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This is volume one, number three of Fantasy Commentator, bearing the date September, 1944. It is edited and published by A. Langley Searles, whose address is 19 East 235th Street, New York 66, N. Y. Unless otherwise noted, all material included herein is authored by him. Though no fiction is desired, I can use occasional worthwhile articles if anyone is in the mood to throw any my way. No extensive editing is ever done without express permission. Sixty-eight copies of this number are sent to F.A.P.A.'s official editor for distribution to members through the usual mailings; the remainder of the copies mimeographed (usually about twenty in number) is distributed free of charge to all those who want them. Please enclose postage with your request, and specify whether you wish the magazine mailed flat or rolled...

This-'n'-That

My apologies, first, to one and all for failing (as promised) to have *Fantasy Commentator* #2 in the mailing for which it was dated. Fact is, friends, your editor had a chance to take a two-week vacation in New England, and didn't have the heart to turn it down... For rectification, if all goes well, two issues will find their way into the September mailing.

I'm very pleased to be able to present, in this number, Sam Moskowitz' long article on magazine science-fiction of the past. It is a sequel to his article "Uncrowned Greats," which appeared in the second anniversary issue of *Fantascience Digest* and will prove, I think, equally interesting. Needless to say, all opinions expressed in "Forgotten Classics" are Sam's own, and do not necessarily reflect those of your editor... By the way, for those who would like additional information on the story "Omega the Man," which is mentioned in the article, there is a short statement by the author on how he came to write it to be found in the June 1934 number of *Fantasy Magazine*.

Along with the foregoing feature, this number has an article by your editor on William Hope Hodgson's writings. As noted therein, it is the first in a series of two such write-ups; this gives the impressions garnered from Hodgson by the reviewers of his own day, while that yet to be written will deal with the opinions held by critical enthusiasts of this decade. The majority of the material in the first of the two will be new even to such Hodgson devotees as Koenig and Wheatly, I believe. Most important is probably the bibliography of Hodgson's books, which will be seen on the opposite page; your editor believes that it is the first time that it has been given complete anywhere. Three of its listings were but recently discovered.

Here's-the-$64-question department: Is the John Collier who authored "The Radium Veil," which appeared in *Popular Magazine* for July 20 1921, *the* John Collier of *Presenting Moonshine* fame? And can anyone cooperate with an editorial desire to beg, borrow, steal, or even buy this yarn?

There is literally room for no more than a word or two concerning current fantasy books. $2.75 of your hard-earned cash will buy a copy of *Lord Halifax's Ghost Book* (Didier Publishing Co., 1944), published some time ago in England, but never (till now) in this country. And those who remember with pleasant memories Clark Ashton Smith's trnslations (in the old *Weird Tales*) of those poems of Charles Baudelaire will be pleased to know that that French poet's biography has recently appeared; *Flower of Evil* (Sheed & Ward, 1944) is by Edwin Morgan, and sells for $3...

Fans who would use the word *fen* as the plural of *fan* would do well to examine their dictionaries; *fen* is defined as 'a marsh or bog' and also (perhaps better) as 'a disease of hops, caused by a mold of rapid growth.' While such an appelation applies most fittingly to many cerebra in fandom, I nevertheless feel that the correct thing to do is still to retain Webster's plural, *fans*. (Speer take note.)

The length of the two articles in this issue has, as you can see, resulted in the elimination of "Devil Take the Hindmost---". I hope to see it return again in *Fantasy Commentator* #4... In the meantime, a very hasty glance at the June 1944 mailing: *The Reader and Collector* and *Memoirs of a Superfluous Fan* take top honors in my opinion. Why? Because both have something to say and say it well. And that is more than can be said for *Star-Stung*, *Take-off*, Degler tripe, *Arcadia* (with its juvenile muddlings and annoying "bw" interlineations at every turn; how did Honig get in F.A.P.A.? I thought we had an age-limit of five years) and other "magazines" I could name. *Black & White*: Ackerman, as usual, presents no cogent argument, but simply a hodge-podge of breast-beating emotionism---which is why Speer's side wins out in this instance. But I still maintain that racial discussions have no place in fandom, or in F.A.P.A...

Bibliography of William Hope Hodgson

The Calling of the Sea
47pp, no date (1920); London: Selwyn & Blount; 19½cm; 2/6.
(contains a frontispiece portrait of the author and an introduction by A. St. John Adcock.)

Captain Gault: being the exceedingly private log of a sea captain
303pp, 1917; London: Everleigh Nash; 19½cm; 5/-.
295pp, 1918; New York: Robert McBride; 19½ cm; $1.35.

Cargunka, and Poems and Anecdotes
84pp, 1914; New York: R. H. Paget; 18cm; $1.50.

Carnacki the Ghost-Finder
288pp, 1913; London: Everleigh Nash; 19½ cm; 6/-.
288pp, 1914; London: Everleigh Nash; 19½cm; 2/-.
248pp, 1920; London: Holden & Hardingham; 19cm; 2/6.

Carnacki, the Ghost-Finder, and a Poem
14pp, 1910; New York: Paul R. Reynolds; 21cm; 25¢.

The Boats of the "Glen Carrig": being an account of their adventures in the strange places of the earth, after the founding of the good ship "Glen Carrig" through striking upon a hidden rock in the unknown seas to the southward. As told by John Winterstraw, Gent., to his son James Winterstraw, in the year 1757, and by him committed very properly and legibly to manuscript
312pp, 1907; London: Chapman & Hall; 19cm; 6/-.
252pp, 1920; London: Holden & Hardingham; 19cm; 2/6

The Ghost Pirates
276pp, 1909; London: Stanley Paul; 20cm; 6/-.
248pp, 1920; London: Holden & Hardingham; 19cm; 2/6.
(The original edition has a frontispiece by Sidney Sime.)

