

THE ACOLYTE

An Amateur Magazine of Fantasy and the Supernatural.

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(and)

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THE ACOLYTE is dedicated to the memory of the
late H. P. Lovecraft by two of his sincere
acolytes. FTL. DWR.

WELL, here it is; another "Vol. I, No. 1". The editors have both gotten rather disgusted with some of the other fan magazines; oh, they were all right, you know, but somehow we thought we could do a pretty good job along that line ourselves. Rimel had both the experience and the enthusiasm; Laney had the enthusiasm plus an obliging employer. So after months of palaver and weeks of letter writing, we dug into it. We think our contents as a whole will stack up favorably with other fan publications; the mechanics of reproduction, however, are something we learned by brute strength and perseverance. If you see a poorly reproduced page, sympathize with the blasting profanity and hopeless despair of a pair of green-horns; if you see a good-looking page, rejoice with us over the partial conquering of the perversity of inanimate material.

AS TO FUTURE ISSUES, that is a matter wholly in the lap of the gods. "Ditto" is not capable of more than about 120 copies, and in any case we can only use this equipment this once. Mimeograph is pretty sloppy, yet a good outfit costs plenty. Multigraph is tops, and of course a printing press is the ne plus ultra. In any event, we hope, after the war, to cash some of our war bonds and buy an outfit. If and when, we hope you will all be with us as cash subscribers, for we have some material in prospect, and some ideas groping around just aching to be materialized, that taken together should delight all true fantasy fans.

WRITE US, friends, fans, and even enemies. We would like to hear what you think of THE ACOLYTE, if you would like to have it continued, and any other remarks you may feel like making. This issue is on us, as a necessary prerequisite to getting the reproductive facilities, but we would appreciate a letter from each of you. And if any of you happen to have fan sheets of your own, an exchange would be no end welcome. Who knows; we might even subscribe to it. And if any of you Canucks have stray copies of EERIE TALES or the Canadian issue of WEIRD TALES, we would appreciate them immensely.

WE WISH TO THANK all our contributors, the various fans who helped us circulate this issue, and particularly to acknowledge our appreciation to Potlatch Forests Inc., Lewiston, Idaho for the use of their reproductive equipment.

DREAMS OF YITH

by Duane W. Rimel

I

In distant Yith past created, ragged peaks;
On far-flung islands lost to worldly eyes,
A shadow from the ancient star-void seeks
Some being which in caverns shrilly cries
A challenge; and the hairy dweller speaks
From that deep hole where slimy Sotho lies.
But when those night-winds crept about the place,
They fled---for Sotho had no human face!

II

Beyond the valleys of the sun which lie
In misty chaos past the reach of time;
And brood beneath the ice as aeons fly,
Long waiting for some brighter, warmer clime;
There is a vision, as I vainly try
To glimpse the madness that must some day climb
From age-old tombs in dim dimensions hid,
And push all angles back---unseal the lid!

III

Beside the city that once lived there wound
A stream of putrefaction writhing black;
Reflecting crumbling spires stuck in the ground
That glow through hovering mist whence no stray track
Can lead to those dead gates, where once was found
The secret that would bring the dwellers back.
And still that pitch-black current eddies by
Those silver gates of Yith to sea-beds dry.

IV

On rounded turrets rising through the vane
Of cloud-veiled aeons that the Old Ones knew;
On tablets deeply worn and fingered clean
By tentacles that dreamers seldom view;
In space-hung Yith, on clammy walls obscene
That writhe and crumble and are built anew;
There is a figure carved; but God? those eyes,
That sway on fungoid stems at leaden skies!

V

Around the place of ancient, waiting blight;
On walls of sheerest opal rearing high,
That move as planets beckon in the night
To faded realms where nothing sane can lie;
A deathless guard tramps by in feeble light
Emitting to the stars a sobbing cry.
But on that path where footsteps should have led
There rolled an eyeless, huge and bloated head.

Dreams of Yith. (cont.)

