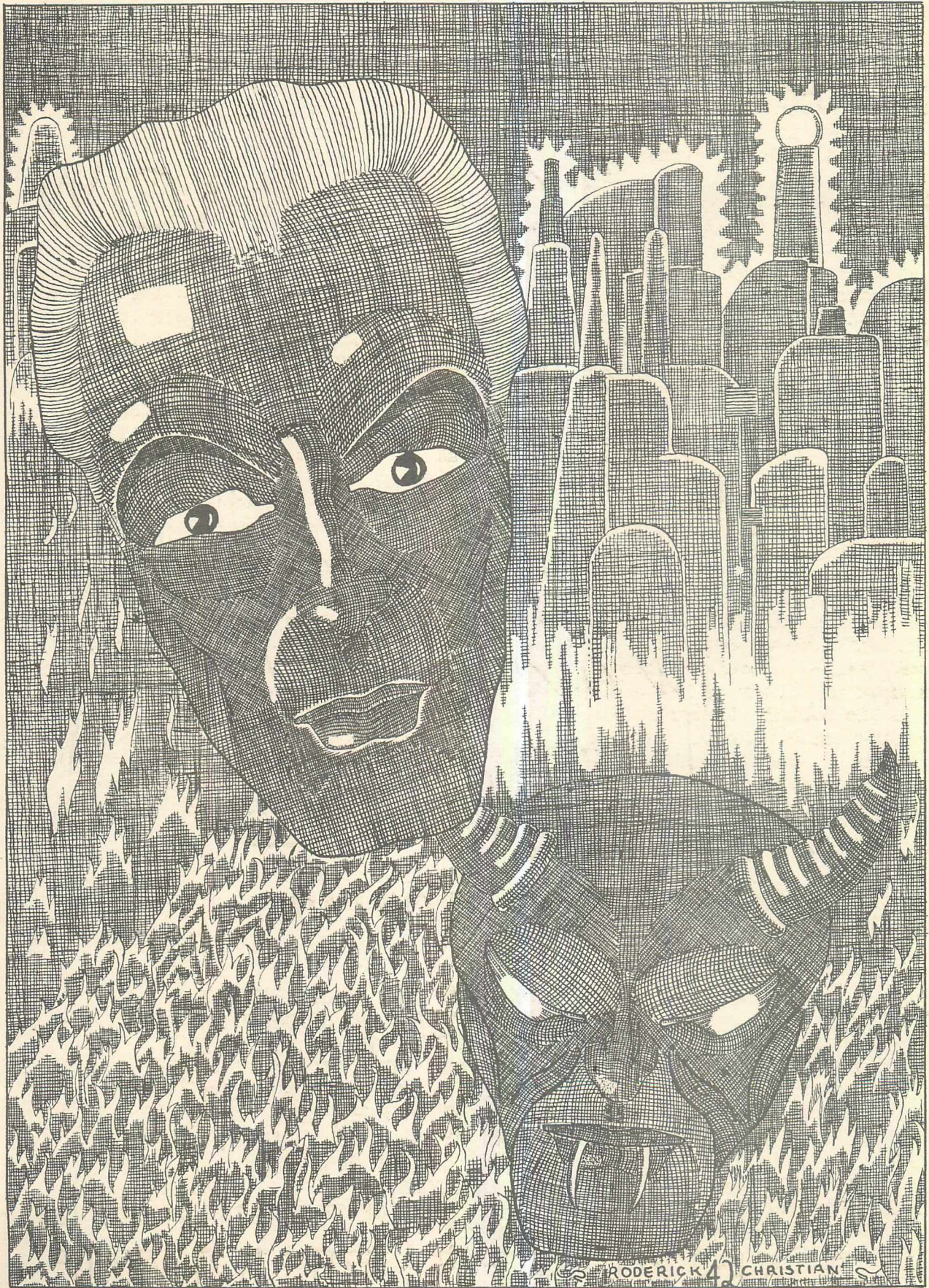
I was on the verge of hysteria. I could contain myself no longer. I seized the arm of the man next to me and whispered hoarsely, "What does all this mean? Who is he?"

The stranger looked at me, frowning. Then he drew away a little and slowly said those words which sent me screaming into the shadows forever.

"Who is he?" the stranger repeated. "He's the man nobody knows. It's the funeral of the Unknown Soldier."

(The End)







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FIRST ISSUE CONTAINS

POETRY BY JOHN AND JEAN ARNOLD,  
AND JAMES KEPNER, AN ACCOUNT  
OF THE ADVENTURES OF AN AGNOSTIC  
IN HEAVEN, ART WORK BY RON  
CLYNE, BILL WATSON, RODERICK  
CHRISTIAN, AND OTHERS, AND  
DISCUSSIONS BY BARBARA BOVARD,  
ERIC HOPKINS, KEITH BUCHANAN,  
AND LLOYD CONNERLY.

THE LITHOED PICTURE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS SHEET IS ONLY ONE  
OF THE MANY FINE ILLUSTRATIONS \* \* \*

FANZINE <sup>of</sup> the FUTURE



# LIGHT FLASHES

Canadian Fandom

- by Leslie A. Croutch

7

Greetings and salutations all you nice people. Here's hoping 1944 proves as prosperously lucrative as did 1943. What? Did I hear somebody in the balcony yell something about where do I get that guff about prosperity? The gentleman must be an inflationist who doesn't like the Prices Board. But then, you can't please everyone, can you? Anyway it was good to me. Who, 1943 or the WPTB? 1943, of course. To count my blessings one by one: I didn't get married; I didn't get caught; and I didn't - well, I just didn't. So don't be curious.

To start off this month's palaver, some news about the boys overseas won't be amiss. Ted White is still holding down the fort in the Mediterranean, and to keep him company, thither hath went - pardon me - that's the Bugs Bunny influence - hence has went fans Norman Lamb, the Screwball Sarge, and the Great Gunner, Bob Gibson. Gibson being transferred deals a blow to the swap route which we kept open for so long. This means no new books from England. Haven't heard from Lamb personally, but his Missus, who is at present living at her parents in Niagara Falls, (Canuck side.) told me the news. Al Godfrey is still in Old Blighty, and evidently films can still be obtained over there for he sent me a photograph of an unclad damsel, or mighty near it anyway, on the stage of London's famed Windmill Theatre.

The American fans are hitting a new high in productivity. New fanzines are coming out all over the place, and most of them are mighty good. I note Taylor is running ads for some of them, and I'd suggest you wouldn't be far amiss to try a few. Nothing like variety to broaden the mind, you know. One fan, a well-known one, didn't put out a fanzine, but went one better. In fact I think she surmounted the pinnacle of achievement. Nanek, Virginia Combs Anderson, whose work has appeared in LIGHT in the past, and in CANADIAN FANDOM, an artist and poetess, and a professional in FEM, on October 10, 1943, presented to the wondering eyes of the world a little fan, Carl Adolph Renneth Jr., 6 lb, 10 oz., Deaconess Evangelical Hospital in Milwaukee. If the youngster inherits even half of his mother's looks Clark Gable

will have to look to his laurels later on. Congratulations, Nanek.