The House on the Borderland: from the manuscript, discovered in 1877 by Mssrs. Tonnison and Berroggnog, in the ruins that lie to the south of the village of Kraighten, in the west of Ireland. Set out here with notes
xii-300pp, 1908; London: Chapman & Hall; 19cm; 6/-.
252pp, 1921; London: Holden & Hardingham; 19cm; 2/6.

The Luck of the Strong
318pp, 1916; London: Everleigh Nash; 19½cm; 6/-.
250pp, 1920; London: Holden & Hardingham; 19cm; 2/6.

Men of the Deep Waters
303pp, 1914; London: Everleigh Nash; 19½cm; 7/6.
250pp, 1921; London: Holden & Hardingham; 19cm; 2/6.

The Night Land: a love tale
583pp, 1912; London: Everleigh Nash; 19½cm; 6/-.
254pp, 1921; London: Holden & Hardingham; 19cm; 2/6.
(The 1921 edition is considerably shortened and abridged.)

"Poems" and "A Dream of X"
84pp, 1912; New York: R. H. Paget; 19½ cm; 50¢.

(continued on page 42)

Forgotten Classics

by
Sam Moskowitz

The veteran science-fiction reader sighs as he scans some modern neophyte's list of "classics." And his sigh is not one of distaste or impatience, for the list before him may contain many fine stories, true. Rather, he grieves for those tales which might have been named, yet were not. Even the old-timers are prone to forget, and with the passing of years only the "big names" remain unfaded in their minds. "The Skylark of Space" by Edward Elmer Smith and Lee Hawkins Garby, A. Merritt's "Moon Pool" and "Twilight" by Don A. Stuart----and then, all too often, the remainder of the list is composed of contemporary stories, outstandingly merely because they happen to possess the questionable virtue of readability.

Some of the most enjoyable moments I have experienced as a reader of science-fiction have been spent in comparisons of great stories with other fans, equally well-read. At first the choice of "greats" is painstaking and difficult ---but practice lends facility to the mind and suddenly the gates of memory open wide and one's fund of memorable stories swells from a meagre trickle to a raging torrent, and we are overwhelmed with nostalgia.

I wonder how many fans have bought old and rare issues of *Amazing Stories*, *Wonder Stories* and *Weird Tales*, and, though delighted by the grand atmosphere of these magazines, nevertheless laid them aside unread simply because no familiar titles were to be seen on the contents-pages. Let such fans in particular read this article carefully, and at least preserve in memory those titles mentioned herein.

In the files of science-fiction magazines you will find the name Chester D. Cuthbert mentioned but twice. It is with only one of his stories that we are at all concerned: "The Sublime Vigil," which appeared in the February 1934 issue of *Wonder Stories*. If you are searching for blazing rockets and hissing ray-guns, do not read this story, for you will not find them there. Or if your taste inclines toward Venusian princesses and Martian gadzooks you will be likewise disappointed. But---if you have ever wished to read science-fiction that bordered upon literature; science-fiction with writing so fine as to make comparisons distinctly odious; science-fiction that successfully absorbs a touch of fantasy and is the better for it; science-fiction of so unusually human a quality that it has appeared but once in the broad annals of the field; science-fiction that broaches a theory so startling, so vast and so distinct that it could appear but once---if you have longed for such qualities read "The Sublime Vigil" for in no other science-fiction story has the cold cosmos been more completely blended with burning human emotions. When it appeared the editor remarked that it was "undoubtedly one of the most beautiful stories we have published in a long time." After it was published the readers could give it no higher praise than "We shall reread this story many times." Read, then, this tragic epic of a man who resolved to remain true to his love throughout all eternity. It is a story of the strangest vigil ever held---a sublime vigil.

It is hard for new fans to believe that at one time a science-fiction tale stood little or no chance of acceptance unless it contained a new idea or a novel twist of an old one. It is hard for those miserable beggars who prattle about "escape literature" to comprehend that once science-fiction was *more* than escape literature. ---That once it was an inexhaustible fund of new, creative, unique ideas. Once it was a type of fiction that appealed as much to the intellect as it did to the emotions. It is hard for the sterile, prostituted minds of today's "typists" (for by no stretch of the imagination are they writers) to believe that once science-fiction *did* give one a basic insight into the sciences and that it could be authentic, too. And so it is that through the years certain stories stand out in the mind because of the nuclear idea alone---so startling, so original that they cannot be forgotten.

Clare Winger Harris' "Miracle of the Lily" is one of these. In this example, the scientists of Earth, after years of painstaking labor, have succeeded in communicating with the planet Venus. Their respective languages having been decoded, the two worlds exchange ideas. Both work together to complete two television sets which will enable the peoples to see one another. As these projects are being completed, Venus sends word that the world is defiled by millions of little insects that have wrought ruinous damage on previous occasions. Could the inhabitants of Earth suggest a means of extirmination? But Earth radios its answer: it, too, is plagued by locusts, termites, boll-weevils and similar vermin, which are kept under control only with great difficulty... Then the great day is at hand: the television sets are complete. Venus will broadcast first to show a sample of the Venusian insects. Earth scientists crowd about the screen. It flickers once, twice---then clearly defined, appears a huge grasshopper _holding a tiny, squirming man!_

Then there is "Dream's End," by A. Connell. In kaleidoscope, Connell presents pictures of the world as we know it breaking apart. Upside-down battleships appear over the Empire State Building. Objects suddenly crumble and disappear. Every natural law breaks down, and as the entire world collapses into complete chaos, the author pictures a super-being awakening from his slumber, to lose the last fragments of his dream, which is our universe, from his great waking brain...

In "The World Wreckers" Raymond Z. Gallun again presents the theme of interplanetary communication. This time Pluto is the planet reached, and both worlds develop a device for transmuting material objects into energy, sending it thus through space, and reintegrating it on arrival at its destination into the original form. It is planned to exchange objects between the two planets, using this means. The Earth scientists send the nearest thing at hand, a lighted candle. They wait. Then---abruptly there is a giant flare in the sky---and Pluto is no more!

