

Operation Fantast

VOL. 1 (New Series)

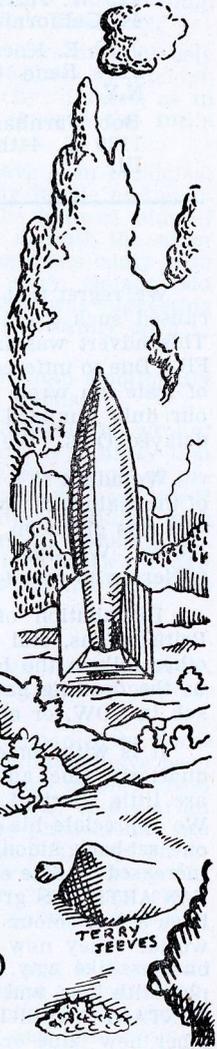
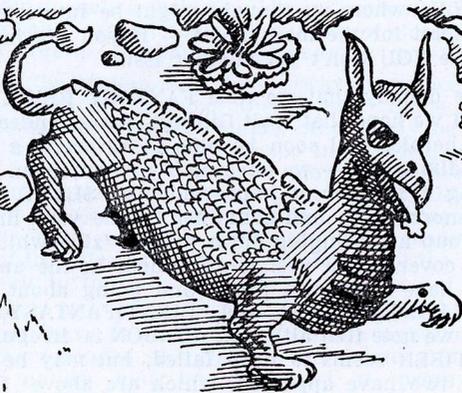
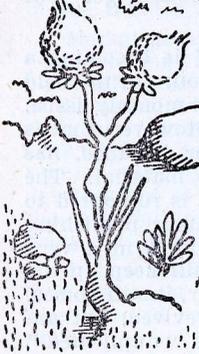
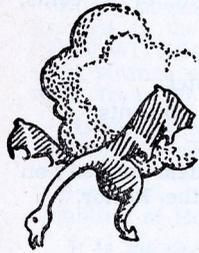
SEPTEMBER, 1949

No. 2

SIXPENCE

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Operation Fantast

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COMMENT

We regret that the advertisement which appeared in FANTASY REVIEW caused such great consternation among our more enthusiastic supporters. This advert was inserted in the expectation that O.F. would appear before FR. Due to unforeseen circumstances O.F. was late. The result was a quantity of irate fan wrote letters . . . and brother, they were letters. Having raised our duly humbled brows from the dust, we then proceeded to mail out the delayed O.Fs. We hope that you liked them.

We admit to a number of faults — teething troubles, only, we hope. One of the main faults was the omission of credit to authors on the pages, although this was given on the cover. The cover drawing, by the way, was by Terry Jeeves. We shall stick to this cover for a number of issues, but any supporters who care to submit drawing for future use are welcome to do so.

Distribution of this issue, and the last issue, was made to some 230 British Fans, and some 600 overseas Fans. We also sent copies to about 50 other folk in the U.K., whom we thought might be interested — which gives us the opening gambit for the main point — if you are interested, get your sub in NOW, or else YOU won't get another issue.

It is with some dismay that we note FANTASY REVIEW is becoming a quarterly 'zine, and we hope that Walt Gillings, whose endeavours in the field are little short of heroic, will soon be able to revert to a bi-monthly issue. We appreciate his difficulties — we have plenty of our own. However, that is one set-back among a number of improvements. SLANT, for instance, has increased in size enormously, and contained some very fine material. The FAN ARTIZANS group are bringing out a printed 'zine which is rumoured to have a full colour cover . . . a vast improvement in the amateur publishing world. They now have their own press, and going about things in a very business-like way. FANTASCIENCE and SCIENTIFANTASY still keep up the photolith jobs, and we note that although GORGON is irregular, it still comes. FANTASY ADVERTISER seems to have failed, but may be revived, but another new 'zine or two have appeared, which are above the "duplicated" standard. We shall comment further on these when we get copies.—Yours fantastically,

JOYCE and KEN SLATER.

SOME THOUGHTS ON HOMO SUPERIOR

By DELL BEAKER

Many writers have contended that a race of Homo Superiors will be spawned by unsuspecting Homo Sapiens, and that they will possess extraordinary powers. Naturally, these powers have varied widely, from physical prowess to the almost inconceivable mental powers intimated in the story "BUT WITHOUT HORNS." Possibly the author decides on his Superman by some strange method of divination, i.e. "Three rejection slips this morning; wind from the West; Hmmm. Better try telepathic tendrils this time."