Lying before me as I type this is the November ASTOUNDING in the new super-small format. For the information of you fans who haven't seen it, here is some statistical data on it. Read, then draw your own conclusions. 180 pages, inclusive of covers. 5 3/8" x 7 7/8". No advertisements. 16 pages of roto-gravures for the articles and photographs. Type face same size as regular format, margins approximately the same. 6 stories, 2 articles, 4 departments. If the binding of the copy I got is the same as for all, everyone will have to restaple theirs before they lose half the contents. I can't see where there is any paper saved by changing down the way Campbell did. If he had wished to save paper he would have done better to reduce the number of pages to 144 in the regular format, and used smaller type face. Or he could have increased number of pages to 200, and changed to bi-monthly publishing. Almost anything I think, would have been better than the step he did take.

There isn't much new to report on the American prozine situation. Proposed additional paper cuts have everybody in a dither. Reports have it AMAZING and FANTASTIC have gone bi-monthly, but I haven't seen a recent issue so can't say for sure. It wouldn't be surprising, though. The single staple in the spine seems to remain standard, though in Canada notice Popular Pubs have gone back to dual staples. Are we better off than our American friends? ARGOSY is increasing format and page number, so what price shortages?

Everyone goes to the movies. Some go all the time. Fans go to see the "shockers", the "crazy" films others look askance at. So to keep in the good graces of all youse guys and gals, I've dug up some movie dope for you. It's second hand but it comes from the best of sources: Ackerman in that new fanzine FAN SLANTS. Anyway, to begin..... Hollywood is digging deep to present the innocent (?) public with a startling (?) line of spookomedies and weirdies calculated to thrill, chill and otherwise make ill with clammy sweat - pardon me - animals sweat; people perspire; but us



fans merely "feel the heat"! Anyway, Hollywood figures they found a castiron formula to scare the pennies out of our pockets and into the box offices throughout the land, from coast to coast and - er - coast to coast. Henry Aldrich leads the parade, being scheduled to see a spirited apparition. Lupe Velez, the Mexicalico Spitfire (such manners, spitting!) is also in for the jimjams and the humping hives. R.K.O. announces it is making "The Amorous Ghost", and the "Ghost Ship", which sounds best. M.G.M. is going to do "The Canterville Ghost" unless the name is changed. Universal's "Mummy's Ghost" is in production. I wonder whose mother-in-law she'll be?

Fritz Lang once filmed, in French, a picture called "The last Will of Dr Mabuse". This is being released in the States at the present time. There is to be a new "Dr Mabuse" film, fourth in the series. I don't know who is making this though I understand Lang is to direct. Lang was one of Europe's best Science fiction filmists. Now in the States, he is purported to be breaking ground on more such pictures. He is supposed to be planning a cavalcade of America, extending into the future. Paramount is supposed to be interested in filming Lang's "Girl in the Moon", which, some of you may remember, first came out in Germany as a UFA production.

There is to be a "Cagliostro", "Tarzan Goes West", though whether this means "west" geographically or spiritually Ackerman doesn't make clear. Another outfit is filming "Tarzan and the Sheik". This doesn't suggest a weirdie or fantastic, I'll admit, but it may be. Note I give the impression that I don't count Tarzan's films as being fantastics. I don't. His are adventure films, mostly kid stuff, and nothing very spectacular at that. For a younger generation used to Flash Gordon, Mandrake the Magician and Superman, I wonder where Tarzan gets his pull.

The women are in it too, with "Cobra Woman" and "Woman of Horror". The Invisible Man will come back in "The Invisible Man's Revenge". "Return of the Vampire" keeps the Invisible Man company on his return engagement, while Curtis Siodmak, who did "Donovan's Brain", is working on a script "Son of Dracula", as well as on "Donovan's Brain". Universal is on set with "The Mad Ghoul", "Ali

Baba and the Forty Thieves" (this in technicolour) and "Zarya".

In a class with "Flesh and Fantasy", judging from their titles, we find "The Lodger", "The Uninvited", and "The Portrait of Dorian Gray". I can only swear in advance on the authenticity of the latter, which is well-known in fantasy circles.

Suggestive titles include, "The Screaming Skull", "7th Victim", "Dead Men Walk", "The Black Raven", "The Devil's Apprentice". Though, this latter could easily be a film about some Nazi bully. 20th Century Fox is reputed to be making one horror film every thirty days!

Even the musicals are to be hit. One, which will have to be futuristic, but not necessarily fantastic, will be "When the Lights Go On Again". Of course it could merely mean somebody had replaced the fuse in the basement! Another is, horror of horrors, "The Hep-Cat People"!

Ackerman heard, though this isn't at all definite, even he won't go out on a limb about it, that either Chaplin or Cagney are considering some of Thorne-Smith's stuff. I hope it isn't Chaplin. Chaplin would ruin a fantasy as I can't imagine him in anything but comedy. Cagney, judging from past work as an actor, and from present press notices on his merits as a producer with his brother, would be a sure thing. Cagney has yet to turn in a dull performance, and he is versatile. It seems he can do justice to anything.

More Universal dope: "Chamber of Horrors" which, no doubt, you have heard of, but if you haven't, it features Karloff, Rains, Lugosi, Lorre, Chaney, Hull, Ouspenskaya, Atwill and others.

Over at Republic we find "Magic Staircase". This appeared in Blue Book. Ackerman mentions the name as Bond, so I'll go out on a limb and add the names Nelson S.

Now for a note not at all fantastic yet interesting, if we can remember it when the time comes: in "Hey Rookie", the opening scene shows two busses descending a hill to the reception centre at Fort MacArthur. They turn and head straight for the audience; look to the left of the screen. In the background you will see a bench on which several soldiers are sitting. There are others

(Continued at bottom of next page)



# WHAT'S WRONG WITH FANDOM

Canadian Fandom

by Harry Schmarje

9

I understand there are drastic changes being made in fandom, changes which would not have to be made if the country were not at war. From what I've been able to hear, fans are becoming alarmed at the diminishing number of active fans and the conscription of some of fandom's more active members. Ackerman is in the army, but still on the job writing, but other draftees just drop fandom entirely.

This SF literature must have some irresistible pull, it must satisfy some suppressed desires of the reader. But what? What is the purpose of all these innumerable short thrilling stories, these amazing novels? Has the world gone crazy - insane? As I read the magazines, I enjoyed them very much, believed in them, and read them as if the stories were fact, as plausible as the war. But now I rather doubt their plausibility. Imagination is fine, but then again - are we mad? A too-vivid imagination may be a characteristic of a moron.

Fans are very sensitive people. Notice also how many writers and artists there are in stf ranks - are stf fans a part of the intelligentsia of the world?

But again, why the lurid pulp form of stf? Certainly, this is no attribute - but could it be that pulp is the only form in which our literature can appear? No, I think not - there have been numerous fantasy books published. A noteworthy example of fantasy's worth is August Derleth, who has had short stories published in certain magazines noted for literary worth. Fantasy in some forms is reflective of life, and thus can be realistic and even psychological in nature.

