

TYNDALLITE
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from Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 1368,
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| mailing comments | page 901 |
| Don Markstein in <i>The New York Times</i> | 904 |
| Jules Verne telegram | 904 |
| Kevin L. Cook | 904 |

The Southerner #233 Apr-May 2003 –
Jeffrey Copeland

Item #9 is listed as:
StricklaNice Distinctions 18 by Hlavaty.
In its place I have **Revenant** #18 by
Sheila J. Strickland. (I do have item #6,
Nice Distinctions #1 by Hlavaty.)

The New Port News #209 May 2003 –
Ned Brooks

p. 2 You have a point that
Captain Nemo might have salvaged coke
from the inside of the volcano for his
sodium distillery.

Cavourite wasn't "invented" by
Jules Verne. It was Herbert G. Wells'
means of reaching Luna in *The First
Men in the Moon*. You postulate that
cavourite wouldn't act unless there was
enough of it. Since I can't find my copy
of Wells' novel I can't cite chapter and
verse but if it had anti-gravity potential
then I presume every atom would have
the capability. Cavor mined it, which
implies that it occurred in sufficient
quantities to be mined. So how did it

manage to stay on Earth during geologic
upheavals?

I agree that killing ancestors of
Adolf Hitler isn't just. To believers in
Original Sin I guess it makes perverted
sense.

Variations on a Theme #20 Apr 2003 –
Rich Lynch

p. 8 You're right that Jules
Verne's sodium distillery wouldn't fit in
the *Nautilus* but Verne specified that it
was inside the volcano in the Canary
Islands. That was one of the plot
elements in *20,000 Leagues Under the
Sea*: that Captain Nemo had to return to
the Canary Islands when his supply of
sodium was running low.

You're also right that coal is a
sedimentary product, not an igneous
product. The volcano would ruin the
quality of the coal.

**THE SOUTHERN FANDOM
CONFEDERATION BULLETIN**
v8#2 Mar 2003 – R. B. Cleary

pp. 4-8 Thanks for publishing an
assortment of convention reports by a
diversity of attendees.

pp. 10-13 "Annotated Fanzine
Listings" by Tom Feller is valuable for
telling us what's IN the zines. Thanks,
Tom.

Tom, it will be interesting to see
if I get any response to your listing of
Tyndallite. So far, the score is zero.

p. 13 "The Spew Goes" – R. B.
Cleary: Randy, your Irish Hugo winners
from an alternate universe are mildly

amusing. It's a tough job trying to parody the winners from *this* universe.

Twydrasil And Treehouse Gazette
#82 May 2003 – Richard
Dengrove

p. 12 You wonder how much story someone could get out of writing about an alternate universe created by a choice of socks in the morning. Of course, there's the theory that washing machines are actually interdimensional transports so that there's an alternate universe full of socks. You're right, it would be hard to come up from the foot of the class with a yarn that would really sock it to them.

Since Lafayette R. Hubbard didn't write the majority of the contents of any issue of *Astounding Science-Fiction* are you sure that you're recalling *ASF*? He did write major portions of various issues of *Unknown (Worlds)* and the Oct 1950 *Fantastic Adventures*.

pp. 12-13 I'm glad that we agree about Isaac Asimov's Foundation series, that the grandioseness of the concept more than compensates for the deficiencies in style and characterization.

p. 13 I agree with you that without the tutelage of John W. Campbell, Jr. the stories of Alfred E. van Vogt have a decided tendency to be terrible. But even Campbell slipped up in dealing with van Vogt. I recall a letter in *ASF* asking about the significance of "The Players of Null-A". Campbell's reply was to give it some time and it will become clear. Fifty-eight years later I still think it was pretentious twaddle.

You're probably right that Howard R. Garis' Tom Swift books had a better average of predictions coming true than did Herbert G. Wells' stories. Of course, Wells' didn't actually make many technological predictions. His forte was *Salvation Through Socialism*; technology was usually incidental unless it was pivotal nonsense, such as time machines, cavourite, etc.

One way of testing free will is to find out how much attorney Guy H. Lillian III charges.

REVENANT #18 – Sheila J. Strickland

p. [1] Thanks for mentioning that Jasper Fforde has now a sequel to *The Eyre Affair* entitled *Lost In A Good Book*. You say that a third book in the series will entitled *The Well of Lost Plots*. So there should be a Fforde in our future.

p. 2 Thanks for your praise for Terry Pratchett's *The Wee Free Men*. So apparently Pratchett is maintaining quality without slipping a disc.

p. 4 You ask if in Nathaniel Schachner's "Ancestral Voices", *Astounding Stories*, Dec 1933 the time traveler killing Adolf Hitler's ancestor prevented the Holocaust or if there was a replacement for Hitler. It's been so many decades but if I recall correctly there was no substitute Hitler, no Nazis and therefore no Holocaust. And actually, as prescient as was Schachner, I don't recall if he predicted the Holocaust or not.

Frequent Flyer 22 May 2003 – Tom Feller

pp. [5-6] Thanks for analyzing some of the Hugo nominees.

Oblio #146 Apr-May 2003 – Gary Brown

p. 9 No, Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* is not now, nor has it ever been, science-fiction. That's been the whole point of this ongoing argument/discussion.