Usually the creature or creatures use the powers they have miraculously obtained to destroy Homo Sapiens, or to interfere in his business by attempting to run his petty civilisation for him. Only in a minority of cases, as in Weinbaum's "THE NEW ADAM," has the Superman ignored the futile bumping of Homo. Sap. and lived his own life.

It is interesting to note that most fictional Supermen have been biological failures, being unable to contend with the basic laws of the jungle and civilisation. "ODD JOHN" was undoubtedly a failure, for he allowed himself and his fellow minds to be destroyed rather than fight against the alien creatures with whom he had no personal quarrel. This contrasts oddly with Odd John's murder of the policeman who, earlier in the story, caught Odd John attempting a little quiet burglary. Probably Stapledon was suggesting that pacifism is the product of a mature mind. The idea is certainly open to argument.

Even Weinbaum, in "THE NEW ADAM," made his Superman emotionally and psychologically unstable, thus leading to his early demise.

At this point it is well to ask whether so many authors could be wrong? Have they approached the problem from the right direction? Is it likely that a Superman or race of Homo Superior will emerge from the womb of unsuspecting mankind, to devour him, as so many writers have postulated? Will Superman be suddenly among us, his advanced mentality sparkling with ingenious mechanical devices with which to destroy normal Mankind, his enhanced muscular powers enabling him to run fast enough to break through the sonic barrier, and his super-mind in telepathic communication with others of his kind?

The answer is almost certainly NO!

The odds against such a being suddenly evolving from us are inconceivably large, probably greater than the number of electrons in the Universe, or the number of organic compounds theoretically possible.

Mental genii in the human race have always been accompanied by some compensating loss of ability in some other sphere. Some children have been born with marvellous mathematical minds, others may be able to play chess at the age of five, but they normally develop into typical adults, or die at an early age. Some exceptions to those are known, but these phenomenae are probably due to an abnormality of some gland, which then pours out an irregular quantity of its secretion into the body. This may result in excessive development of the brain or some other part of the body. This may cause the early failure of the affected organ, or the return of the gland to normality bring the like result to the affected part.

It has often been said that genius is akin to madness, and it is well to note that most genii have been definitely mentally unbalanced in some way. The so-called "absent-minded scientist" is more than a fable. Compensation always occurs in nature, man has developed his brain and his sense of touch, but he has partially lost many of his other senses, such as his sense of smell. An unarmed modern man has little chance on his own in the jungle.

Thus it is far too much to expect Superman to abruptly appear. Nature changes things slowly, usually over a period of tens, hundreds, or even thousands, of generations. Even if natural selection was combined with a whole series (arithmetic or geometric) of favourable mutations — which the odds are heavily against — it would require many generations before even a midly interesting Homo Superior was formed.

What is more likely is that Homo Sapiens will gradually alter, mutate, intermarry, and procreate until any advance, or degeneration, will be spread over a large part of the human race, and will only be noticeable to an observer studying a period of many thousands of years.

(Author's Note: This is assuming that Mankind does not become extinct through radio-active dust, hunger, mass-madness, or a mutated "Super" virus during the next few years.)

IN DEFENCE OF SHAVER

Many writers, both in this country and in America have attacked Shaver and his stories of vast caverns deep below the surface of the earth, inhabited by degenerate people who can hardly be called human, and it will, therefore, be a pleasant change for someone to write an article in his defence.

Most of these writers, to judge from their articles, have had very little knowledge of what has become known as the Shaver Mystery. They appear to have read two or three of his stories and articles and to have based their judgment of him upon them.

I have studied the Mystery as a whole, having read almost everything that Shaver has had published during the last five years, and so consider that I am in a position to be able to attempt an evaluation of the Mystery, and to criticise less well-informed writers upon the subject.

Some of these writers at least are obviously prejudiced against Shaver from the start, and they select short passages from his writings which, taken alone, appear to support their claims that Shaver is trying to perpetrate a hoax. But the separation of these passages from the rest of the articles and stories concerned changes and distorts the meanings which Shaver intended to convey.

I have spoken to many people about the mystery, and have listened to others who were discussing it; most of them had not gone deeply into it; it is enough for them that Shaver states things as fact, which according to present day science are impossible. Their immediate conclusion is that he must be wrong, in spite of the indisputable fact that many things which scientists of a 100 years ago believed to be impossible are now proven fact.

The impossible is merely what man does not yet understand; the great unknown. Too many people seem to think that scientists know just what is possible and what is impossible. They do not know that, because their knowledge is far too limited. Their greatest weakness is that they tend to think that anything they cannot understand and explain is impossible, instead of keeping open minds about it.

