

TYNDALLITE

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mailing comments page 909

BOB'S INFECTED NOSE May 2003 –
mike weber

p. [23] You quote me about
Lafayette R. Hubbard as saying:

*"[Hubbard] wasn't as prolific in
science-fiction as some people would
have us believe."*

You then respond with:

*'Hubbard himself once made the
claim – in so many words – that the
major reason (or one of the major
reasons) that Campbell started up
"Unknown" was that he (LRH) was too
prolific for just "Astounding" ...'*

It's certainly within the realm of
possibility that in one of his more
opaque moments that Hubbard made
such a claim. However, it's not borne
out by the facts. Campbell said that he
began *Unknown* so as to have a fitting
venue for Eric F. Russell's "Sinister
Barrier". Russell's story appeared in the
first issue dated Mar 1939. Please refer
back to my complete list of Hubbard's
appearances in the science-fiction
magazines on pages 892-893 of the Feb
2003 *Tyndallite*.

He first appeared in *Astounding
Science-Fiction* in 1938 and had two
stories in 1938. In 1939 he had no
stories in *ASF* and four stories in
Unknown. In 1940 he had five stories in
ASF and four stories in *Unknown*. In
1941 he had two stories in *ASF* and three
stories in *Unknown (Worlds)*. In 1942
he had six stories in *ASF* and two stories
in *Unknown Worlds*. In 1943 he had
zero stories in *ASF* and zero stories in
Unknown Worlds (whose last issue was
Oct 1943).

Nice Distinctions #3 [year] 2003 –
Arthur D. Hlavaty

p. [1] I share your apprehension
that Robert A. Heinlein's first novel, *For
Us the Living*, will turn out to be
"awful", rather than awe inspiring.

SPIRITUS MUNDI #197 – Aug-Sep
2003 – Guy H. Lillian III

p. [3] I regret to learn that P. L.
Montgomery is dead. She was a very
nice lady.

p. [6] To quote you:

*"Yes – let's get a SFPA charter
and all of us go to Oz!"*

Fine, but how do you charter a tornado
in Toto?

p. [10] You wonder if Jules
Verne really believed that *20,000
Leagues Under the Sea* would come
true. I'm firmly convinced that he did.
Simon Lake's submarine, *Argonaut*, was
close and the *U.S.S. Nautilus* was even
closer, except for the improved power
source. But Verne itemized the basics of
building a working submarine.

I'm amused by your line:

"So the Devil wears Bermuda shorts, huh? Well, I'd roast in Hell before I let anyone see me in Bermudas, so it makes sense."

Have you ever read Horace L. Gold and Lyon S. de Camp's "None But Lucifer", *Unknown* Sep 1939? It's a fairly good story about the Devil wishing to retire but having to trick someone into taking his place. Originally it was an unsatisfactory solo story by Gold. Gold wasn't able to revise it to John W. Campbell, Jr.'s satisfaction so John had de Camp collaborate on it to Gold's resentment. Shasta wanted to reprint it but Gold refused unless his original version was used. But Shasta also didn't like his version. It recently appeared in paperback with both bylines so I presume the text is that of the collaboration.

REVENANT #20 Sep 2003 – Sheila J. Strickland

pp. [1]-3 Thanks for your report on the 25-27 Jul 2003 DeepSouthCon/LibertyCon.

Your comments about Andrew Fox's *Fat White Vampire Blues* about an overweight vampire cabby in New Orleans make the story seem to have potential. (I'm glad that I have V- blood and don't ride in cabs in New Orleans.)

pp. 3-6 Thanks for your 2003 Torcon report.

p. 6 Some of the best science-fiction novels I've read about secret rulers of the world are "Talbot Mundy"'s trilogy, *The Nine Unknown*,

"Ramsden"/*The Devil's Guard* and "The King of the World"/*Jimgrim/Jimgrim Sahib*. (These are a subset of a much longer series.) Mundy postulates the world being controlled by nine immortals. They are being impersonated and the impersonators try to interfere with our heroes (who are undercover intelligence agents). Unfortunately the last of the trilogy was textually butchered from *Adventure* when it was published in hardcovers and then the paperback butchered the text of the hardcover. (Toni, would you like to remedy the situation?) In the last of the trilogy the Nine plus the secret agents Jeff Ramsden, James S. Grim, Narayan Singh, Chullunder Ghose and their pals tangle with Dorje, a super-villain who has acquired such items as ray guns, a spaceship, etc. and is trying to conquer the world. The rest of the series, both before and after don't match these in quality.

Somehow a lot of "Mundy"'s non-fantastic books got into Everett F. Bleiler's *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature*.