Then, since practically all fans can write, even if only a little, fandom is not in such bad shape after all. Those fans who write will make up for the material lost by conscripted fans by merely exerting themselves and by writing more and more, of things different than those to which they are accustomed.

I believe fandom should assume a more marked trend toward the fan's education. Such things as philosophy, psychology, life, morality, etc., can be discussed intelligently by fans. There is really nothing serious gone from fandom. Mags have been dropped, fans have lost interest -- but certain fans can bring about a revival.

## L I G H T   F L A S H E S (cont. from preceeding page)

standing behind them. One of these standing soldiers will have papers in his hand. THAT will be Forrest J. Ackerman! Maybe we could say "Hey Rookie", therefore, holds claim to being a horror film. For isn't the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society's Wolfman in it?

Is that enough movie dope to make your chops slaver for a while? I'll see if I can't dig up some for each issue of LIGHT FLASHES.

Well, folkses, I guess this is about all the dope for this time, unless some late flashes come in after this is mailed to Beak, in which case they'll be along. But I have a bit of editorializing to do.

It is on this subject of fanzines. In the U.S. every fan with some cash buys a duplicating outfit of some kind and publishes a fanzine. As a result we have umpteen dozen fanzines chasing each other through the mails. Some are very worthy efforts, but some are pretty puny and need some vitamin pills before being let out alone. Now it is a mighty fine

thing to print a fanzine, and I like to see the boys who can do it. But this I suggest: here in Canada let's not follow our American friends. Why clutter up the market with several, each fine, maybe, but still not as good as though each of those publishers worked together to turn out one BIG magazine. Let's not split up the field. Let's all pull together, dig together, to make the ONE magazine a whopper. Instead of splitting up the available talent, the available mailing lists, and having, say, three mediocre publications, let's lump it all together and back one. To boil it all down - let's all bend our efforts this year of 1944 and put our shoulders to the wheel and see if Canadian Fandom can't have the gol-darndest, biggest-headed, swellest fanzine on this continent. Let's show our American friends what we can do when we want to. Let's all dig for subscribers; let's boost CANFAN: let's see if we can't shove it in the top ten in the next poll. Let's  
(Cont. on page 21)



# LITTLE DROPS OF WATER

10

- by Gnr Bob Gibson -

Canadian Fandom

Perkins was looking decidedly prosperous after his return from Mars. Yet I understood that he had nothing but trouble there. At any rate he was wound up to tell me about it. He sat by his desk, fingering one or another of three crystal globes, perfect in shape and clarity, that rested by his blotter.

"You know," he said, "How the Martians keep their water from evaporating."

"Never thought of it," I admitted. "They must do something, I suppose, with only two pounds to the inch air pressure."

"They do. And let me tell you, it's neat. They charge it with surface tension - enough to overcome the vapour pressure. It won't evaporate, even in a vacuum, below 400 odd degrees."

I was wondering what this had to do with a success story. But perhaps he ~~wasn't~~ as well wound up as I thought. I let him ramble on.

"You know I was on Mars recently."

I nodded.

"It's a most uncanny place. And a most uncomfortable one, outside the pressure cities. You have to live in a space suit or your bubble, and carry a little sun motor that is chug-chugging all the time, charging your air tanks. You walk all day, with your food and airtanks and bedding and a net bag with your water - you pack it on the shady side of something or it focusses the sunlight and heats a spot. You can burn a hole in your bubble, and that's awkward. And all the while that damned little motor goes thump-whug, thumpwhug, thump-whug. Pretty soon you start saying it yourself."

"Half an hour before sunset you find a smooth spot, climb into the bubble, seal it and open three of the airtanks. Up she blows and there's your room for the night. The motor stops with sunset, and it's so quiet you wish the damned thing would run, just for company. You dismount the drinking tube from the helmet, with its battery, because the water's no good until the tension is reduced to normal. The tube is wired to do the trick. You drink some, and you shave -"

"Shave!" I interjected.

"Yes, shave. Whiskers are hell inside that facepiece. Fits like a gas-

mask. You eat and clean up, and put all the wasted water through the rectifier and back into the main supply with another gadget that increases the surface-tension. You have to use the drinking tube to break the "skin" where they are tangent, and they merge with a snap. In the morning you climb into the suit, screw on the fourth air tank, let the air out of the bubble, hold it open a moment to dry, pack up and move on.

"After two weeks of prospecting - with nothing found - you can bet I was glad to come across a bunch of natives. Even if they were pretty primitive-looking; and I had been told that some of the primitives had mighty queer customs. These gathered 'round. They seemed happy, but not friendly, about my coming."

"They led me up to one old geezer who was standing by an eight-foot globe of water. All of them, even the most primitive, are supplied with surface tension equipment, and all the communities have big apparatus. The uncivilized ones regard them as miraculous, not scientific. This particular lot went in for sacrifice to the water spirit, or whatever it was to them, I found."

"This old guy - he was thin as a three-tailed snake stood on end -- unhooked the battery cell from my drinking tube. Just like that -" he waved one arm. " - No warning. Then they relaxed a bucket-full of water and threw it over me. They must have had a tension projector arranged, for there I was, with a ball of loose water clamped around my knees, hobbling me as though it was gum rubber. Another lot over my shoulders and I was stuck. They backed me up to the big globe, relaxed my bonds' points of contact simultaneously, and I was inside, like the embryo in a frog's egg. A lot of air came in with me - all my dry surface - but under the pressure it was only a little bubble. They boosted someone up the outside and let it out."

"Well, there I was; really stuck. I could swim in the water, which made the globe distort and writhe violently. I could walk, rolling the ball along with me, but that was uphill work - there's a lot of weight in an eight-foot sphere of water, even on Mars. But there was nothing I could do about getting out. If my outfit had been unwettable --- waxed,



say - nothing would have been easier. But it was fabric, of course, and rubberoid.

"For a while I cultivated patience. I had air for a week if I kept quiet; far longer than I could live without removing the suit. I would not starve for a few days, I thought, and there was plenty of water. That reminded me I was thirsty, so I opened the tube. It was a nasty shock. Inside the globe the tension did not affect me, but all surfaces were affected. I couldn't draw any thru the tube and couldn't have used it if I had

"Water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink." A real stymie, if ever there was one.

"Night came, and my audience vanished. The surface of the water froze, and needle-sharp crystals extended in towards me. I turned on my torch and broke them. Dante was right about the cold section of Hell. The water conducted my bodily heat away, I had to keep moving to avoid going comatose, the energy keeping a space thawed.

"The night was infinitely long. I was using up my air several times faster than if I'd been quiescent; I was burning my tissues to keep going. I had food but no means of getting it inside my helmet. I was too cold to feel hunger or thirst, and I almost quit

"The glow of light through the translucent ice gave me hope and a trace of sanity. I relaxed into unconsciousness. When I recovered it was nearly dark, but the ice was melting. I thought "It's night again", and nearly died of shock before I remembered there is no nearly dark on Mars. It's blazing day, or black night. -- The moons -- well, if you stand up to something white you can see the shadow they cast. Bright as Venus here, maybe. The natives had put a black cover on the globe so the sun's heat would melt the ice faster. They wanted to see how I was, and were pleased as all get out when they perceived I was alive. I figured that their usual victims smothered almost at once, but an earthman in a space-suit was much more fun. More durable.