It is not impossible that Shaver is telling the truth when he says there is a great system of caves deep beneath the earth's surface, which were created by a great race, which left earth in spaceship before the present human race came into existence. And it is quite possible that these caves are inhabited by "dero" (degenerate humans) and "tero" (not so degenerate).

The main argument against this possibility is that if such a thing was so the present surface inhabitants of the world would know about it. But there may be many things going on in this world, and in this Solar System about which man knows nothing. For Homo Sapiens, for all his boasted superiority over the lower animals can be peculiarly blind to things that happen almost under his nose.

Shaver claims to have lived in the caves for a long period of time; and one of the things he discovered, he says, is that the half-mad "dero" and the "tero" kept surface people in ignorance of their true origin by playing upon their superstitions. Occasionally surface people saw one of the inhabitants of the cavern world, and legends grew up about the existence of goblins, elves, etc., the cavern people being generally dwarfed and ugly.

During recent times, as people have become less superstitious and more numerous, the cave people have appeared less often on the surface. If anyone reported having seen one of them and insisted on sticking to his story he would probably be certified as insane!

Shaver has explained many things that the scientists have either ignored completely, or given unsatisfactory and even ridiculous explanations for. Charles Fort spent many years collecting newspaper reports of such things and studying them in an attempt to discover more reasonable explanations.

For instance:

People have been found burned to death in their own homes; nothing else was burned, not even the clothes they were wearing. Shaver says this is the work of the "dero" with the "ray-mech" which was left in the caves by the Elder Gods when they hurriedly departed for other planets. No better explanation has yet been thought up.

There are numerous disappearances of people who are never found, or heard from again. The "dero" kidnap surface men and women and use them as slaves, says Shaver, but most people would laugh at such a "far-fetched" explanation. Nobody has thought up a better one.

Shaver says that the sun causes old age and death, because mixed with the beneficial rays are detrimental ones which are produced by the atomic disintegration of the heavier radioactive metals in the sun's interior. The Elder Gods lived for thousands of years because they lived beneath Earth's surface in caves, sheltered from the lethal rays, but artificially producing the beneficial ones which they needed.

They left the earth in giant space ships when the sun's radioactivity became so intense that even the miles of solid earth and rock above their heads was not enough protection. They went to seek a planet circling a dark star, where they could be immortal, because of the absence of death dealing rays.

No satisfactory theory to account for old age has yet been produced. The cells of our bodies gradually lose that ability to renew themselves, but there is no apparent reason why they should do so.

Fish do not age; they continually eat and grow, and would live indefinitely were it not that they are eaten by larger fish, which in turn destroy one another. It seems logical to assume that a mile or so depth of water would be an efficient shield against the death producing rays from the sun, which according to Richard S. Shaver is now passing through a period of comparatively low radioactivity.

Shaver's enemies, and they are legion, say that the wonderful machines which he claims to have seen in the caves, in working order to this day, cannot exist — merely because modern man has no idea of how to produce similar machines. They say that metal capable of remaining almost unchanged for thousands of years cannot exist because man knows of no such metal, that rays cannot penetrate miles of solid rock and emerge into an open space with killing power, that the "ben-rays" and "stim-rays" are impossible.

But Shaver insists that such machines do exist and are still in use. He says that the "dero" and "tero" also use the "telaug" ray which carries vision and sound from the earth's surface to those operating the "mech" in the caves — and that they are even enabled to read the thoughts of surface men and women through the "telaug" rays, and to project their own thoughts into the minds of surface people at will.

Many readers of Shaver's cave stories think that he pretends his stories are true in order to make more money. Shaver says they are truth presented

in the guise of fiction, because that is the only way he can get them published. Many writers describe Shaver as a "hack." They, themselves, have their stories published in the pulps, so if he is a "hack" so are they. The quality of his writing is above that of most of the writers who accuse him of "hack writing" and his stories are based on ideas which are more original and interesting than their own, in the opinion of a great many people, whether they are fiction or truth.

It seems to me that it would be to Shaver's disadvantage to try to hoax people, and that he would make more money, if that was his only object, by presenting his tales as straight fiction. Having read most of his stuff, and having corresponded with him, I am convinced that he sincerely believes what he writes to be true.

No doubt most people will insist that if he is sincere he must be suffering from delusions and a persecution complex. I do not agree. No man could possibly have imagined so many things to be true if they were not so. There is a great difference between the wild imaginings of people with delusions and the magnificent whole of the Shaver Mystery, which takes into account so many previously inexplicable things, and fits them together like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Shaver's thinking is logical; people suffering from delusions do not think logically.