VI

Amid dim hills that poison mosses blast,
Far from the lands and seas of our clean earth,
Dread nightmare shadows dance---obscurely cast
By twisted talons of archaic birth
On rows of slimy pillars stretching past
A daemon-fane that echoes with mad mirth.
And in that realm sane eyes may never see---
For black light streams from skies of ebony.

VII

On those queer mountains which hold back the horde
That lie in waiting in their mouldy graves,
Who groan and mumble to a hidden lord
Still waiting for the time-worn key that saves;
There dwells a watcher which can ill afford
To let invaders by those hoary caves.
But some day then may dreamers find the way
That leads down elfin-painted paths of gray.

VIII

And past those unclean spires that ever lean
Above the windings of unpeopled streets;
And far beyond the walls and silver screen
That veils the secrets of those dim retreats,
A scarlet pathway leads that some have seen
In wildest visions that no mortal greets.
And down that dimming path in fearful flight
Queer beings squirm and hasten in the night.

IX

High in the ebon skies on scaly wings
Dread batlike beasts soar past those towers gray
To peer in greedy longing at the things
Which sprawl in every twisted passageway.
And when their gruesome flight a shadow brings
The dwellers lift dim eyes above the clay.
But lidded bulbs close heavily once more;
They wait---for Sotho to unlatch the door!

X

Now, though the veil of troubled visions deep
Is draped to blind me to the secret ways
Leading through blackness to the realm of sleep
That haunts me all my jumbled nights and days,
I feel the dim path that will let me keep
That rendezvous in Yith where Sotho plays.
At last I see a glowing turret shine,
And I am coming, for the key is mine!

EXCERPTS FROM THE LETTERS OF H. P. LOVECRAFT.

(Editors' note) The following paragraphs are taken from previously unpublished letters written to Duane W. Rimel by the late H. P. Lovecraft, dean of supernatural writers, who was also a unique correspondent. Writing regularly to a circle of correspondents comprising over two hundred writers, weird fans, artists, and anti-quarians; Mr. Lovecraft's letters frequently ran to 12000 words, and covered practically every subject known to mankind. We have picked out a few items which we hope will prove of general interest to fantasy fans.

* * * * *

November 19, 1934.

...Regarding the question of a preliminary synopsis---I have found that in most cases a very clear idea of what is going to happen pays extremely well; since after all, every part of a story ought to be in harmony with every other part. The secret of perfect effectiveness is an atmosphere so thoroughly coordinated that every sentence has some subtle bearing on the whole plan and outcome. It always helps to jot down the main points of a future story, although of course it would be just as good theoretically if every point were clear in one's head, even without being written. In practice, we are always apt to overlook some little point if it isn't written down. Common sense is the best guide as to what to do in each individual instance. Sometimes one has planned out a plot so thoroughly in one's head---changing and re-changing as days and weeks go by---that the story virtually exists in complete form before a word is actually written. In such a case, a formal synopsis can sometimes be dispensed with---but these cases are relatively rare, and not to be expected among beginners. And even then it is well to have a set of notes on the details, in order to avoid vagueness and contradictions. I have found that one extremely valuable thing is a perfect time-schedule assigning a definite date for every event and a definite age for every character. Indeed, it is sometimes useful to have a brief biography---and even a partial genealogy---of every character drawn up in order to make all casual allusions consistent. Beginners usually bungle frightfully in handling the time element...The general principle is that one ought to know all about the imaginary events he has chosen to describe, before he begins describing them. In weird stories involving bizarre monsters and forms of architecture and scenery, it is best to make an explicit (even though crude) sketch of the strange shapes, with a list of all their dimensions, aspects, and properties. Thus, as I told you once, I had Cthulhu all down on paper before I tried to write about him---and likewise the curious entities of "At the Mountains of Madness". That's really the only way to be sure of avoiding vagueness and self-contradiction...

* * * * *

March 10, 1935.