"Set Your Course by the Stars." That is what Eando Binder's hero did in a short story of that title. Space navigation was planned to perfection. All that one needed to do was to set one's course by means of the major stars, plot the trajectory, and take off. Jason took off---and came back. Came back because beyond the protecting blanket of the atmosphere so many stars were visible that all space was white---a brilliant, glaring white, and you couldn't set your course by the stars...

In "Exiles on Asperus," in the Winter 1933 _Wonder Stories Quarterly_, a vivid picture of the extrapolated adaptability of human beings is painted by the author, John Beynon Harris. A damaged spaceship lands on the asteroid Asperus. Although the entire solar system had supposedly been colonized by proud Earthmen here on the asteroid the voyagers find thousands of human beings existing as abject slaves of a bat-like race of creatures known as Batrachs. The issue never is in doubt: these enslaved descendants of spacewrecked Earthmen must be freed from bondage. A terrific struggle ensues between the Betrachs and the newly-arrived Earthmen. After bitter fighting the latter faction is victorious---but in the fighting only. For the Betrachs' control is still in evidence; the formerly enslaved men turn on their liberators in an effort to drive them away. And the Earthmen leave, defeated by the doctrines the Betrachs have insidiously instilled into the minds of their captives. The story concludes, "And so, though it is colonized, you will fail to find the word _Asperus_ on Earth's proud colonial lists."

Those stories mentioned above were based on new ideas, new scientific that had not been heard of before. But there were other great stories, stories with delicate insinuations, stories that had to be understood thoroughly to be savored, stories that dealt with the conflict of future science and human emotions in a manner which would credit the best of modern novelists.

David H. Keller has written many fine stories. But among the finest are two, very short, which are destined to live and be anthologized. One is "The Thing in the Cellar," which was originally published in Weird Tales and which is also available in a limited brochure form. This tale is one of the grimmest examples of sheer horror ever written. It is also, incidentally, Dr. Keller's own favorite out of all his writings. A child is born to British parents, a child normal in every respect save one---he is afraid to go near the cellar of the house. This puzzles the parents greatly, for the cellar is an ordinary one with its piles of firewood, its cider-barrels and heating equipment; they themselves are in the place several times a day, and nothing unusual has ever been found. But as the child grew older its fear of the cellar increased to such an extent that it could not bear to be in the kitchen near the cellar-door, and even stuffed its keyhole and cracks with bits of paper. The lock was an object to be all but worshipped. Exasperated by his behavior, the couple lock thier son in the kitchen with the cellar door nailed open on the advice of the family doctor, who feels that when the boy finds out that there is nothing to fear he will forget his childish fancy. But later, convinced that his remedy was a poor one, the physician visits the family and before him the kitchen door is opened. The lamp is out, and on the floor lies the torn, mutilated remains of the little boy..... "What killed him, doctor? What killed him?" shouts the grief-stricken father. "How do I know?" the doctor replies. "How do I know? Didn't you tell me that there was nothing there? Nothing down there? In the cellar?"

The plot of "No More Tomorrows" is based upon the title itself. Here, Dr. Keller shows a group of foreign agents who plot to poison America's water by poisoning it with a drug that will cause people to be unable to plan for the future; they will believe that there is no tomorrow---only the present exists. The agents capture an American, tell him of their plans, and finally promise him a horrible death if he does not aid them. He is given orders to drop a supply of the drug into the city resevoir. Instead, however, he takes some of it himself. When he meets the agents the next day they realize that he has not carried out his part of the plan. "If you do not poison the water system tonight," he is told, "you will tomorrow experience the hideous death that we have shown you." The young man looks at them---and laughs. "You can't scare me with your ridiculous threats. Kill me tomorrow!" And he again laughs loudly. "I have no more tomorrows!"

L. Taylor Hanson, in her "Undersea Tube," has written a story whose greatness rests upon a few paragraphs of fine writing. A tube is built beneath the sea from this country to England. It has been purposely routed in a big arc to avoid an area of volcanic activity. A man rides the tube to Europe, as thousands have done for years. Suddenly a great volcanic blast crumples the tunnel and cars; gigantic rents appear in the walls; and molten lava pours in. And the young man, in that instant before unconsciousness overwhelms him, sees a strange sight. Through a newly-made rift he gazes down into a great subterranean city of unknown origin. A deserted city? No! Down a street runs a tiny child, and in its wake flow giant tides of lava. The child is near exhaustion, but finally manages to reach the tallest building in sight, which is capped by a statue of a strangely-garbed figure. And as darkness wraps his brain, the man remembers a scene that will haunt him forever---a background of a wondrous ancient city, its streets molten steams of lava, and a tiny child, running, running...

Have modern readers forgotten "Rex," that story of a magnificent robot of unequalled intellect, who had the mastery of the world within his power---until he realized that human beings experienced something he lacked: emotions? His mighty brain and those of human scientists as well projected one experiment after another, but to no avail. Finally the mighty Rex, goaded on by his failure, destroyed himself---never realizing that the emotions of hope, disgust, rage and finally dispair had prompted his suicide.

Nor should we forget the tender story of another strange robot, inhuman in form, yet not so in feeling, who remembered that he had been created to serve man and no other, and though man had long ago forgotten and all power was indeed his, he must not deviate one whit from his duty of nurturing, protecting and uplifting his human creators. This great story, "Derelict," was written by Raymond Z. Gallun, who has such masterpieces to his credit as "Old Faithful," "A Beast of the Void," "Son of Old Faithful," "The World Wreckers," "Davy Jones' Ambassador," "Space Flotsam," "Mind over Matter," "N'Goc," "Avalanche," and many, many others...