Because I have studied the Mystery thoroughly, and because I do not believe things are impossibilities merely because I cannot understand them, I am convinced that there is more in Shaver's writings than people who have not understood them would have other people believe.

Everything that Shaver claims is quite possible and should not be dismissed without serious investigation by people who are open-minded and not prejudiced against him before they begin. Unfortunately, most people do not like the thought that the things Shaver writes about may actually exist, and so they will do their best to convince themselves and others that they are not so.

But truth has a habit of making itself known, despite the sometimes incredible blindness of man.



"THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME"

By P. J. RIDLEY

According to most artists, the shape of the orthodox space craft of Science-Fiction is roughly that of a cylinder tapering to a point at each end, several aesthetically beautiful fins being placed symmetrically along the sides and top. The propulsion unit is fitted at one end of the cylinder, or alternatively, is housed in one or more of the aesthetically beautiful fins.

The overall appearance is that of a sleek super-streamlined torpedo.

However, unlike a torpedo, a space ship needs some means by which the tremendous speed reached in interplanetary space may be retarded when its destination is attained. Ignoring the loud lamentations of the outraged artist we demand the inclusion of propulsion tubes at both ends of the ship. Still muttering about our lack of appreciation of true art, the artist reluctantly places power units at both ends of his cylinder.

Again we scrutinize the drawing. Despite our artist's Bohemian dislike of scientific accuracy the space ship is now almost within the realm of possibility. With a glad smile cracking his face the artist awaits our accamations.

Candidly brutal, we point out that the a. b. fins decorating the sides of his vessel are completely unnecessary, since the interplanetary space craft will

undoubtedly land on small artificial satellites situated in orbits around each inhabited planet, the passengers being conveyed from and to the planet in more suitable "ferries."

A glassy smile on his face, the artist erases his beloved fins and turns once more to the circle of "fen" surrounding him.

With considerable trepidation one of the fen points out that as the propulsion units are situated at opposite ends of the vessel any deviation from its set course would be impossible; the advent, he continues, of a shower of meteorites would make the ability to turn the ship a decided advantage.

His face rapidly assuming a brick-red hue, the artist, mumbling under his breath, rapidly sketches in a number of propulsion tubes which would enable the ship to be turned. In a strained, sarcastic voice, refraining from shouting only by a great effort of will, the artist enquires if the fen can think of any further modifications. Danger means little to accuracy-loving S-F fans.

A slight, bespectacled figure stands forth from the group of fen; a sphere, he suggests, is a stronger form than a cylinder, and the likelihood is that a space craft of the future will be spherical in shape.

A small amount of foam is seen to cloud the artist's lips, as screaming imprecations he hears down on the frantically fleeing fen, a meat cleaver swinging in a silver circle round his head . . .

INITIAL ERROR

By CHARLES DUNCOMBE

Earth's continents heaved, then surged outward in one burst of supernal fire. The expiring agony of her millions of inhabitants merged into a crescendo of sound that spent itself in the vast bosom of space that quenched it in its all-encompassing dark.

The Admiral of the invading fleet gave a contented sigh. "Well, that's that," thoughtfully, "Strange though, they gave us so little opposition; what do you think, Captain?" turning to his companion at the control board.

"Not so strange, sir," he replied, "your approach was masterly; they had very little chance to detect us, before we launched the nuclear torpedo."

The Admiral turned away to hide his pleasure. "I suppose you are right," he said smugly. "Order all ships to return to Omnium."

"Yes, sir." The Captain saluted smartly, then into the inter-com; "Bridge to Communications. Flag-ship to fleet. All ships to return to home base."

The majestic ships of war wheeled, then fled with ever increasing velocity towards a far distant star.

Some hours later came a discreet knock at the door of the state cabin, and at the invitation to enter, the communications officer appeared

with barely suppressed excitement visible on his face, and a message in his hand. "Eh, what's this?" snapped the Admiral testily, "What's so important about this?"

"From Omnium, sir; I thought you would like to see it right away, sir."

The Admiral took the message suspiciously, then with darkening brows read it through. "Here, what do you make of this, Captain?" He read it slowly. "The pirate ships of Planet 3, Sun-type E-591 are still making extensive raids on our commerce. The expedition under Admiral Kardex has evidently failed in its mission. Continued alertness is essential."

"Planet 3, Sun-type E-591" he repeated vaguely, "But we've just destroyed it. Did you notice any of its space-ships get away, Captain?"