All Four Winds is an omnibus, which includes *King – of the Khyber Rifles*, *Jimgrim*, *Black Light* and *Om*.

KotKR is an adventure novel set mostly in Afghanistan with a cave-based jihad preparing to invade India. I've heard two specious rationalizations as to why this is fantasy. 1) It involves Afghan warriors hiding in caves. 2) Princess Yasmini shows Captain Athelstan King two mummies and claims that she and he are reincarnations of the mummies. That is as close as the story gets to fantasy. While not an outstanding novel it is an entertaining

novel. Donald M. Grant reprinted it from *Everybody's Magazine* with all of the excellent Joseph Clement Coll illustrations.

The text of *Jimgrim* is butchered. As far as I know no one has reprinted the complete text from *Adventure*. The magazine version is excellent. The book's text is so sloppy and inconsistent that I realized something was wrong when I read it. Charles F. Hansen then informed me that the magazine version was far better.

Black Light was announced as *The Man From Jupiter*. However, it's not an interplanetary but rather occult science-fiction in which the hero is the man from Jupiter in an astrological sense. It's a good book, but not a great book.

Om is mystical borderline science-fiction involving British subjects obtaining true knowledge from Tibet.

Caves Of Terror is a non-fantasy about the secret service trying to track down Princess Yasmini under India. It also fizzles out at the physical end of the story. Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, editor of *Adventure*, accepted this one for mysterious reasons. He should have had "Mundy" revise and finish it.

The Devil's Guard ("Ramsden" in *Adventure* and the English hardcover) is an excellent novel of the secret service battling their way into Tibet in an effort to unmask the false Nine Unknown.

Full Moon ("There Was a Door" in *The American Weekly* and the English hardcover) is a good mystery novel trying to find out what happens to many

of the people who disappear each year. The explanation is science-fictional.

The Mystery of Khufu's Tomb is another non-fantastic. It's a novel about trying to find Khufu's real tomb.

Old Ugly Face is not a good novel. It intermixes philosophy, science-fiction and Tibetan mysticism in a dreary mish-mash. This may be one of the main reasons why Richard H. Eney is supposed to have said something to the effect of 'Talbot Mundy's characters are so full of Cosmic Wisdom that they slosh.'. It's a sequel to *The Thunder Dragon Gate*, a far better and far less pretentious non-fantasy. Both of them concern the search for the current Dalai Lama. I was going to ask him if he'd read them but decided to keep my mouth shut.

For some reason *The Thunder Dragon Gate* is listed in Bleiler.

The last entry in Bleiler is *Tros of Samothrace*. It's an episodic novel cobbled together from seven stories in *Adventure*, none of them fantasies. In conversations with several fans they suggested two reasons why some might consider it fantasy: 1) druids and druidic quotations. 2) After battling Julius Caesar Tros builds a ship with which to circumnavigate the world. In neither sequel (*Queen Cleopatra* and *The Purple Pirate*) does he do so.

AVATAR PRESS v2#29 25 Sep 2003 --
Randy B. Cleary

pp. 4-5 Thanks for the reviews.

p. 5 You are slightly disappointed with Alice M. "Andre" Norton's *Time Traders* (an omnibus of

The Time Traders and *Galactic Derelict*) and *Time Traders II* (an omnibus of *The Defiant Agents* and *Key Out of Time*). You say that you'd like:

“...a little more characterization and character development and connection and explanation of the sweeping backdrop of vanished intergalactic empires and time travel in Earth's past.”

I don't recall reading any of these. I enjoyed *Star Man's Son* and a couple of others from the 1950's. I was slightly disappointed with her retelling of Xenophon's *Anabasis*. I felt that Xenophon did better with the material. I quit after the first two Witch World books. She padded the connecting scenes and compressed the main scenes. I happened to discuss these shortly afterwards with Richard A. Lupoff. He'd had the same reaction to her bad handling and pacing.

[“]YNGVI IS A LOUSE[!][“] [AND OTHER GRAFFITOS] #85 Sep 2003
- T. K. F. Weisskopf Reinhardt

p. 3 Thanks for recommending John Varley's *Red Thunder* and Timothy Zahn's *Manta's Gift* as “...fun real sf books. Neither blew me away,...”. You say that the Varley is Heinlein-derivative, “...hey kids, let's build a spaceship and go to Mars” while the Zahn is “...an alien contact story...”

As for stories that do blow away the readers have you read James N. Hall and Charles Nordhoff's *The Hurricane*? It's not up to the quality of their Bounty trilogy but it's enjoyable.

p. 18 Thanks for letting us know that Edward E. Smith's Lensman books are in print. Do you know which versions?