The last man and woman in the entire world stand beside the last body of water in existence, a small lake. And as they scan the bright cloudless sky their eyes do not despair, but rather fill with hope. They are male and female. Here is water. All the mighty science that man ever conceived lies at their beck and call. They will start the race anew. Giant heads, scrawny bodies---perhaps they would seem freakish to us, but human they are nevertheless. But out of the water before them springs a monster such as earth has not seen since prehistoric ages---the last mindless reptile, which has somehow survived and which zealously guards this bit of water. And a battle for possession of it ends in defeat for man, for the monster succeeds in killing the woman. Yet the last man continues a hopeless battle alone. In his laboratory he calls upon all the resources at his command and, in the end, creates artificial life in man's image. But it is not man. Lowell Howard Morrow, in his truly classic "Omega, the Man," depicts one of the greatest tragedies of worlds, as he pictures the last mind, the great reptile, the semi-moronic test-tube entity, and the final epic concept of a waterless world---with the last man gazing up into an eternally cloudless sky. An example of literature in science-fiction!

In science-fiction magazines there are dozens of stories by a self-admitted style-copiest, Jack Williamson. Inspired by A. Merritt, Williamsom imitated the former's style as best he could, and became noted and popular because of it. Fans admitted, however, that he could never quite compete with the original. But once---and only once---Jack Williamson rose above his master with the story "The Moon Era," which is certainly in the Merritt tradition, but which introduces an added simplicity and humane touch that that master never possessed. The touching conception of "The Mother" is here introduced---that beautiful, intelligent, kindly creature of the all-but-extinct Moon race, within her resting the seeds of generations yet to be born. Her enemies are the ants of the moon, who have constructed great mechanical robots, and who block all that the Mother dreams of for her descendants. Together, an Earthman and the Mother fight for the hope of a more-than-human race to be---only to taste defeat in the end. But the memory of the beauty and tenderness of this alien being lives with him for the rest of his days---as indeed it must with all who read this tale.

In the same issue of Wonder Stories appeared another powerful tale by an author who excels on occasion: Edmund Hamilton. The story, "A Conquest of Two Worlds," deals with that phase of science-fiction that only Williamson, in his "Crucible of Power," ever presented as nearly successfully. Here is found a picture of Earth's ruthlessness, of its systematic, cold-blooded colonization of the planets in the future. The treatment of those planets' inhabitants by the exploiters makes the treatment of our native Indians seem like coddling. Here we see man, the conqueror, at his best and his worst, and here too is a story which exposes man, the villain---that makes the reader angry at his own race. A story of a renegade Earthman and his desperate, losing battle with the races of Jupiter and Mars against foreign encroachment---of one, who, firmly convinced that a wrong is being done, leads alien hordes in a righteous, defensive war. But slowly, inexorably, man's mighty mechanized civilization exterminates the denizens of other worlds, and the Earthman dies in the last stronghold of defeated Jupiter...

A lone Earth-dweller is stranded on Mars. All that stands between him and death is the friendship of a mute, rabbit-like race, whose sole diet is the Martian bean-like vegetation. The years pass, each laden with fearful monotony ---till the yearning of the graying Earthman for hisnative planet becomes an all but impossible longing. Then one day there is a flash of red in the sky---it is a spaceship from Earth. The stranded man, now old indeed, is overcome with joy. At last his prayers have been answered; he will be returned to the world of his birth. But the newcomers discover that the cave-dwellings of the natives are veined with precious mineral. And they blow up sections of these caves, killing many Martians, and load their vessel with as much of the ore as can be carried. They plan to return---which would spell extinction for the natives, for the only food is dependant on radiation of this rare mineral for its growth. But the old man overhears their plans, and at last realizes that he is nothing to them; they would probably leave him, after all, so that the location of their wealth would remain a secret. He sees the still-suffering eyes of the Martians; he remembers their kindness in the long and lonely years of isolation on this ruddy world.... The ship takes off---but is destroyed by a terrific explosion in mid-air. And P. Schuyler Miller's "Forgotten Man of Space" is again alone with the rabbit - like Martians---"But somehow they seemed to sense what he had done for them."

Many readers remember Thomas Calvert McClary for his epic serial novel "Rebirth," but all save a few have forgotten the name of Calvin Peregoy, under which nom de plume his "Short Wave Castle" appeared. Those who do recall it may treasure one of the most touching fantasies ever told. Scientists create a tiny race of dissimilar beings who live in enforced confinement, their means limited to whatever their captors permit them to have. This highly intelligent race has a plan to overthrow the big, clumsy, slow men who created it. They are to send a grotesque member of their company, a violinist, to the scientists as an agent to accomplish their plot of revolt. The simple violinist, whose genius expresses itself in music, is heard playing his instrument by a beautiful young daughter of a scientist; she does not see him, however, and expresses delighted gratification. The poor violinist, accustomed to being treated as a simpleton and a buffoon, is overcome by the intensity of his emotions at her kindly words---and the poignancy shatters his tiny body into crystalline fragments...

The ranks of the science-fiction-is-escape-literature group never received so stunning a set-back as with the publication of "The Raid on the Termites," by Paul Ernst, in the June 1932 issue of Astounding Stories. If a more absorbing, action-filled, yet scientifically authentic tale has ever been published I have no knowledge of it. Dr. Keller's "Human Termites" is distinctly a tale inferior to it, not only from the informational standpoint but in story value as well. And Stanton A. Coblentz, in "After 12,000 Years," deals more in potential possibilities of super-termites than with present-day facts. In my estimation, Paul Ernst has written the termite story.

In "Peril among the Drivers," which appeared in Amazing Stories, Bob Olson presented another first-rate, action-packed tale of authentic science and information. This one dealt with the famed "driver ants," about which so many tales have already been recounted.

Nor can more or finer information, coupled with sterling story value about bees be found than in W. K. Sonneman's superb offerings, "Greta, Queen of

Queens" and "Council of Drones." If these stories do not furnish a greater fund of accurate information than a standard text-book, and furnish it in a readily-palatable form besides, I miss my guess.