The Captain replied, puzzledly, "No, sir. You made a good job of it. I'll stake my life that no vessels managed to escape before we blew that world up."

He strode across to a desk and extracted a heavily sealed official document. Opening it, he commenced to read. Then he started—"Sir, I'm afraid you made a slight error, it was Planet 3, Sun-type G-591 you have just destroyed. Tut, tut. How unfortunate."

Ah, well, mistakes will happen.

MIST

By LAURENCE SANDFIELD

The tide of conversation had ebbed and flowed around the tiny inn's single bar, moving from cattle to crops, from crops to nursery gardens, from gardens to wild life. From wild life it had gone, strangely enough, to the supernatural.

Throughout the evening Bill Temple had sat at the long table, surrounded by the villagers, burying his nose from time to time in an excellent pint. He was dressed in conventional hiker's shirt and shorts, sun-burned with more than a British sun. He was listening, hoping to pick up fragments of local folk-lore for novel material.

Jan Stewer, leaning on the bar, said "Ar, the ole marsh road du be 'aunted vor zure. Oi bean' zeen nothin' moiseif now, but Ebenezer Mawgon's dog did cum out vurry vast the other night, an' won' boide neigh un sin'. Zaw that Oi did, an' ole Ebenezer's dog bean' 'fraid o' nought, not what Oi knowns on." Sceptically a farmer from a neighbouring village quired: "Now, Jan, that be a parcel o' ole crams, zurelee," but his protest was silenced by a murmur from the company. "No, it bean't, Oi zaw un moiseif—Jan, 'e's got sense, un 'e don' tell no crams—Oi were over thur in bright munelight, vor zure, an' wudn' there agan," and so on.

For a time the talk centred around local legends, each more incredible than the last, until the tale of the headless vicar annoyed Bill by its very conventionality. He drew the line there, quite definitely. As the narrator paused for breath, he interjected: "I say, you don't believe these tales, surely." He hesitated before quoting Kipling. "It 's so much—cobwebs and moon-talk."

The bar buzzed. Annoyance and incredulity was evident in every face. "Cobwebs, is un? Mune-talk, eh?" a big labourer leaned over and breathed beer into Bill's face. "Yu'r a city maan, zeemly," he said, "Well city folks knows what us doan't, an' us knows what city folks doan't, and none of us'd take the marsh road after dark, not vor anyone's money."

Bill looked up. "Show me where it is, tell me where it goes, and I'll take it," he said, "I'll live to prove you all wrong, too."

"Oi wudn' advise 'un, mister," said Jan. "Thur be mist coming up vor zure, n' thur's only one safe road thru' the marsh, which du cum out by Major Harvey's place."

"Major Harvey?"

"Eh, Harvey, William Harvey. Paratrooper in war, 'e wur."

Bill Temple asked eagerly: "Is his house called 'White Gables'?"

"Ah," replied Jan, "that be it, vor zure."

"I served with him. We were inseparable in action. They called us 'the two unpaid Bills.'"

"Zo 'ee be the gent 'e used to talk about. Moi zister works at Gables, now, an' she du be sayin' 'e says Bill did this, Bill did that, 'till 'is mother wunners did 'ee win the war 'eeself, wi' Major taggin' on ahind."

"That," said Temple, "Settles it. I've got to get to White Gables to-night. Show me the road, and if I don't come back, tell Major Harvey his old friend Bill Temple has been around." He drained his glass. "Who'll show me?"

Jan Stewer stepped out into the road with him. "Tain't zeemly, zur, bean't zeemly nohow. Oi'd advise 'e, zur, to go round t'long way. Thur be marsh road, Mr. Temple, an' good luck to 'ee."

With the boldness of modern youth and three pints of strong ale, Temple said good-night and walked down the road. As he moved away, a soft mist drifted over, obscuring the marshland.

He had ben walking some 15 minutes when he noticed he was not alone. Ahead, about 10 yards away, walked another, a slim feminine figure clad apparently in short skirt and blouse. Company, he thought, would be wel-

come, so he increased his pace. As he drew level with her, he saw that she indeed wore no overcoat or jacket as protection from the mist's damp bite.

"Er—excuse me, may I have the pleasure of your company?" he asked. She turned her head to him, revealing deep blue eyes set in a pointed, heart-shaped face. There was an elfin merriness about her, a humourously tolerant understanding of mankind that belied the apparent immaturity of her body. Seventeen or eighteen, she seemed, but wise beyond that. She took his arm naively, and yet vaguely as if playing a part. It seemed as if her unquestioning acceptance of his escort was the response to a prompter, off-stage. Or was the miasmic atmosphere of the marsh inflaming his imagination? Her confiding smile dispelled the thoughts.