...As for the "abstruse" comment, that evidently stems from his (Farnsworth Wright's) incurable dislike of any subtlety in a story. He wants everything spoiled by a diagram---which of course prevents the best stories from landing at all. It was only by a hair's-breadth that my "Randolph Carter" squeezed in a decade ago. Wright thought my failure to explain what uttered those words at the last was well-nigh inexcusable. However, I guess he sometimes uses that pet word abstruse just on general principles. Another old standby of his is

LOVECRAFT EXCERPTS. (Cont.)

"unconvincing"---and in the case of my mss., "too long". No, I certainly wouldn't give in to his demand for a flat, explained ending. I'd rather not place a story than twist it to his mould...

April 16, 1935.

...I can generally recall an idea pretty well, once the essential outlines are down on paper. I also save press cuttings bearing on weird topics---reports of monsters, lost races, excavated cities of antiquity, sunken islands, etc.---for possible future use in fiction. As for "abstruseness" in stories---all the pulp magazines seem to demand detailed and prosaic explanations for every unusual element. It ruins the story from a truly artistic standpoint, but editors don't care about that. They aim to please the very lowest grade of readers, probably because these constitute a large numerical majority. When you glance at the advertisements in these cheap magazines (and they wouldn't continue to be inserted if they weren't answered) you can see what a hopelessly vulgar and stupid rabble comprise the bulk of the clientele. These yaps and nitwits probably can't grasp anything even remotely approaching subtlety. Suggestion---the most artistic way to present any marvellous event---means absolutely nothing to them. One has to draw a full diagram and drive the idea into their heads with a hammer before they "get" it. Indeed---many persons of far greater literacy are surprisingly slow in grasping the fine points of a story. I know a really brilliant chap who didn't grasp the meaning (a very subtly concealed meaning) of Machen's "White People" until I carefully and detailedly explained it to him. But it doesn't pay to cater too extensively to this taste for diagrams and hammers. Many a writer has been ruined by so doing. I can see where the reiteration of this demand has injured my own work---in my more recent stories I undoubtedly explain too much. I don't mean to, for I despise the cheap ideal demanding it---but the constant objection to obscure endings has doubtless crept somehow into my subconsciousness...

November 12, 1935.

...Well---luck is a queer thing! I was, as may well be imagined, highly elated over the acceptance of the "Mountains" (which I had let Schwartz, at his own insistence, handle as agent, though I thought it a forlorn hope) --when lo! look at the second pleasing jolt I have received! Astounding has also taken "The Shadow Out of Time"---which Wandrei, unknown to me, had submitted to it!! The career of the "Shadow" has certainly been one of surprises -- first Bobby Barlow flabbergasted me with the typed copy -- and now Wandrei has put one over on Grandpa by marketing the selfsame copy! ...Naturally I realize that this dual acceptance is simply a coincidence-bred luck shot, and that I can't depend on "Astounding" to take things right along. However, the occurrence is distinctly encouraging, and may start me on a new period of intensive writing. Indeed, it has done so already---since last week I wrote a 26 page bit of horror whose typing I have just finished. (The Haunter of the Dark) Prompted by one of the letters in the Eyrle, I've dedicated this to young Bloch in exchange for his dedication of the "Shambler". He left me as a splotch of ensanguined jelly -- and now I've left him as a glassy-eyed corpse whose expression of cosmic, unutterable fear turns the spectators sick! I doubt if this tale

NORTON AND I

By

Duane W. Rimel

I am not writing this story. Norton, the janitor and my liberator, is doing it. The same calloused hands---which ended the lives of two famous men who never dreamed their monster would strike back---are performing a task that my own will never do again.

You wonder what I am? No, I am not a ghost or shadow from the borderland; I only to God I were. . . . I am a hideous reality---a human brain and eyes, sealed in a tomb of steel and glass, fed at intervals with chemicals and heated by batteries in the satchel that houses me.

It looks like an ordinary suit-case, save for the glass panel in one end---the end that faces Norton---and my eyes are poised behind that glass, which is colored so that I can see out, but no one can look in. Doctor Vincent was quite clever with his masterpiece of horror.

Poor old Norton---how his hand trembles as he writes! Beneath that ~~hand~~ his clambering mind awaits my departure, for I have him controlled by hypnosis. Luckily I knew the art before my disaster; afterward my mental powers seemed to grow tremendously and I developed them to a remarkable degree.