"But I knew another night would fix me.

"When the water warmed I realized I was deathly tired, furiously thirsty, and hungry in addition. But I was feverish and the thirst was torture. I drew blood in my mouth, trying to suck

that beautiful, useless water through the tube.

"Presently I dreamed of drinking - lemonade and lime juice and raspberry vinegar - swimming in a pool under pine trees - food, and long, cool drinks of water.

"After the sun passed the meridian I seemed to get numb to these major discomforts and a new torture grew on me. A ridiculous, nagging, unget-at-able itching inside my face-piece. My whiskers were growing inside the skin-tight rubber. It was a daily discomfort, but this was the first time I'd had more than twentyfour hours' growth. I could feel every whisker catch its head against the rubber and shove. The mask didn't yield, but the hair grew longer. I could feel every hair-root being shoved in deeper. In my condition it was a worse agony than any before it.

"So I began to dream of shaves. A barber working over me; doing the job myself. Shaving with hot water and lots of lather; shaving from streams of ice-water; shaving with salt water, soap and a two-weeks old blade; shaving over a kitchen sink with the tap running gently. -- Water -- and the lather shaken from the razor onto a film of water. Water --- and then a cold edge of sane memory cut through into my consciousness.

"I fumbled around with my kit, and I never had so many thumbs in my life. I worked out the shaving kit, and scrubbed over it until I got out the shaving cream. Somehow I got the cap off the tube with my clumsy gloved fingers, and I remember laughing at the endless, sinuous white worm of soap that emerged and tangled about me as I struggled up and reached out and drew the spouting tube across the inside surface of the water.

"The globe vomited me forth as tho the soap disagreed with it. Shot me out violently, with all the force of the uncontaminated elasticity of the bulk of its surface. I saw the amazed face of the old High Panjandrum before it squashed under my fall, heard the sun-motor start to suck air the moment it was exposed to it, and saw globules, globoids and plain splashes of water bouncing in the dust as I faded out.

"When I came to I was warm. I was in one of the underground rooms the primitives live in, surrounded by their funny little heaters, piles of their  
(Continued on page 17)



# COOKIN' WIT' GAS

12

- voices from the gallery -

Canadian Fandom

**JOHN HOLLIS MASON** CANADIAN FANDOM # 5 is a very fine job. Top rating goes to Bett's tour de force. I think we've finally convinced him how good he is.

For me, the interior contents didn't have the same general excellence that's been so conspicuous in #3 and #4, but Croutch's WEEPER was quite good. I'm pleased to see Les improving to such a degree. He has a good sense of scene in WEEPER, though from a strictly utilitarian standpoint, the third scene was not necessary. He'd made his point sufficiently well in the first two. Croutch still has a tendency to overdo it. The only other thing I didn't care for in the story was over-sentimentality. This seems to be one of LAC's weak points: whenever his stories utilize sentiment he slaps it on with a paint brush. Such a story must have a deft touch; otherwise it becomes merely maudlin. An excellent example of what I mean by a "deft touch" is provided in Thomas Burke's THE CHINK AND THE CHILD from his book of short stories, LIMEHOUSE NIGHTS. While not fantasy, this beautiful little love story (it's barely 4,500 words) is undoubtedly one of the finest shorts ever written.

STUFF AND SUCH always hits the spot with me. Hurter has the makings of a gossip columnist, I think, but it's always interesting. It would be interesting to see what his friends with the printing facilities could do on a published fanzine. Keep us informed on its progress, won't you, Fred?

The readers' department rates next. Laney, as usual, writes the most interesting letter. And I'm not saying that because he praises me! I disagree most violently with him, however, regarding Hurter's thoroughly delightful little verse, MISFIT. This was one of the best items in the last issue.

Gibson's Venusian Idyll is next best, followed closely by Sloan's cartoon.

Miss Peck does a fairly good job in THE UNCLEAN. It's at least reasonably professional in spots. The usual run of fan fiction doesn't even remotely resemble the professional. However, the trouble is the story is not adequately motivated. That is to say, in the type

of story she was attempting, the main character should have been malignant. He should have purposefully killed the old caretaker, should have been depicted such a rat that the reader felt satisfied when he died so horribly. It could have been done without being as hack as it sounds in skeleton form. As it was, I felt sorry for him and mad at the author. But let's see more, Shirley; a little more study of the technics of fiction and you should be ready to sell some stories. I'd recommend reading John Gallishaw's TWENTY PROBLEMS OF THE FICTION WRITER; ADVANCED PROBLEMS OF THE FICTION WRITER; ((also, THE ONLY TWO WAYS TO WRITE A STORY, by the same author)) and Lajos Egri's HOW TO WRITE A PLAY, more recent, and giving a very valuable insight into character and many aspects of the fiction story, as well as the play. Most of these books are obtainable in the public library.

LIGHT FLASHES: Croutch has something of the preacher in him and at times he's apt to blow off steam without giving much thought to what form the steam is shaping. This would seem to be the case in the section dealing with ASTOUNDING. I agree with him that ASFs going to the dogs, but the fault is not with Campbell so much as conditions and the writers themselves. Campbell, after all, is only the editor; he's got to get out around a hundred thousand words of passably good copy every month, come hell, war or high water. Anybody ever tried to get out that wordage in a month? Not even friend Croutch and he apparently seems to underestimate the task. If the writers who work for Astounding were on salary, were under the direct influence of JWC, what Les says might hold meaning. They're not, though. The writers (what there are of them, for remember that the war's taken more than seven eighths of the top-flight men who wrote for ASF) do what they think they can sell most easily. I'm not blaming them for that. It's better to do something that has a fairly sure reward rather than taking a chance on that which is uncertain. But you can't blame Campbell for that! He does what he can. I happen to know that he wanted del Rey to do some stories of the far future



last year, something with the more adventurous qualities of the Prof. Jamieson stories and the modern superior writing techniques that Astounding's evolved. But del Rey hasn't done anything, let alone what Campbell wanted him to. What more can one do? Campbell can't come out and say, "Now George Smith, I want you to develop a new style and write a type of stf, that's never been done before." Geo. O. Smith is writing the type of stories that he likes and that his background of electronics experience has given him; he can't switch. Campbell can only hope some new chaps will come along and provide something different. I think he's more than willing to have something new, even if it's only the old stuff with a new twist, and after all, what else is there to do nowadays? The thing to do, Les, is to get to work and turn out something original for Campbell. If it's of the technical quality Astounding demands, he'll buy it --- and bless you! I'm trying my damndest to hit something different; I think it's the duty of any fan who has real hopes of becoming a professional writer. Remember, it was fellows like van Vogt and Heinlein who speculated with an entirely new type of yarn, that set the fashion for the change in '39 and '40. Well, where're the new Heinleins and van Vogts? They're coming; they may appear tomorrow, three months from now or a year, but eventually, there's going to be a change for the better. I hope it's soon.

You did a good job of describing our "great day", Beak. Particularly liked: "A terrific flash of unearthly light lit up the room...Mason had blown a fuse." I had, both literally and figuratively. Whatta time!