"I have been warned against this road," he said, smiling in return.

"Indeed?" she replied. "I've used it regularly, for years. Where are you going?"

"To visit my friend, Major Harvey, at White Gables."

"The major is a gentleman. Is he expecting you?"

"No, I only to-night learned htat he resided in this locality. I'm on a walking tour, plenty of time, so I decided to visit him. I didn't originally intend to come here, but a hiker who sticks to a fixed itinary loses much pleasure."

She nodded. "I know the marsh intimately, and use paths most people do not know. If you will accept my guidance—?"

"Of course," Bill replied. "I didn't dream that a chance-met acquaintance would prove a friend in need."

She leaned on his arm, guiding him from the lane into side-tracks along which she moved with the ease of a Londoner on his city streets. He followed her, dumbly. Reeds began to surround them, rank and shoulder-high, nauseous great frogs squelched and flopped from their path. The mist thickened, until he could scarce see his guide, following only the touch of her soft hand. Thicker still grew the mist, shutting down upon vision like a backdrop. Now he was totally blind, solely dependant upon this sure-footed girl ahead of him.

The scarcely-visible paths beneath his feet twisted and disappeared into the murk, loosing themselves in clouded infinity. The fog's dampness soaked into his very soul. A bat fluttered gruesomely past his face causing him to start violently. The girl laughed, a silvery inkle of sound thru the darkling haze. The sound, raier than reassuring him, struck a strange terror into his heart, as of cold iron entering his deepest being.

"What's funny?" he exploded, terror lighting into anger. "Who are you? Where are we? Who—?" She wheeled suddenly, and he felt her, curving, soft and vibrant, press close to him. **She was totally invisible!** Her lips brushed his, but no face swam in the mist before his eyes. The stories told in the tavern rushed back into his mind, as the kiss sucked away his warmth, leaving a cold and empty husk of life.

Her voice answered, like silver bells, softly whispering. "I am what I am, and you, you have reached your destination," and her hands pushed against his shoulders, throwing him off balance into the mire. He flailed wildly, then found himself waist-deep.

His wild fear found voice in hoarse screams which echoed and died in the choking fog.

She stood suddenly visible, outlined in glowing blue against the blackness, laughing, laughing; then danced away into the swirling vapours, her ghost light cleaving their depressant walls.

In the little time left to him Bill Temple found a moment to ponder upon Lilitth and her children, who haunt dark and lonely places to trap mankind, of their will-o'-the-wisp, which guides men's stumbling feet into the deep marshes.

SCIENCE REVIEW

By
KENETH F. SLATER

First item for this issue is a subject dear to the hearts of all fantasy fans . . . the FLYING SAUCERS . . . from correspondent Phil Rasch comes word of a 22 page release from the National Military Establishment Office of Public Information, which composes a digest of preliminary studies made by the Air Command, Wright Field, Ohio. Briefly, reports Mr. Rasch, after two years of study they have concluded that about 30 per cent. "can probably satisfactorily be explained away as astronomical phenomena." About 30 per cent. "of the sightings studied thus far" have been identified as "conventional aerial objects." It is expected that further study will provide a commonplace answer to at least an equal number. The balance, however, are question marks. The Air Force state that the saucers are not a joke, but it is believed that they are not dangerous. They point to the **Books of Charles Fort** in proof that similar phenomena have been sighted at various times throughout past centuries. The possibility of visitors from other worlds is not ruled out, but it is strongly discounted. The nearest star is Wolf 359, eight light years away. It is believed that this is too far off to be a source of the saucers. Mars is so inhospitable it is thought that its inhabitants—if any—would be too occupied with survival to have energy to go in for interplanetary flights. Venus may have intelligent life, but it is so surrounded by clouds that they are probably unfamiliar with astronomy and space travel. Nor does it seem likely that if space travel was attained they would simply come, look, and then disappear without any attempt to establish communication. Mr. Rasch says there is a great deal more, but that this is the essence.

The whole thing would appear to have various points open to argument by members of the fan-clan, but they are all pretty obvious, so I shall neglect to mention them.

Other items of interest States-side would appear to be a rumour that a rocket plane has easily exceeded Mach-2, and the fact that the American scientists are now assured that Russia has succeeded in causing atomic (nuclear) "explosions." It is pointed out that the ability to cause fission does not necessarily mean the ability to make a nuclear fission bomb. The "know-how" of the fuse is a most important factor.