My name was Christopher Baker, but that does not matter any more. To everyone except Vincent, Kirkland and Norton, I am no more; county records say that I have been dead three months, following an unsuccessful operation on the brain by a certain famous surgeon. I can understand, now, how a phantom feels; how a wraith from the grave looks upon the world of cold reality so far beyond his finger-tips, a world that he can see and observe, but cannot touch. . . .

A year ago I was studying surgery in this very place, under the supervision of Everett Vincent, eminent brain specialist and surgeon of the Kirkland Clinic, Epswood Drive, Washington. Oliver Kirkland, wealthy philanthropist, had taken me under his wing after I left medical school in the East, saying he had known my father in the early days and wanted me to have the best. The mere thought of working near the great Dr. Vincent made me giddy with delight.

The fact that Vincent had been ridiculed by the press and certain members of his own profession for his fantastic theories and practices regarding brain surgery only made me

all the more eager and excited. He was famous, good news-copy any day. He was, too, a bit unbalanced---the way talented men sometimes are. He wasn't old---thirty-five, perhaps, with graying hair, steel-cold eyes and darkly handsome features. Tall and erect, well-liked by newspaper photographers, he was often hounded by love-lorn women claiming severe mental disorders.

I went to work at the Kirkland Clinic April 2, 1940, and for months, almost a year, everything went in my favor. My wages were good, almost phenomenal for an interne, and I was permitted to watch and assist Everett Vincent in his precise, difficult work that few men in the world could have duplicated; watched him save the lives of those afflicted with hopeless brain tumors, skull fractures, and incurable brain diseases which no other specialist would tackle. I believe he knew more about the brain and complementary ganglia than any of his contemporaries---but he was not a diligent worker. He was temperamental, high-strung, and the most cold-blooded creature I ever saw. He seemed to enjoy hacking people apart, to find out what made them tick; seemed to take a fiendish delight in his work on the organ which controls the minute functions of the body.

If ever a human being lacked a soul, Dr. Everett Vincent was that one; and even his private life was as devoid of warm emotions as his professional existence. The beautiful ladies who pestered him received only cold stares and words of abuse, so his bachelorhood was never the slightest threatened.

Kirkland, gross and clever, charged enormous fees, and after two years, Dr. Vincent began to slacken, spending more and more time on private experiments which were always shrouded with the greatest secrecy. It was near this period in his career---this turning point---that I had been asked to join the staff. The high death rate among Vincent's patients made his reputation sinister indeed, yet the public clamored for him as much as ever.

One day in October, when I was passing Kirkland's office, the door was ajar, and I heard Vincent talking.

"The blasted fools, all of them! They wait till the patients are half dead before they bring them here. Then I catch hell on all sides because so many die!"

"You've been working too hard, Vincent," Kirkland's thick voice interrupted. "Take it easy for a while---we've made our pile! Now you can go to work on that experiment you've been planning. I think this patient is healthy enough!"

Both laughed, and the conversation turned to other channels. Their dark insinuations aroused within me a strange fear. Healthy patients in the Kirkland Clinic were unheard of, and I didn't like the cold, heartless tone of Vincent's laugh, so seldom heard but which always reminded me of a madman's cackle.

I sneaked away from the partly-opened door and walked to the rear of the clinic, where I changed clothes for a dinner date with Elsa Rogers, that uneasy fear still gnawing at my thoughts, blurring my dreams of happiness with the girl who had

promised to be my wife the following June.

About a week later Oliver Kirkland called me into his office. The clinic had taken no patients all week; the nurses were gone, the wards empty. I was the only help around save old Norton, the janitor, whom I often amused by hypnosis, making him do odd, amazing things at my command.

He trusted me implicitly, and always, after each session, I let him know what he had done by employing posthypnotic suggestion. However, we never let our superiors find it out. It was a little game that Norton and I shared between ourselves. Kirkland was against any "unscientific" pursuits, and Vincent knew little about the subject. Time was heavy on our hands; half the days neither Kirkland or Vincent were in the place.