I suggest keeping up the lithoing, if at all possible. It elevates the mag to a position of dignity that is definitely worth maintaining. I'll be pleased to contribute the odd buck or so to help out. I think some of the boys might feel the same way; why not put it up to them if the thing gets beyond you?

**DONALD A. WOLLHEIM** I was astonished to read Thomas Kelley's references to me in his talk with Mr Hilkert. Where Kelley obtained such extraordinary misinformation, I cannot even guess. However, let it be said that my father is not a magazine publisher, he is a physician and has never had any connection with

the literary business from any angle at all. Nobody I knew, either through relations or friendship, had any ownership of the company which put out Stirring Science Stories and Cosmic Stories. I was hired by them on my personal ability as a fantasy expert. My basis for them was an employee. Prior to my interview with Mr Albert, the president of Albing Publications, I had never seen or spoken to any of his business associates or him.

As for whether I could sell stories elsewhere --- I had stories in four magazines on the newstands at the time I was hired to put out Stirring.

I cannot say how fans would rate Kelley's yarns as against mine. I never heard of a poll taken by Weird Tales --- and if there was one I'm sure I wouldn't rate at all as I never sold that magazine anything.

**ANDY ANDERSON** I am very definitely not satisfied with merely the inclusion of my letter in Cookin' Wit' Gas. Anderson is a jerk, and not, in my opinion, well enough qualified in matters scientific-fictional to count. I strongly suggest you solicit a greater variety of letters if you care to improve the column.

I rather enjoy the fact that Canadian Fandom sticks pretty well to Canuck authors for material, though. Not that I particularly dislike Americans included, I just feel that a localized magazine like that is nice to have a round. (If there aren't too many of them)

Ever brimming with helpful suggestions, Anderson, the indefatigable jerk, comes up with one more, to wit: give us wider margins. Although you get more material in this way, your format is not particularly beauteous. Some of your material is not worth sacrificing good looks for, either. Such huge cartoons, for example (get 'em somewhat smaller) ---corn such as Our Pet Author...or even 4e's shortie. Don't get me wrong, Beak, I'm not panning CanFan just to be cynical and sneering. I really want to tell you how I would improve your fmz I may or may not stand alone on these opinions and alone I scarcely count, but this is still a democracy, for which I thank the Lord and the Marines.

**ALAN CHILD** I am sorry that I let you down. I had the last episode done but lost it. I was thus discouraged, and as I had by that time decided to quit fan-  
(Continued on page 15)



# THE AFTER-LIFE

14

- by Oliver E. Saari -

Canadian Fandom

Danton Morrell sat before me, the flames from the fireplace playing on his face, and one slim hand holding a cigaret. It was a long cigaret. Already it was half ash, but that hand held it as steadily as a surgeon holds a scalpel.

It was the hand of a surgeon. The brain, the poise, the vigor of a surgeon --- and the mind of a philosopher. A professional psychologist, vivisectioning minds with a razor-sharp mental scalpel. That was how I had always thought of Danton Morrell.

"The After-life," he said again, "exists. Take this weed, for example."

He held the cigaret aloft and the ash did not fall.

"The ash you see, is lifeless. But what becomes of the smoke? It eats the enamel from my teeth, yes. It fills my blood. But it does exist somewhere after the flame has died."

"You're confusing chemical things with something else," I said testily.

"Not so. Life is chemical."

"All right. But life after life. What can we know about that?"

"Very little, perhaps -- or a great deal. What do we know?"

"Well --- there's Heaven. But some of us don't know that. Still, there is some sort of heaven or after-life in every religion."

"Some of us believe in complete oblivion," he said, "But there is a problem there. We should be able to prove it, either way."

"What do you think?"

"Well, there's the belief in reincarnation --- one of the oldest. Death. An 'astral life' of several stages, and a rebirth. The soul finally reaches perfection and is liberated from that cycle into higher planes still --"

"I'm a realist," I said.

"All right. You'll go to the multiple Heavens or Hells of Mohammed, or maybe you'd like Valhalla better. Where there is always rejoicing. Or the Buddhist's Nirvana, the desireless state --"

"Are you going to commune with spirits?" I asked flatly.

He smiled and very carefully transferred the cigaret with the ash still intact as far as the tray.

"Don't be crude. I'm not a spiritualist. In fact, I don't know what I believe, but I think there's a problem there, and I think it can be solved. I want to know."

He stared thoughtfully past me at the fireplace, at the leaping flames sending their pungent alter-egos up the chimney into the freedom of the night.

"Who doesn't?" I said. "Hasn't it been tried? I seem to remember Houdini --"

"Houdini, yes, and A. Conan Doyle, too. Both tired to break the barrier from the other side. Both promised to communicate with friends from the spiritual state, and neither has been heard from."

"Why did they fail?"

"They waited too long. They should not have waited until death."

"And you?"

"I'm on the track. I've searched the past for clues. The ancient religions are encouraging but unscientific. All had their source in the fundamental hope or instinct in an after-life. The spiritualists aren't much better. They have ideas, yes, and imagination. But no science."

"Why should there be an after-life?" I asked. "Sometimes I find it just as easy to think of a blackness, a nothingness after death. It would simplify matters. After all, a simple organism like man shouldn't inflate his ego to the tune of immortality. Why shouldn't the individual just cease to exist after death, and only the race survive?"

"Yes, why not? I see your point. and I can't answer it. But you can't prove it. We'll see."

I WAS NO match for him at that game. I went away, mentally exhausted and disturbed. But eventually I came back to ask for more.

Danton Morrell was in his study again, gazing in fascination at the fire.

"You know, John, the analogy grows on me," he said. "Fire. So akin to life. It eats, it grows, it reproduces."

The problem was still on his mind, and his cool methodical brain was making progress. I could see it mirrored in his face, in the leaping flames that



played with his features.

"How does the problem go?" I asked.

"I've made progress. I've studied Dante, and much of the older philosophy. It was more pure, more fundamental. Believe me, spiritualism was a science until it was debunked."

"Rightly," I added.

"The Frenchman, Fournier, is one of the few modern thinkers who has treated the subject seriously. You haven't read his book?"

He held a volume aloft. I shook my head.

"Wants to do everything with mathematics," Morrell said. "Thinks mathematics will solve every problem, including the spiritual. He's right. It would, if we had the symbols. We're limited, fenced in by symbols. Without symbols we might --"

"Mathematics without symbols. Ha ha!"

"Well, not exactly mathematics -- not integrals and sines and differential equations. But mathematical method applied in a different sense, with a new set of tools. Mathematics of the mind."

"But -- after-life," I said, "Where does this get you? How close are you to the truth?"

"So close," he said absently, thinking, "That I think I shall know tonight. It is not a problem of physical quantities, but a problem of the mind alone. Fournier's method has helped, though there was something missing. It is a problem in pure logic, and like any other problem the solution is to be reached step by step. But the solution is inevitable."

I knew Danton Morrell well enough to be thrilled at that. He never failed. His was the keenest, most clear-thinking brain I knew --- a brain supplemented by the sheer physical health of a body that was yet young. A brain that stopped at nothing.