Of interest to those readers and writers who deal in robots, brain and nerve surgery, and so forth, is the confirmation of Prof. R. S. Lillie's (University of Chicago, 1925) suggestion that nerve impulses are not continuous, but are relayed. Experimental work conducted by A. F. Huxley (Physiological Lab., Camb.) and R. Stampfli (Physio. Institute, Berne) has supplied the necessary electrical measurements to support the theory. The system is roughly that each nerve relay unit generates its own impulse, instead of merely amplifying. These impulses travel backwards, as well as onwards.

Of interest to fanzine editors and publishers is the invention of a new photographic printing process, which does away with all chemical manipulation. **ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING**, Jan. 1949, reported that the process is "dry, fast, simple and cheap." As far as fans are concerned, the last word is the operative one. Anyone knowing prices, please advise for publication.

If you are interested in joining the search for uranium . . . the British Government will pay 13s. 9d. per lb. of contained uranium oxide . . . the Geological Survey of Great Britain D.S.I.R. (Atomic Energy Division) has produced a short technical pamphlet called "A Prospector's Handbook to Radioactive Mineral Deposits." This contains the fundamental data to aid all searchers. However, its' not much good to you if you are going to sit in your own backyard . . . the cry is "Go West, Young Man." Price, by the way, is 6d.

Chapman and Hall have in preparation (possibly now printed) a book of interest to B.I.S. members. Title is "Jets and Rockets," by R. Smelt, M.A., and T. R. F. Nonweiler, B.Sc. Two new books on nuclear physics are also available . . . "Atomic Energy" R. R. Nimmo, M.Sc. (N.Z.) Ph.D. (Cantab.), 9s. 6d., and "Cosmic Rays and Nuclear Physics," L. Janossy, Ph.D., 9s. 6d. A somewhat more expensive tome, recommended to electronic engineers is "ELECTRONICS AND THEIR APPLICATION IN INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH," Price 42s.

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THE YOUNGER GENERATION!

Louis Holmes was attempting to convince Susan, aged 7, that there was no such thing as a 'thunderbolt'. Susan refused to be convinced, and quoted as authority for her belief statements of many local yokels. Mrs. Holmes found reason to intervene, and pointed out to Susan, "You know, Daddy does know a lot about science."

To which Susan, bearing in mind the gaudy covers of numerous sf magazines, replied:

"I know, but science couldn't happen in this country, could it?"

SHE

By
KIRBY FRAZIER

The damned sound is still in my brain—there can't possibly be any semblance to music in this crashing storm . . .

The radio was playing in the cab when I left her, the radio was playing in my studio when I did it; and now I hear it! But I won't hear it long! Just one more cigarette and I shall be gone, I, Pierre Robillard, artist.

I didn't mean to do it, it was an accident. She had come to my studio to pose. I had been doing a portrait of her. Her white skin gleamed under the lights, her lips were moist and tempting, her eyes taunting. She did it—she did it herself! She had no business coming to my studio.

She was the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in our town. Our town, New Orleans, the wicked. She liked to be known as a sophisticate, she read William Faulkner, Carl Sandburg, and Nietzsche. She went barefoot in their mansion and swam nude in the pool. She gave parties and invited a mixture of human debris. She knew that I was an octoroon, that my grandfather had been Haitian negro of the blackest blood. I was not ashamed of it, even though no one could tell by looking at me. My painting and sculpting was likened to that of great masters. I was accepted by all people. Now I am going, taking my great gift, all because of Her.

My studio was in the Vieux Carre', the Latin quarter, the Artist quarter. On a night like this, first evening of the Mardi Gras, she wanted me to paint, so I painted. She had taunted me about my art. "You need no lover, Pierre," she would say, "You have art." But still she would brush against me, leaving traces of a subtle perfume in her wake. She would talk intimately to me, me alone! And always Debussy's "La Mere" would be playing in the distance. Perhaps I fancy it, but standing here on this cliff high above the sea, I hear it. "La Mere," the sea!