There had been a subtle atmosphere of tension about the clinic for weeks; and none of the help knew the exact cause, although we had seen the two strangely excited one other time when a high priest of Tibet had visited the clinic for treatment. I never assisted in the operation, and often wondered who had. Probably some special intern who was more experienced than I. At any rate I never discovered what ailed him or what they did. Norton and I had grown used to their secret, furtive ways, so my suspicions were not unduly aroused by Kirkland's polished words.

He crouched behind the ornate desk like a toad, the lines around his fat fowls deepening into a smile.

~~"Chris, you've been with us about seven months now, eh?"~~

"That's right, Kirkland," I said. "I hope my work has been satisfactory."

I expected the jolt any moment--the blow I feared; but it didn't come.

"Quite, quite," he grinned, taking an expensive cigar from his silver-mounted case and stuffing it between thick lips. He chewed it reflectively a moment, his beady eyes darting over me from head to foot.

"Our work is entering a new phase, Chris. We aren't going to take many more outside cases; we're going to do some--well, advanced experimental work. I'm rich enough--I want Vincent to go ahead with his plans----"

"Yes?" I said, aware of a change in his attitude toward me. In no previous conversation had he ever linked my name intimately with Vincent's or his own. Now I seemed to be included in the "we," and my hopes went soaring.

"We are going to raise your salary, Chris. Your work will be, shall I say, more precise; but you'll have shorter hours, and so on. We're going to take it easy. No other special duties. Just Vincent to go ahead--"

"To what?" I inquired.

His face reddened. "Well, that's a secret, just yet, Chris; but you'll be in on it---I hope. You see, we need someone we can trust---someone with a thorough medical knowledge, who will submit to a new type of brain anesthetic Vincent has devised. He wants you to take a small dose and give him your reactions."

"Certainly," I said, knowing that my whole future with Elsa depended on it. I felt that I could trust the famous doctor.

"Good!" Kirkland boomed, heaving his fat body out of the chair. "Vincent wants to start tomorrow, about nine. Later, after it's well under way, we'll let you know all about the new experiment. Very extra-special, and all that."

The following morning, November 6, 1940, I walked straight from the dressing rooms into Dr. Vincent's surgery. . . .

WHEN I awoke---if that horror could be called awakening---the blazing agony was so intense I nearly slipped back into unconsciousness. It seemed that ages had whirled past me down the vortex of dark eons. I felt ancient and estranged, as if I were but a phantom hovering near infinity. Physical self, awareness of animal feeling and sensation were gone. I was afloat in a void of pain and nameless fear.

Two months I existed in that hell of loneliness; seeing, thinking---thinking and seeing . . . going insane by slow degrees. However, a plan had been forming in my agonized thoughts---a desperate, daring plan; my only hope for vengeance.

I was kept in a curtained alcove in Vincent's main laboratory, and was permitted to look out only at certain times. A calendar on the opposite wall told me how the days were slipping away, while I thought madly of sweet Elsa and wondered what had happened to her. The agony increased when I realized that I was already dead, legally and physically---my body rotting in its grave as surely as I was rotting in that strange, unique hell, the victim of a mad surgeon's twisted mind. The fiend even tortured me by revealing my own obituary notice in the newspapers.

And I swore I would have revenge if I had to live in that bath of chemicals a lifetime. That was their scheme---keeping me alive as long as possible, perhaps for decades. Vincent was preparing a paper about me for submission to medical journals. I, an unidentified brain and eyes, would be the living monument to his evil genius.

How I hated those beasts as they watched and gloated over me! Sometimes they looked frightened when they came in direct line with my staring eyes. . . .

I was waiting---waiting my chance. And one day in January it came, so suddenly and unexpectedly I was nearly taken unawares. About closing time that day I had seen Vincent answer the 'phone and leave in a hurry, forgetting to pull the curtain over my alcove.

A few moments later Norton walked through the door!