And if he said he was about to unveil the age-old mystery of what comes after death --

HE STILL stared into the fire. His hand, outstretched, held another cigarette, another ash. I couldn't detect a tremor in the long, slim fingers, though my own hand was shaking as I dabbed my brow. The flame in the fireplace was dying.

Then my friend spoke, and there was

a note of excitement in his voice. Not exultation, but triumph of a sort.

"You may be right, John, in part about that blackness," he said, still looking into the fire. "But not completely. No, not completely."

"What do you mean?"

He didn't answer. I looked at him and saw the intense concentration on his features. A cool, god-like concentration. Step by step, so sure, so logical.

"Darkness," he said again to himself. "Yes, Fournier had it there --"

He seemed to be seeing something in the flames. As if that futile analogy of his had some meaning.

I waited. Then I couldn't stand it any longer. I couldn't stand his calmness in the face of a thing like that. He was making the most important revelation in the history of the world, and he just sat there.

I got up and fetched myself a drink of water.

When I came back, the fire was out. Only the glow remained, and a faint trickle of smoke going up the chimney. Danton was still sitting before the fireplace.

"Well -- ?" I began.

He didn't answer me. Then I saw the outstretched hand. The cigaret had fallen to the floor, the ash broken.

I picked it up, my throat dry. Carefully I put it in the tray.

Then I took Danton's hand and moved it aside, and peered at his silent, thoughtful face.

He had succeeded. He was dead.

### COOKIN' WIT' GAS (Cont. from page 13)

dom I didn't feel like doing it over. That was two months ago. Now I have finally found time to tell my friends of my decision. I shan't give you pages of reasons. There is only one reason....I have lost interest. I hardly think that my departure from the great institution will be a permanent one. I'll probably be back in a few years or even sooner.

**JOHN M. CUNNINGHAM** The cover is exquisitely a work of fanzine art, and as a whole you have a compact fanzine, mimeo well done and quit clear reading.

.....I can see you could use some better stuff. It's a shame stencils have to be wasted on such poor stuff. I  
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# CORRESPONDENCE PIECE

16

- by Bob Tucker -

Canadian Fandom

Mr. Henry Pinham, Esq.  
Editor, Thrilling Tales  
New York City

Weatherbee, Ohio  
February 2, 1943

Dear Sir:- Attached to this letter you will please find my major triumph in the world of literary endeavours, namely, an 8,000 word thriller entitled, "Footprints Across the Sun".

It pleases me to report to you that the scientific facts as stated in the story check to the nth degree with the best of authorities, among them Mr Joseph Gulbert, our local garbageman, who, you may be interested to know, is a person of no small importance in the field of amateur astronomy. Mr Gulbert has read the story and pronounces it Okay.

It has also been read by Mr Robert Lundus, the editor of the Weatherbee Weekly Bee, and before the Tuesday Ladies' Literary Club, both of whom have graciously informed me that they will be pleased to pass on to you recommendations as to the story's merit.

I can safely promise you the extra sale of about forty copies of Thrilling Tales in Weatherbee, of the issue which carries my literary epic.

Waiting to hear from you, I am your faithful servant,

H.P. Ponghoff

Mr Henry Pinham, esq.  
Editor, Thrilling Tales  
New York City

Weatherbee, Ohio  
March 6, 1943

Dear Sir: More than a month ago I forwarded to you with proper postage my greatest manuscript, entitled "Footprints Across the Sun", which I then described as a powerful scientific novelette of dynamic scope and magnitude, totalling some 8000 words in length.

Since that date I have heard nothing from you on the matter nor has the manuscript been returned for proofreading or other matter pertaining to impending publication. Permit me to ask you to look into the matter immediately and to favour me with an immediate report on the same.

Awaiting an answer, yours truly,

H.P. Ponghoff

Mr Henry Pinham  
Editor, Thrilling Tales  
New York City

Weatherbee, Ohio  
April 3, 1943

Dear Sir: Look: I know you are a busy man, but can't you just imagine how worried I am over the fate of one noteworthy manuscript sent to your office on February 2nd, of this year. I fairly bite my nails in agony over its probable fate.

The first week in March I sent a letter of inquiry on the manuscript, and enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your reply. Again I was terribly disappointed. It was entitled "Footprints Across the Sun" and was an 8000 word noevelte.

I would appreciate just a hint as to its final resting place even if such place is in the pages of your magazine.

sincerely,  
H.P. Ponghoff

Henry Pinham  
Thrilling Tales  
NYCity

Weatherbee, Ohio  
May 19, 1943.

Where the hell is my story?

H.P. Ponghoff



Thrilling Tales  
New York City  
Attn. Mr Pinham

Weatherbee, Ohio  
May 29, 1943

Dear sirs: I am in receipt of a notice from your firm asking the meaning of my letter of May 19th. This certainly puzzles me, as I have been writing to you the matter since early March.

In February of this year I mailed to your office an 8000 word scientific novellette which I entitled "Footprints Across the Sun". I heard nothing from you. Early in March I wrote you asking as to the whereabouts of the manuscript and what decision had been made upon it. Receiving no answer, I again, in April, dashed off a short note asking Mr Pinham the reason for the delay in reporting on the story. Again no answer.

Frankly, gentlemen, my patience was exhausted. At that time I then addressed to you a terse note (admittedly in somewhat vulgar language) demanding to know what had been done to my manuscript, which I regarded as a major piece of writing destined to take its rightful place in the literary annals of the world.

So there I place the full situation in your lap. Obviously the fault is yours, as it has now been almost four months since the story was dispatched to you, without result.

Trusting you to speedily clear up the situation, I remain,

H.P. Ponghoff

Thrilling Tales  
New York City

Weatherbee, Ohio  
June 12, 1943

Gentlemen: I have at hand your letter of the 9th, informing me that a thorough search has been made of your office without the finding of my manuscript, "Footprints Across the Sun".

Gentlemen, permit me to say I am astounded. I cannot conceive of a vast business organization such as yours being run in so sloverly a manner.

I shall give you ten days in which to produce my manuscript, with the alternative of sending your check for eighty dollars (\$80.00) to cover the 8000 words at one cent per word, or I shall place the entire affair in the hands of my attorney.

yours, H.P. Ponghoff

Thrilling Tales  
New York City

Weatherbee, Ohio  
June 15, 1943

Gentlemen: May I offer my apologies for my hasty words in my letter to you of the 12th? Allow me to inform you that the manuscript in question, "Footprints Across the Sun" is herewith enclosed for your consideration.

Because of carelessness on my part, the story became lost on my premises when it dropped between my desk and the wall, where it has reposed ever since. My housekeeper found it this morning.

I shall expect a quick report from your office.

Truly yours, H.P. Ponghoff

### LITTLE DROPS OF WATER

food, dozens of baseball-sized water-balls and all my kit. Even the drinking tube battery and the cap of the shaving-cream tube. They'd transferred their veneration to me.