But, you say, these science stories---with their emphasis on a sugar-coated science---can never depict the true inflections of human emotions, can never reach the heights of near-literature and still profess educational value. But ah, you're wrong, dead wrong, my friends! Have you ever read "Isle of Gargoyles" by Dr. William Lemkin, which was published in the February 1936 number of Wonder Stories? Have you ever heard of a cretin? ---An unfortunate human born with a thyroid gland deficiency, and because of it existing like "an idiotic, dwarfish, deformed monstrosity of a being"? Thousands of these creatures do exist in actuality, and only the the recently-discovered drug thyroxin gradually restores them to near-normal human beings. But should the intake of the drug be discontinued, they would revert back to their original state. Lemkin's story is about a scientist who discovers an entire island of these unfortunates living in a savage society of their own. It tells of the companions who accompany the scientist, and of the research carried out in an attempt to effect a cure for this terrible affliction. One reads of the tiny human monster which is restored to normalcy, and of the terrible uprising of the cretin colony when the whereabouts of the ship is discovered, and of the the subsequent wrecking of the laboratory. Thus all the painstaking research is destroyed overnight. The scientist, his friend, and the cured cretin escape, only to be shipwrecked---and they hopelessly watch the boy revert to his former self as the symptoms of cretinism reappear. The sight of this tragedy appears to be unhinging the scientist's reason, for day by day he grows more dulled and hopeless. But one morning both of the two are gone, and in a note which they left behind the friend discovers the true reason: the scientist is himself a born cretin, kept normal by periodic injections of thyroxin, and, knowing his own case to be as helpless as the boy's, he joins the latter in flight to the monstrous colony. "Isle of Gargoyles" is a story poignant with mounting despair, a story of remarkable power.

Even while many---often justifiedly---rained abuse upon Nat Schachner as a "hack" writer, he frequently showed qualities which have today elevated him into the best-seller ranks. In his story "The Isotope Men" he displayed a knowledge of humanity rare even in great writers. This tale tells of the invention of a machine that is able to separate men into their component chemically isotopic counterparts, and how an entire army is duplicated and forced to fight, each man pitted against his twin isotopic self. Schachner's deft handling of the emotional struggle involved makes this story a top-ranking one in science-fiction.

Upon somewhat the same theme Henry J. Kostkos wrote a sadly underrated classic entitled "Men Created for Death." Here the author told of the scientific manufacture of test-tube men for the explicit purpose of fighting wars and being killed. The heartless butcherings of these men continues until finally it is discovered that they possess all the finer emotions of a normally-born human, and thus the story ends on a note of crashing power.

Shall we also consign to oblivion that little gem from Wonder Stories Quarterly, "The Martian," by A. Rowley Hilliard and Allen Glasser? This moving story relates an incident of a fragile Martian who comes to Earth to save his race, which is slowly dying for lack of water. His frantic efforts to convince Earthmen of his mission, how he is exploited and tortured, how his great mental powers are selfishly utilized, and his final realization of betrayal while dying helplessly, and knowing that the hopes of his race will be entombed with him----all these things are told with a beautiful sympathetic realness.

As this article continues, the stream of "greats" assumes larger and larger proportions. I haven't even touched upon great novels, or mentioned some tales having a faint fantasy tinge. Nor have I said a word about the many great stories hidden away in obscure, almost unobtainable magazines. I've merely done a bit of listing of some truly excellent stories that are well within the grasp of the average fan. There is not one story mentioned in this article that could not be obtained with a little patience in a good second-hand magazine shop or from a science-fiction dealer. To read these stories is to enrich your appreciation of and restore your faith in science-fiction as literature, instead of as the inferior "pulp" version that chokes the field today. Those who claim that science-fiction cannot produce literature cannot honestly claim to have read any amount of either. So much of magazine-printed science-fiction should be republished in book form that fans should never relinquish their fight for this goal. The great novels of David H. Keller---"The Conquerors," the magnificent "Evening Star," the warmly human "Life Everlasting"; the superb satires of Stanton A.Coblentz, as typified by "The Blue Barbarians," "After Twelve Thousand Years," "The Man from Tomorrow," "The Sunken World," and "In the Caverns Below"; the greatest interplanetary novel ever written, Richard Vaughan's "Exiles of the Skies"; the magnificent conception of the ultimate in mechanical civilization, "Paradise and Iron," by Miles J. Breuer, M. D.; the marvelously drawn superman of John Taine's "Seeds of Life," as well as his novel "The White Lily"; "Liners of Time,"by John Russell Fearn, which is to me the fastest-moving time-travel yarn ever written; the enthralling reconstruction of civilization in Thomas Calvert McClary's "Rebirth," or in Arthur J. Burks' "Survival"; the truly stirring concept of future eras contained in John Bertin's "Brood of Helios"---all these are just a few of the many fine novels and short stories that were breathed into life through the existence of science-fiction magazines. Of course many of them are not by any stretch of the imagination forgotten, but if they are not republished many will doubtless eventually become so.

Few fans today remember Jack Williamson's "Dead Star Station"; "A Race through Time" and "Farewell to Earth" by Donald Wandrei; Nat Schachner's "Hundredth Generation"; "Succubus" and "Man of the Ages" by K. F. Ziska; Edmund Hamilton's "Island of Unreason"; "A Scientist Rises," by D. W. Hall; R. Frederick Hester's "Gypsies from Thos"; the "Mr. Dimmitt Seeks Redress" of Miles J. Breuer M. D.; "The Far Way" by David R. Daniels; Raymond Z. Gallun's "Old Faithful" and its sequel, the equally beautiful "Son of Old Faithful"; "The Phantom Dictator," by Wallace G. West; J. Harvey Haggard's "Lost in Space"; "Outcasts" by Guy Wernham; the wonderfully memorable "Proxima Centauri" and "The Mole Pirate" of Murray Leinster---and an interminable host of others.

I have presented, then, this list of forgotten classics, with, in many cases, their equally-forgotten authors. Some of these I have already spoken of in a previous article, "Uncrowned Greats," to which this may be considered a sequel. All of the tales cited in both articles need resurrection and rereading--and I hope that those of my readers who may be able will do this. New fans, especially, should be curious when I tell them that they have missed most of the great stories, and they should also be skeptical enough to secure and read them in order to confirm or refute my opinions themselves. Then, I have no doubt, the gradually fading chorus of the old-timers will be swelled by the voices of newcomers who will taste great science-fiction---and many for the first time.