And yes, Mr. Mercier, an Anglican clergyman, mangled the common English translations. Mercier objected to Verne's technological content, his liberalism, his anti-imperialism, etc. So he deleted 23% of Verne's text and mistranslated what was left.

It's Because We're Proud of You
30 May 2003 – Jeffrey Copeland

p. 11 Thanks for your glowing review of Neal Stephenson and J. Frederick George's novel *The Cobweb* (as by "Stephen Bury").

Home with the Armadillo #58 Apr 2003 – Liz Copeland

pp. [2-4] Thanks for the book reviews.

p. [2] You review the Baen omnibus *Med Ship* by "Murray Leinster" (pseudonym of William F. Jenkins) and say that the afterword claims that "Leinster" "...starting the subgenre of science fiction doctor stories." in the 1950's. That's only true in an alternate universe. I don't know who was first in

this universe. David H. Keller, M.D., began publishing science-fiction doctor stories in the 1920's. Lafayette R. Hubbard's Old Doc Methuselah series began in the Oct 1947 *Astounding Science-Fiction*.

I haven't read "Leinster"'s *Med Ship* stories since their first appearance, but I have fond memories of them. You say that they're good stories. It's nice to have confirmation that they've stood the test of time.

Jenkins was an amazing author in that he was writing top science-fiction stories starting around 1918 and was still writing outstanding stories into the 1960's (along with some second-rate stuff over the decades).

Your comments about John Ringo's *A Hymn Before Battle*, *When the Devil Dances* and *Gust Front* shows that he's filibustering about weaponry and battles rather than telling a story.

Thanks for recommending Harry Turtledove's *The Best Alternate History Stories of the 20th Century*; Connie Willis' *A Woman's Liberation* and "Stephen Bury"'s *The Cobweb*.

Trivial Pursuits #107 – Janice Gelb

p. 2 Thanks for the reviews.

It's nice to know that Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* has been restored.

Your opinion of Jason Fforde's *Lost in a Good Book* is close to Liz Copeland's, so that's confirmation that it is almost good.

from *The New York Times* 28 May 2003,
page A2:

“An illustration on Saturday with the obituary of Lionel Wilson, voice of the television cartoon figures Tom Terrific and Mighty Manfred the Wonder Dog, carried an erroneous credit. It was from a Web reference site, Don Markstein’s Toonopedia (www.toonopedia.com), not from CBS.”

from:
<http://www.simonlake.com/jvcable.htm>

‘CABLE FROM JULES VERNE TO SIMON LAKE, Sent from Amiens, France – 1898

“While my book ‘*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*’ is entirely a work of imagination, my conviction is that all I said in it will come to pass. A thousand mile voyage in the Baltimore submarine boat (The Argonaut) is evidence of this. This conspicuous success of submarine navigation in the United States will push on under-water navigation all over the world. If such a successful test had come a few months earlier it might have played a great part in the war just closed. The next great war may be largely a contest between submarine boats. I think that electricity rather than compressed air will be the motive power in such vessels for the sea is full of this element. It is waiting to be harnessed as steam has been. It will then not be necessary to go to the land for fuel any more than for provisions. The sea will supply food for man and power without limit.

Submarine navigation is now ahead of aerial navigation and will

advance much faster from now on. Before the United States gains her full development she is likely to have mighty navies not only on the bosom of the Atlantic and Pacific, but in the upper air and beneath the water’s surface.

JULES VERNE”

There’s a footnote saying:

“DID YOU KNOW THAT...
...after Simon Lake read “*Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*” at age 12, he decided he was going to build that fantastic “*Nautilus*” submarine. And he did!

Was Simon Lake the real Captain Nemo?”

from: Kevin L. Cook, 53 Oakland Ave.
Tuckahoe NY 10707-1732 4May
2003

Dear Norm:

While I had the interest to read all three versions of “*The Metal Monster*” by A. Merritt, I never even considered trying to read the alternate versions of “*The Skylark of Space*” by E. E. “Doc” Smith. Although Smith is a pioneer, I do not think that he has aged well at all, and I doubt that many younger readers of science fiction have ever even sampled one of his books; actually, I cannot recall the last time I even saw a new edition of one of them having been published. Unfortunately, the same is true for Verne as well; probably new and accurate translations of his books would only sell to universities and libraries.

I think Isaac Asimov’s *The Caves of Steel* and *The Naked Sun* are probably his two best novels. His work would have a better reputation today if

he had not gone back and written those last half dozen or so novels connecting all of his series. Almost all of his earlier novels and short stories are readable, though.

No More A Corpse by “Loring Brent” was the U.S. hardcover book title of George F. Worts’ “The Return of George Washington”. As you noted, the whole story was a hoax, not time travel nor raising the dead, as the plot suggested.

Take care.

Sincerely,
Kevin

[My favorite Asimov novel is *Pebble in the Sky*. I think that *The Caves of Steel* is excellent but that *The Naked Sun* is a slightly-lesser work. The English first edition of Worts’ story is *The Return of George Washington*. There is a dispute as to whether or not it preceded the U.S. first. Everett F. Bleiler says that the U.S. edition was the actual first.]