"How did I do it? I told you. I remembered dropping soap on a film of water. Try it. Or float bits of matchstick on water and touch the space between them with soap. The water retreats in one case, the chips in the other -- withdrawn by the surrounding

(Cont. from page 11)

surface tension because the soap reduces it locally. The globe must have turned inside out, ejecting the soapy part.

"And why am I not broke? Common sense, my boy. I brought back some of the surface tension gadgets. Sold bouncing balls made of water - and now -- look here."

He tossed across the yellow ball. "Lemonade -- in the perfect package.

(Cont. on page 21)



# STUFF & SUCH

18

- by Fred Hurter jr -

Canadian Fandom

Ah, so it is Christmas, and again we celebrate that quaint pagan festival which the worshippers of Apollo or Dionysus, Mithra, Adonis and Attis, Osiris, Astarte, and Jesus celebrated in the past. But, you say, what connection have all these other pagan gods got to do with Christmas? Nothing, except the fact that all these gods and a host more were born on or very near our Christmas; were born of a Virgin-mother; in a cave, underground chamber, or stable, led a life of toil for mankind; were called Healer, Savior, Mediator, Deliverer; were pioneers of Mankind to the heavenly world; founded communions of Saints, and churches into which disciples were received by Baptism; and they were commemorated by Eucharistic meals.

Just one example; the case of Krishna, the ninth avatar of Vishnu. Krishna was born in a cave of a virgin, (Devaki) and his birth was announced by a star. A ruler sought to destroy him and a massacre of infants was ordered. He escaped the massacre, and later performed miracles, raising the dead, healing lepers, the deaf, and the blind, and championing the poor and the oppressed. He had a favourite disciple, Arjuna (John ?) before whom he was transfigured. He was crucified on a tree, and rose from the dead, ascending into heaven. And he will return on the last day to be the judge of all.

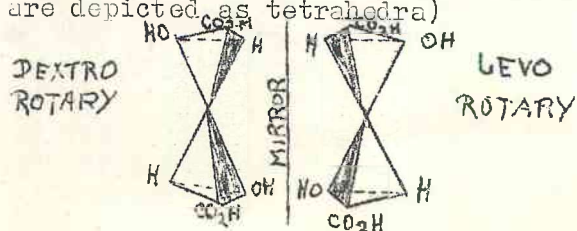
Has a familiar ring, hasn't it? It would seem that either Mankind has an appalling lack of imagination, and the various peoples have had to borrow, steal or plagiarize their religions from each other. But this cannot be the case as these religions have cropped up in different eras, some of them long before contact was established between them. These religions appear spontaneously, yet there must be some connecting link. The first clue for such a link comes from the fact that any people who developed such a religion were well-advanced in Astronomy. Advanced to such an extent that they were able to tell in which constellation the sun was, even though the constellation could not be seen.

It was then noticed that December 25th, the birthday of so many of these gods, was on the old Julian calendar reckoned as the day of the Winter Solst-

ice and of the Nativity of the Sun. And why were so many of these gods born in underground chambers? Why? Because in those days the sun was believed to go underground. Justin Martyr himself states that Christ was born when the sun takes its birth in the Augean Stable. And why did a star herald the birth of these gods and saviors. Let us look at the elementary astronomy of those days. How could the date of the sun's rebirth be fixed? You can check this yourself. Go out on Christmas Eve and look towards the South, and at midnight you will see Sirius shining brightly near the meridian. Some three thousand years ago, however, Sirius was on the meridian at midnight on the day of the Winter Solstice. The presence of Sirius on the meridian thus became a sign that the sun had reached the very lowest point of his course, and was about to be reborn. Also, at the same time you will notice the great constellation of Orion, and that the three stars of his belt have long been known as the Three Kings. And why were these gods born of a Virgin? Well, three thousand years ago, immediately after midnight, the constellation of the Virgin rose above the horizon, and it is interesting to note that on the side entrance of the Notre Dame Cathedral at Paris, which is figured with a zodiac, the sign Virgo is replaced by that of the Madonna and the Child.

I could go on at great length of the astronomical connections of Christmas, but as I intend to use this material for the second chapter of a series begun in MEPHISTO (plug), we'll let it go at that.

Came across an interesting little problem in stereoisomerism the other day, and no professor at McGill was able to answer my question. Here it is. The dextro and levo forms of an optically active compound: take tartaric acid for example; have identical properties, one form being the mirror image of the other (in the diagram the asymmetric carbon are depicted as tetrahedra)





# THE STORY OF TREES

Canadian Fandom

- by Alistair Macrae -

19

"Softly the breeze is shaking the trees"

sharp . . .

The silver birches whispered among themselves and then paused to hear the wind's reply. The bees, too, were in intimate conversation, their deep, melodious humming blending with the tuneful notes of the thrush. Perhaps all nature was chatting and gossiping about the child lying on the grassy green carpet at the feet of the silver birches. The child herself, a chubby, apple-cheeked baby, was unconcerned by the murmuring of the trees and stared, gurgling with glee, at a daisy whose only contribution to the discussion was an occasional nod of agreement. The child had arrived during the night at a time when the pale Witch of Darkness had drawn a cloud over the moon; from whence she had come, no one knew, even the old owl who had kept the midnight watch shook his head with an unknowing nod . . .

But, strangest of things, an object bright and shining in the child's hands gleamed and glittered . . . a knife, razor

"Under the greenwood tree, who loves to lie with me"

In the shady dell, two people were resting on the grass; one was a tall man with a laughing smile and carefree eyes, the other was a beautiful woman whose voice was unsteady and whose nervous smile flitted on and off her face. There was no love reflected in their eyes; the man showed frank curiosity as he gazed with admiration at the rolling curve of her hips and the flatness of her stomach; there was something deep flashing from the dark eyes of the woman, like the gleam of gold from the bottom of a murky pond. One would almost say there was hatred . . .

As time went by and the sun sent an orange glow through the trees, the man pressed himself closer to his companion and urged her to kiss. Slowly, behind his head she slipped her hand; there was  
(Continued on page 20)

## STUFF & SUCH (Continued from preceeding page)

However, if the two forms are mixed 50-50, the mixture has different properties. Now why should that be so? Both compounds that went into the mixture have the same atoms, the same properties, the same space relationships, and yet their mixture has different properties. Why?

I've always heard that Montreal is a wide open city, but I was surprised myself when I walked a few steps off St Catherine in the heart of the city, and stumbled onto a thriving gambling outfit working behind the front of an "empty" store. Wagers of over a thousand dollars were being made on a particularly fiendish game known as barbotte. And then there is that other place....but I am digressing.

These rumours of gigantic rocket shells supposedly being built by the Germans to launch across the English Channel interest me greatly, inasmuch as such rockets have appeared in sky almost since sky began. I doubt, however, their efficiency, or accuracy, and also doubt whether they will contribute much to the science of rocketry beyond poss-

ibly stirring up research on rockets by the Allies.

And what else is there to say? Oh yes, the quaint basis for the Arthurian legends, but I shall leave that till the next time. So I shall close dear reader (?) with a little quotation from "Beyond Life" by James Branch Cabell, that amused me greatly:

"What is man, that his welfare be considered? - an ape who chatters to himself of kinship with the archangels while filthily he digs for groundnuts. . .