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Bibliography of William Hope Hodgson (continued from page 35)

The Voice of the Ocean
46pp, 1921; London: Selwyn & Blount; 19cm; 2/6.

The English Catalog of Printed Books gives incorrect numbers of pages for the sixth and eighth titles above.

William Hope Hodgson: In His Own Day

The scanty amount of critical and descriptive material which has appeared in this country on William Hope Hodgson and his writings, together with the lamentable scarcity of his published works, both here and in England, have resulted in a general impression of the matter which is not altogether in keeping with the facts. Hodgson has been variously classed as a forgotten genius and a writer of no moment; the truth of the matter obviously lies somewhere between these extremes, and it is my intention in mentioning the subject to give a clear account of what is known about this author and a definitive critique of his extant writings. In this, the first of two planned articles, I shall deal solely with Hodgson's place in the literary world as seen by his own generation; I hope in a second to evaluate his work as it appears today, some three decades later.

The best method for appraisal of the literary opinion coeval with the author appears to be consultation of reviews of his works then current. One may generalize, first, by stating that the tone of all of these is distinctly favorable; in fact, I have yet to find one which is moderately critical of Hodgson's productions. To particularize, I have chosen for quotation a series of reviews that appeared in the English literary publication The Bookman. The general tone of this magazine may be described by comparing it to our own Saturday Review of Literature, although it was far more pretentious, both in scope and format, than the latter periodical. But like it, The Bookman clearly and accurately mirrored the literary trends of its day, and was noted for its fair and unbiased critical opinions. These latter may, therefore, be given the weight of authority.

It is typical of its caution that neither of Hodgson's first two novels received The Bookman's reviews. That they were known and evaluated, however, is obvious from the context of the review of The Ghost Pirates, which was published in the October 1909 number (vol. 37, p. 54):

> There can be no need to call to memory two such remarkable works as Mr. Hodgson's Boats of the "Glen Carrig" and The House on the Borderland. They are books of the kind that, once read, cannot be easily forgotten. The Ghost Pirates forms the last volume of the trilogy, for, as the author points out, "though very different in scope, each of the three books deals with certain conceptions that have an elemental kinship." The next sentence in his preface is a disappointment to us: "With this book, the author believes that he closes the door, so far as he is concerned, on a particular phase of constructive thought." We can only hope that Mr. Hodgson may be induced to reconsider his decision, for we know of nothing like the author's previous work in the whole of present-day literature. There is no one at present writing who can thrill and horrify to quite the same effect. The Ghost Pirates does not display Mr. Hodgson's wonderful qualities of imagination to such good effect as did The House on the Borderland, nor is it so terrifying a book to read. Nevertheless, it is a very remarkable story, told in a matter-of-fact manner that materially increases his "grip." The author particularly excels in the creation of "atmosphere," but he is also possessed of a vigorous style and a wonderful ingenuity in the concoction of terrifying detail. Mr. Hodgson has his faults; his exaggerated treatment of the Cockney dialect of one of the minor characters is unsatisfactory, and his punctuation is annoying. But when all is said The Ghost Pirates is a book of high literary

qualities and a worthy member of a memorable trilogy.

Let the reader reflect for a moment on Mr. Hodgson's competitors in the field of imaginative writing. Though such literary giants as Arthur Machen and M. P. Shiel, tramping behind, were not receiving the praise that was to be their due in coming years, he still had to compete with two recognized masters: Algernon Blackwood and Montague Rhodes James. The former's fantasy *Jimbo* was being published in the same year (1909), and the preceeding three years had witnessed the appearance of a trio of that master's works---*The Empty House*, *The Listener*, *John Silence*---that definitely established Blackwood's reputation. And with the publication of his initial collection *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1904) M. R. James had but recently gained a following as a writer of the supernatural that he has not lost to this very day. Arthur C. Benson's *Hill of Trouble* (1903) was still being read and reprinted, as was Robert Hugh Benson's equally worthy collection of supernatural happenings *A Mirror of Shalott* (1907). The fact that he could gain recognition in the face of such opposition speaks volumes in itself for Hodgson's abilities as an exponent of the outré.

The next three years were not idle ones for him. His reputation made, he occupied himself with the production of several smaller works which were eagerly sought after by British magazines, and some of which were to appear abroad in American periodicals, as well as to be collected in book form at a still more advanced date. It was in this period, too, that that literary gargantua, nearly 200,000 words in length, *The Night Land* was completed. With its publication (in 1912) the author received but slightly qualified praise from all quarters. "It cannot be denied that *The Night Land* is a wonderful effort," said the Manchester *Courier*. The *Pall Mall Gazette* called the work "an extroadinary love tale" and added that the author was "gifted with a strong imagination." "A remarkably fine piece of narrative...a *tour de force*," stated the *Morning Leader*. Said *Vanity Fair*:

> The book is in every sense remarkable... The style in which it is written, the theme of which it treats, and the eerie imaginative quality which abounds in it are all exceedingly rare and fascinating, so that when once it has been taken up one cannot leave it for any length of time.