He headed toward me, his kindly old face looking downcast. Then he glanced at me, and I doubt if he even guessed what he saw---until later.

My eyes probed his. All my hypnotic powers were focused in that stare; all the energy I could muster, every wild hope for partial escape from that yoke of horror.

Norton's gray, dull eyes brightened, and bulged with terror, his seamed old face paled and I thought he was going to faint. I surmised that Vincent had sent him to pull the curtain in front of me---and in so doing, made the worst mistake of his career.

Had Norton fainted, this story never would have been written. I'd be rotting in this strange dungeon for God knows how many more years, dreaming and dreaming and going mad. . . .

Silently I commanded Norton to walk toward me, and he did! I knew the mastery of my mind over his---Norton had always been a perfect medium. When I saw recognition flame in his eyes, I knew I had won. He was willing! Without his consent I could have accomplished nothing.

He is still my slave, but not for long. When this manuscript is finished I shall release him, and he will be arrested and charged with the crimes I have committed. The police---if they read this---will never believe that I did it, because I am already dead! Poor old Norton wasn't to blame; he is too kind-hearted to do anything dishonest or hideous, and I feel sorry for him. But there was no other way. Later, when he remembers everything he has done, he will know who made him do it, and I hope I shall be forgiven.

When I thought I had Norton under my control, I suggested, mentally, that he lock the laboratory door and feed me the necessary chemicals. These tasks he performed well. I told Norton to place me carefully in the heated satchel designed for me by Vincent and Kirkland; then we were ready to leave the clinic and venture onto the streets. I knew I had to visit Elsa Rogers just once more. . . .

On the dark, snowy avenue I gazed curiously about. How strange and lovely were the last rays of the setting sun, piercing the cold, blue heavens! How strange ordinary sights appeared---people walking about, breasting the cold west wind that whipped clouds of light frost around us. Across Epswood Drive I saw Cassando's lunch counter, neon lights ablaze, where Elsa and I had eaten dinner so often, discussing our wedding plans. . . .

All seemed familiar and real, but soundless and far away, like a silent movie; for I could not feel the sharp winter gale, or the snow crunching underfoot. I had to imagine all those mundane sensations which sight alone denied me.

I directed Norton to the nearby taxi stand, where at my command, he blurted an address. I had to keep him out of sight

as much as possible. If Kirkland or Vincent saw the satchel, or happened to return to the clinic and find me gone, they would know, and my plans would be ruined.

During the long drive I was in a fever of anticipation. Only those in love can know the ecstasy of that moment, as I dreamed of Elsa with her honey-colored hair, soft dimpled cheeks and bright smile, remembering the touch of her hands on my brow, the caress of her lips in sweet surrender.

Sitting beside Norton, I felt my powers increase as the chemical food stimulated my thoughts, hurled my imagination across the awful barrier that separated my lover and I, seemed to bridge the horrible gulf of time and place and being.

In front of Rogers' gate Norton climbed out and paid the hackie, who gave us a stare of bewilderment. The yellow light slanting on his face from above revealed his moving lips, which said:

"You scientific guys are sure screwy----"

The car door closed and we stood on the snowy pavement. During my long imprisonment, while I studied my enemies, I had become an accomplished lip-reader, a knowledge that stood me well half an hour later.

Darkness had fallen swiftly, shrouding the vacant look on Norton's face and the odd, black satchel. Lights from the parlor window filtered through the frosty twilight, showering sparks of icy fire on the tall, snow-laden fir trees in front of the Rogers house. Elsa would be home now---it was after six..

I didn't know exactly how to handle the situation. Elsa had seen Norton only a few times, and I couldn't possibly let her know that I was alive in such a hideous condition. That obstacle merely enflamed my desire.

Norton moved softly across the porch, and I made him veer from the front door to the lighted window, raise the satchel so I could peer into the parlor. The rectangle of light blinded me for a moment, and I was on the point of telling Norton to leave, when I saw the outline of the old sofa with its back to the window---the sofa where Elsa and I had talked and laughed into the small hours. Then I saw two figures on the lounge; and if a physical cry had been feasible, I think I would have screamed in mad delirium. What I saw blasted my peace of mind forever, adding bitter irony to utter, hopeless defeat.