- Yet more clearly do I perceive that this same man is a maimed god . . . He is under penalty condemned to compute eternity with false weights and to estimate infinity with a yardstick; and he very often does it..

- There lies the choice which every man must make - or rationally to accept his own limitations. Or stupendously to play the fool and swear that he is at will omnipotent."

adios

F.H.



# FANDOM, FAD OR FACT

20

- by Nanek -

Canadian Fandom

How many fans are there? How many people who write to all the fantasy and science-fiction magazines on the market, either pro or amateur? How many people, who, upon receipt of the first issue of some faded little mag sit down and send the suffering editor a dime's worth of stamps and a poem or picture or article? How many who gather together a ream of cheap paper, some mimeo or duplicating supplies and set forth bravely to storm the world of fandom with a NEW FAN MAG? How many people who buy Amazing Stories, or Famous Fantastic Mysteries, or Future or Weird Tales every month, and do so faithfully every time an ish comes out, yet never write ye ed. a line, or submit a story or other material, either to a pro or fan mag? How many?

## A VERY GOOD MANY

A rousing, cheerful many. An army strong in numbers, weakened by dissension and doubt, by fads and fueds. We march along, having our little conventions, fighting our little fueds and arguing where we should be in agreement. Alas, so much wasted energy, so much wasted talent.....and for what? To get one's name in a fan mag, or mayhap drag a poor pro editor into carrying their battling letters in every issue, wasting

space that might better be devoted to honest, constructive criticism of the contents of last month's issue. Yet we are sincere, in our own muddling way.... honest in our convictions, even if they seem like material for an insane asylum to an outsider. We are merciless to a mistake in science; most of us know the main facts about the planets, and understand space travel and its problems, better than the savants. We are a queer race, devoted to eccentricities and hack writing and bug-eyed monsters on the cover of science-fiction magazines. We are a screwy lot, but cheerful in our madness. And cunning too. We almost have the rest of the world fooled; almost, but not quite. Never mind. Better to be the only madman in a world of sane people, than the only sane person in a world of madmen. What we need is more opposition. It does wonders to the human mental metabolism. When opposed, humanity is a pig-headed, mulish bunch. If there was a law against science-fiction it would really mean a lot to us, but as it is.....tolerance is the deadliest enemy of all. We need a good, rousing crusade for.....for, let us say, a rocket trip to the moon.....it's a new idea you know.....even if the hackiest of writers has been there before. We might do well to try it.

## THE STORY OF TREES (continued from preceeding page)

a flash like polished silver and as the sun's glow now turned to crimson and steeped the trees in a fantasy of colour, so too was the knife, razor sharp, stained a deep red. . .

"Come away, come away Death, by the sad cypress let me be laid"

Somewhere, under the light of the pale moon a dog had howled; the wind was moaning mournfully; a candle flickered and went out; an old woman now left in darkness uttered a foul curse. Then there was a deep and penetrating silence, nay, a very thickening of the air, as though the mongrel's last haunting howl had shattered the bounds of Hell and released upon Earth the homeless

shades of the Dead. Then the old hag saw her erstwhile lover, a man with curious and carefree eyes; his breast was held against her head; she could feel his heart beating. Suddenly his body stiffened in her arms; he screamed in mortal agony; again and again he screamed... Then she saw a vision, a grove of silver birches, but many had been cut down and were lying on the grass. Again her lover, a man with a laughing smile, was there; he was hammering at a long, narrow box...

An old woman was lying on the ground; her body was twisted grotesquely; blood was oozing from an opened vein in her wrist; on the floor lay something bright; a knife, razor sharp..

- finis -







# LE ZOMBIE

Box 260, BLOOMINGTON, ILL.  
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED





ON ANOTHER BIRTHDAY

Anon.

The rain clouds rising over Westwood Hills,  
 The lucent silver of a desert moon,  
 Our double anniversary in June,  
 The mountain snows, the memory that fills  
 The shadows with a fresh and nameless grace:  
 These are the shadows of a cone of growth  
 Upon whose lip we feel the swelling warmth,  
 The pressure from the past, the opening  
 space.

Some distant place between the first and last  
 Of mortals climbing toward eternity  
 We stand, two finite flocks in history,  
 Into the dawn, two moments of the past....

Slowly the dream withdraws. There streams a  
 long

And heavy worried rolling from the skies;  
 A meteor sobs with brief intensity  
 And falls, a corruscation and a song:

The legend in an Oriental land  
 Of how two castings of a temple bell  
 Had failed, and how upon the third attempt  
 The precious alloy of a princess' blood  
 Was added by a sacrifice to love.  
 The bell had perfect form, the tone was pure.

The metals scattered thinly through the earth,  
 The naked stuff that builds a greater world,  
 Are mixed with human blood and human work  
 to build the towers that sparkle in the dawn,  
 With one inscription on each monument:  
 "A simple law defeats the grandest Aim,  
 The more of building takes the more of blood".

Around and through and over this girl and man,  
 The meaning rises as a slow surprise,  
 That love could blindly bring the world to rise  
 Without the workings of a greater plan.

A dark initial conscience from afar,  
 Walled in and wretched, pulsing, beat again,  
 And the first longing through a roof of pain  
 Looked up the stairs that open toward the stars.

COOKIN' WIT' GAS (Cont. from page 15)  
 also include 40 Ackorman's article in  
 this category. Certainly Forry could  
 turn out better stuff than this.

BOB TUCKER I like that label, 'CAN-  
 FAN', but why not drop the hyphen?  
 You can subtitle it: "The Confounding  
 Fanzine!" For it did just that when  
 I discovered a likeness of myself  
 squatting on the 'thing's' right knee  
 except that I long ago lost that mean  
 look in my eye.

Enjoyed Crutch, Child & Wright  
 best of all. Furter casually finds a  
 book I've been hunting for a long  
 while. Gnats to him.

LIGHT FLASHES (Cont. from page 9)

all work together and set a pace that  
 will have the others looking to their  
 laurels.

Let's make 1944 something to be  
 proud of and remember - as fast as we  
 attain a goal, let's set another to  
 work for.

So, Canadians, let's make it a  
 case of ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL!!

LITTLE DROPS OF WATER (Cont. from 17)

Raspberry Vinegar, grape juice," he  
 touched the others. The globe in my  
 hand was elastic, live-feeling. "And  
 here" he slipped a paper straw into a  
 coil of wire on a rig like a pocket  
 lighter. "Touch the wired end to the  
 ball." I did, and a gentle fountain  
 of lemonade flowed onto my shirt-  
 front. I "capped the gusher" in an  
 appropriate manner, and the ball van-  
 ished.

"Man," I said, "You'll make a  
 fortune."

(The end)

YOU WON'T KNOW THE NEW

## CENTAURI

When you see it. It sports a lithographed cover, improved format and printing, and quite a few distinctive drawings. Material includes fiction by Rimel, articles by Daniel and others, bibliographical features, verse, humour by Pong himself, columns by Warner and Anderson, plus several pages of letters on the first issue. Ten cents, from Andy Anderson, 515 Ocean Avenue, Pismo Beach, California, U.S.A.





CENTURY