Country Life, the *Morning Post* and the *Occult Review* were other periodicals, all of which spoke in complimentary terms of the novel. *The Bookman* likewise noted its appearance; I quote in full the review which appeared in its June 1912 number (vol. 42, p. 137):

> You may say that in *The Night Land* Mr. Hope Hodgson's reach exceeds his grasp, that his story in some of its details is obscure and difficult to follow, that he tells it in a quaint, archaic language that does not make for easy reading, but at least you cannot say that he has not aimed at doing a big thing. He has set himself to unfold a love tale that is not bounded by the limits of a lifetime, but continues and is renewed again at last in a strange dream-life after many centuries. His hero is a man of two hundred years ago who loses a woman he loves not long after she is married to him; in utter grief and despair all his thoughts go yearning after her---they carry him far on down the ages yet to be, and he seeks her and cries out for her through new and newer planes of existence until, at length, in a miraculous trance state he finds himself at the close of some million of years living in the latter days of the world when

> the powers of evil have grown so potent, so aggressive, so so almost all-conquering that the survivors of the human race are gathered for self-defence into one enormous pyramid, building their city tier above tier within it, and on every hand all around this Last Redoubt stretches the Night Land, inhabited by primeval, material giants and loathsome monsters and sinister dreadful immaterial beings of the spirit world that have power over the souls of mortals. Here, in this place of refuge, that man of two hundred years ago is continually sending his eager thoughts out across the grim wastes of the Night Land in search of the woman he loved and lost; and a time comes when out of the vast and unknown darkness her thoughts answer him, and after some broken fashion they are able to communicate with each other. Suddenly this communication fails; he tries in vain to renew it; and fearful that she may have set out across that fiend-haunted dayless wilderness to find him, he takes all due precautions, arms and fits himself for his enterprise, quits the shelter of the Pyramid and begins to make his way in the direction whence he believes she may be coming. From this point onwards the story grows rapidly in power and interest. Whatever Mr. Hodgson lacks it is not imagination, and his description of that fearsome journey by trackless ways and through perils undreamt of before, and of the meeting of the two lovers, and the adventures, by turns grim, terrible, charmingly idyllic, through which they passed together give him scope for painting some of the most eerie, wildly horrible and pleasantly dainty pictures that have ever come from his pen. We shall not attempt to give any full outline of Mr. Hodgson's romance; it runs to nearly six hundred pages and is crowded with incident and alive with inner significances and undercurrents of meaning. You may read it as a cloudy and elusive allegory, if you have a liking for that form of literature, but in its allegorical aspect it is not simple enough, it needs too much explaining, and you will do better perhaps to read it simply as a daring imaginative love story, and as such you will find it a very original and sufficiently remarkable book.

This, then, is indicative of the reception *The Night Land* met with on its publication. A brief glance at the literary scene of the time shows that in no sense could an imaginative story of the future be lauded on the basis of its theme alone; H. G. Wells had produced *The Sleeper Awakes* just before the turn of the century, and had, in fact, published it anew in a revised version but a year before (1911). Nor was Wells, of course, the sole exponent of the novel of the future--many works upon such a theme had already appeared before that master had set his hand to it. Still, reviewers still remembered his works, and stories of the future were frequently compared with *The Sleeper Awakes*, *A Story of the Days to Come* and *The Time Machine*, as well as Bellamy's *Looking Backward* and a few other lesser-known excursions into futurity. Again it is seen that Hodgson must have possessed something more than an active imagination to impress leading literary periodicals of his day.

In 1913 Hodgson for the first time presented the book-reading public with a selection of his short stories. *Carnacki the Ghost-Finder* was its title, and it proved popular enough to be reprinted within a year. The author had laid the groundwork by the publication, in this country, of Carnacki, the Ghost-Finder, and a Poem (1910), a small board-bound brochure which gave rough synopses of those episodes which were thoroughly treated in the larger volume. On the whole, reviewers reacted even more favorably to Carnacki than had they to the author's previous writings. The Westminster Gazette dubbed it "A collection of admirable ghost stories"; the British Weekly complimented Hodgson's ability by calling it "a book of thrills which should not, perhaps, be taken up by nervous readers too late in the evening"; "There is not one of this collection of ghostly episodes which does not grip with its weird fascination," remarked the Globe. Said the Daily Express: "Some ghosts are real, some are not, but from both kinds Mr. Hodgson...gets a maximum of blood-curdling thrills. Better stories of haunted houses have not been told in our day..." For a more complete account, The Bookman may be once more referred to; in its June 1913 issue (vol. 44, p. 142) there appeared this:

> Mr. Hope Hodgson's new novel comprises half-a-dozen of the "creepiest" experiences imaginable. Carnacki, the hero or victim of these experiences, narrates them to a privileged circle of frinds with an artistic sense of cumulative horror calculated to create the sensation known as goose-flesh in your veriest skeptic. Whether you believe in ghosts or not, you are sure to find something to your taste in Carnacki's thrilling reports of his investigations; for in some cases the mysterious forces at work prove to be merely ingeniously contrived tricks of human origin, while in other cases strange and horrific Beings take threatening shape and have to be dealt with according to the laws of supernatural "science." Read after nightfall in a dimly lighted room peopled with uneasy shadows, these tales carry with them a haunting atmosphere of terror and an ever-present sense of the unknown powers of darkness. Take for example the phenomenon of "The Whistling Room" in an old Irish castle. The room at nights was wont to give out a weird whistling sound "like a monster with a man's soul." Carnacki climbing in by moonlight to the window from the outside looks in. "And then, you know, I saw something. The floor in the middle of the huge, empty room, was puckered upwards in the centre into a strange, soft-looking mound, parted at the top into an everchanging hole, that pulsated to that great, gentle hooning... And suddenly, as I stared, dumb, it came to me that the thing was living. I was looking at two enormous, blackened lips, blistered and brutal, there in the pale moonlight ..." Mr. Hope Hodgson plays deftly on the strings of fear, and his new novel stamps him a fascinating panic-monger with a quick eye for all the sensational possibilities of ghost lore.

Again let it be borne in mind that such a complimentary review involves a tacitly favorably comparison of Hodgson's ghost stories with not only those mentioned earlier in this article, but with M. R. James' second collection More Ghost Stories of an Antiquary (1911)---which, incidentally, contains that master's finest work---and with Blackwood's Lost Valley (1910), as well as the sterling work of two newcomers to the field, F. Marion Crawford, represented by Wandering Ghosts (1911) and E. F. Benson, whose Room in the Tower (1912) had appeared in the previous year. And yet, coming on the heels of these notables, Hodgson was actually characterized by the Liverpool Courier as "...probably our best writer of Ghost stories, whether he finds them afloat or ashore..."