That night in my studio, the night I left her, somewhere in the building, someone had a radio going, and it was La Mere. La Mere—even the words remind me of that white throat—on, well, one more cigarette and I shall go—she sat on the dais draped in the blue velvet and I painted. She moved restlessly and the drapes parted, showing creamy curves, curves that would tempt anyone, anyone but me. I was truly wedded to my art. I asked her if if she would like to rest a moment—she came over to the canvas, she pressed against me, she gestured and tipped my palate; a thick blob of black oil blotted out the delicate features I had worked so hard and so long on. The radio was pulsing with La Mere—would it never stop? I turned slowly, I took her in my arms, the velvet slipped, she stood undraped. Slowly my hands crept over her perfect body, creamy thighs, ivory breasts, snowy shoulders, no adjective is descriptive. Now my hands were at her throat, my thumbs bearing down. Yes, I killed her! I killed her slowly pressing with my calloused artist's hands at that white throat. Slowly! Slowly! She did not make a sound, her eyes did not pop, she changed no colour, she just died. I dropped her on the pile of blue velvet and turned off the radio. One moment of blessed quiet and then La Mere! That awful dirge, for that was what it had

become. Someone in the building had a recording. I stood a moment and then I did it. I went to my supply closet and took a quantity of plaster, I took model wires and braces from it and then I, yes, I made a statue of her, I braced the body with wires and then I applied a coat of plaster—it made a beautiful statue—everybody said so. I had fabulous offers for it—but I had to keep it! The hue and cry about her disappearance was dying down when her father came to see. He thought perhaps I had some sketches of her—he saw the statue and immediately wanted to buy it, because it reminded him of her, he said. When that infernal record started La Mere I went a little berserk, I covered the statue and ran from the studio. Late that night when I went back I saw a policeman in front of the building, and as I hurried away a newsboy's cry informed me that I had been found out. Hurriedly I took a cab to the edge of the town. All the while the cab radio was playing and I was trembling—trembling—

Now I stand here on this cliff, and the lightning plays and the thunder roars, the waves break against the cliff and I can hear music! Music I can hear forever. No, I can't do it, I shan't jump. I can't bear the torture of hearing that infernal music in hell. I shall go away, yes, yes, I shall go away! Where I shall never hear that theme again. Careful now, the cliff is muddy and I may slip, I shall go away! I shall be free! One more step, careful—

GENERAL CHUNTERING

Don Tuck (Tuck of Tasmania) obtained his B.Sc. in May this year, and is now Assistant Editor of Publications, Defence Research Laboratories, Victoria, Aus. . . . we understand he only reads aSF now . . . Franklin M. Dietz, Fantasy Artisans, has purchased a printing press, and are now moving into the semi-pro field . . . we learn that next issue of their 'zine will have a full colour cover . . . David A. Kyle, the Fantasy Book Club, had a program set-back, and had to swing in two old books, to make up the three-for-sixty scheme. . . . GNOME PRESS had better watch out . . . two copies of THE PORCELAIN MAGICIAN have been received by O.F., the first had a complete set of pages missing, and when we got a replacement, it had four pages blank. . . . I rather feel that Fantasy publishers are already feeling the slump, the books are coming so slowly . . . but it may only be the summer heat slowed 'em down . . . in the British mag field one or two interesting items have appeared . . . LEADER, June 25th, ran a four page illo-ed article on Jules Verne . . . STRAND July, had a short yarn, THE DOUBLE-CROSS BAT by Ian Peebles, which was amusing and sf-ish . . . and August has an article on Loch Ness and other monsters . . . TIT-BITS, April 15, had a page about the ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN . . . Germany has published a few sf novels since the war, latest of which is AUF UNBEKANTEM STERN by Anton M. Kolnberger, Price DM. 9.50 (approx. 15s.) . . . a French stof mag has appeared in Canada . . . FATE'S Editor reports they will publish an stof mag in September, 160 pages, 35c. . . . two new forthcoming Canadian mags are reported for winter publication, titles: SUPERNATURAL STORIES and AMAZING ADVENTURES. Publishers are Sair Publications . . . W. L. (Louis) Holmes was presented with a daughter on June 6th . . . congrts. Mr. and Mrs. Holmes . . . our congrats also go to Walter Norcott, he only requires two issues to complete a set of WEIRD TALES, Vol. 1, Nos. 3 and 4 . . . as this mag. was first pubbed in 1923, this IS an accomplishment . . . The SFI hope to devise a scheme to ensure supplies of mags for UK fans . . . more on that later . . . the disappearance of the WAC CORPORAL gives rise to much speculation, including the fact that maybe we are property and must not go outside our cage . . . a rain of fishes was viewed by Dr. A. D. Bajkov, in Marksville, USA . . . the "rain" included black bass, and minnows, some fish were nine inches long . . . Cedric Walker is trying to break into the pro field, and has passed a story for aSF Editor's perusal . . . lots of luck, Cedric . . . Frank Fears reports membership of SFS is steadily growing.—K. F. S.

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