In 1914 a second collection of short stories put in its appearance. It was titled Men of the Deep Waters, and consisted of tales which had mostly been printed previously in magazine form. The London Times termed it "a serious contribution to literature" and furthur remarked, "Its quality is excellent..." "In these stories of the sea Mr. Hodgson worthily maintains a well-won reputation of strength in the qualities of imagination, mystic beauty and spiritual force," was the opinion of the Glasgow Herald; and the Liverpool Courier said: "Mr. Hodgson is a writer on whom the mantle of Poe has fallen." Complimentary indeed! And no less so was The Bookman; in the November 1914 number of that periodical (vol. 47 p. 54) this review is to be found:

> Mr. Hodgson has not gone to work in the orthodox way and put his best stories first in this book; but that is not the only sense in which he is unorthodox. "On the Bridge" is a very vivid sketch---a brilliant bit of imaginative realism, and "The Sea Horses," which has second place, is a story of no little charm, though the sentiment is now and then in need of a restraining touch; it is when you come to "The Derelict" and "From the Tideless Sea" that you find Mr. Hodgson right at home, where he belongs; these, with "The Voice in the Night," "Through the Vortex of a Cyclone," and "The Mystery of the Derelict," are stories that, in their kind, would add something to the reputation of any living novelist. They grip you, as Poe's grim stories do, by their subtle artistry and sheer imaginative power. In fashioning his most uncanny, most supernormal occurrences his imagination so completely realises them that he describes them, and and what has led up to them, and all their envirionment with a minuteness in detail that makes them convincingly real to a reader's apprehension. The fury and terror of storm at sea has never been more impressively pictured than it is in Mr. Hodgson's wonderful description of how the four-masted bark, Golconda, was drawn into the mighty vortex of a cyclone; and of the mystery, the perils, the loneliness of the sea, the almost unthinkable horrors that lurk waiting for the castaway in its unknown places, we have read few stories equal to the others named. No lover of tales of mystery and imagination that are also good literature should miss this book.

William Hope Hodgson followed this volume with a third collection of his shorter works, The Luck of the Strong, two years later. It was as favorably received as his first. Said the Daily Telegraph: "Mr. Hodgson more than once has been paid the compliment of being likened to Poe. It is not a compliment carelessly paid. Among it all there is not a dull paragraph." And The Bookman rated the book as favorably; in its August 1916 issue (vol. 50, p. 142) the following account of it appeared:

> "Rum things! Of course there were rum things happen at sea---as rum as ever there were. I remember when..." This alluring introduction to what perhaps is the best yarn in the book might have served equally well as an opening formula for the rest of the thrilling sea stories that make up the greater part of this entertaining volume of "rum things." Mr. Hope Hodgson is certainly an expert raconteur of "rum things," whether of the sea or the land. He is an

> adept in the art of giving you the "creeps", and he sees to it that you extract the last ounce of fearful delight from the thrill before he lets you down with a comfortable explanation. In "The Stone Ship," an excellent example of the author's skill, the crew of a windjammer, becalmed on a misty night a thousand miles from the nearest land, are astounded to hear the sound of a brook running down a hillside! Next, they become aware of a frightful stench and a strange, fitful glow; and the mystery culminates in the discovery of a ship built wholly of stone, manned by a stone crew, and to all appearances floating on the Atlantic in the defiance of the laws of buoyancy. And the explanation, while destroying none of the glamour of the mystery, is remarkably concise and satisfying. Hidden gold and rare sea monsters play important parts in many of the stories. In Captain Jat's quest for the island pearls, a mammoth man-eating crab figures prominently, while one of the biggest thrills in "The Stone Ship" is afforded by a giant sea-caterpillar. Another story tells of the ingenious ruse whereby Captain Gunbolt Charity smuggled "The Painted Lady" into the U. S. A. Ingenious too is the explanation of the ghostly ringing of the bell on the derelict *Laughing Sally*---a story noteworthy also for its amusing sketch of Dot-and-Carry-One Cargunka, ship owner and saloon keeper. The author spins his yarns cleverly and neatly, has a crisp, racy style, and a bold imagination with a flair for the macabre and horrific that will always appeal to a wide public.

Hodgson followed *The Luck of the Strong* with yet a fourth collection of short stories, *Captain Gault*. In this latter volume, however, he abandoned the supernatural theme entirely, and therefore a detailed discussion of this work is outside of the scope of this article. It may be noted in passing, however, that this venture into the realm of playful romance and detective-work proved, in the eyes of literary periodicals then current, as successful as his earlier attempts in the field of fantasy and the supernatural. The influence of the sea is still patent in this work, as might be guessed from inspection of its title.

Besides his prose works, Hodgson had, over a period of the decade preceeding his death, dabbled frequently in poetry. Examples of his poems had appeared in his other books as prefatory and epilogic additions, as well as in the three American-published works *Cargunka, and Poems and Anecdotes*, *Carnacki, the Ghost-Finder, and a Poem* and *"Poems" and "A Dream of X"*. The collected editions of his poetry appeared under the titles *The Calling of the Sea* (1920) and *The Voice of the Ocean* (1921). The influence of the author's years spent on shipboard on this phase of his work is patent throughout. Closer consideration of these two volumes is likewise beyond the pale of this discussion, but it may be mentioned that the former received a reasonably favorable review in *The Bookman* in which Hodgson was referred to as "a true poet as he is a true novelist of the sea."

A complete bibliography of Hodgson's books is to be found on page 35 of this issue. Data on all editions printed is given in full, and a few (though minor) errors which have appeared in reference books are also noted. Unfortunately, I have not been able, as yet, to compile complete data on the places of original publication (i. e., in periodicals and/or magazines) of the author's short stories. I hope to be able to do so in time to include such data in the next article on Hodgson which I plan shortly to write. In the meantime, anyone who could help along these lines: please send me any information at hand.

William Hope Hodgson