Elsa was on the sofa---with another young man I had never seen, her head nestled on his shoulder, the dim lights painting her hair a web of spun gold. . . . How long I stood there I shall never know, but when I saw their lips meet in a long, passionate kiss, the exquisite agony was too much. I wished then that my eyes had been destroyed along with my body. . . .

Norton retreated, his footsteps muffled by the drifted snow. I thanked God for the darkness as the horror of that moment engulfed me, made me sick with loathing and fury. Truly, I was already dead; beautiful Elsa had another lover.

Norton carried me down the icy sidewalk to the nearest cab stand, three blocks away, on Fourth and Chestnut. Snow began drifting downward and my host involuntarily pulled his coat collar tighter about his throat. I tried to keep from thinking as the cab wheeled us through the frosty, brilliant streets to Everett Vincent's house on Lexington Avenue. I tried to keep from remembering Elsa's sweet, carmine lips upturned for the stranger's kisses. . . . Poignant memories haunted me like hellish imps, pushing me onward with murder in my heart.

The driver stopped and Norton climbed out, paid the man generously. I remembered suddenly that I would never be able to reimburse old Norton, no matter how long I lived.

He carried me up the sidewalk, snow and darkness blurring the abrupt lines of Dr. Vincent's palatial home. Norton walked across the porch and touched the door bell. Presently lights sprang up in the hall, then overhead. A middle-aged butler with graying hair opened the door, a look of surprised inquiry on his bland face. I had Norton's lines ready.

"Is Doctor Vincent in?" he said stiffly.

"Why, yes. You're Norton, aren't you? Come in."

He glanced at the satchel, but made no remark. His presence in the house would complicate matters, make my escape difficult; but I knew I had to take that risk.

We entered the long, familiar hallway and were led to a door I had seen many times before. Norton was announced and we swept into the Doctor's study.

"Hello, Norton," he said, rising. "Anything wrong? You look like you'd seen a ghost----"

Vincent's eyes were lustreless, shoulders sagging in the expensive gray suit. On his desk were piles of notes illuminated by an antique lamp. When he saw the satchel his eyes bulged with terror; then narrowed, blazing with fury.

"You dolt, what are you doing with that? Put it down!"

Norton didn't answer. I gave him instructions, and he drew the revolver---the old '38 belonging to Vincent himself. The doctor's face paled, turned a ghastly yellow. He took three jerky steps backward, crafty eyes darting from me to Norton and back again, twisting crazily like the frightened eyes of a trapped animal. I told Norton what to say.

"You fiend, you murdered me---now I'm going to kill you! The only thing I hate is that I can't torture you the way you tortured me!---that I can't do it with my bare hands, and watch your face turn purple, feel the life go out of your carcass inch by inch. The worst thing of all is that Norton has to do it for me!"

"My God---no!" Vincent screamed. He trembled, nearly fell backward over his swivel chair. Never had I seen a face so convulsed with terror. And how I loved it!---gloated over it!

"You won't experiment on any more human beings!" Norton cried. Then he squeezed the trigger. Vincent's mouth gaped, but the scream never came. He fell, writhed a moment and lay still.

Swiftly we left the house. I knew we had to hurry, for the butler had surely heard the shot. The alarm would go out---

We caught a taxi at the corner and headed for the clinic. I knew Kirkland often went there evenings to annoy me, letting me read newspapers and magazines which he propped on a stand in front of me.

The cab jolted to a halt. Norton paid the fare, walked rapidly across the pavement and into the building. The unlocked door indicated the fat man's presence, so I told Norton to go at once to the main office, where light shone behind the frosted glass. Without knocking, Norton opened the door. The gross philanthropist sat behind his desk, and as we entered, he snapped shut the book he was reading and glared at the janitor. He stood up ponderously, lips parted, face turning crimson.

"Norton, what the hell do you mean bursting into my office this time of night?" He hadn't seen the satchel.

I felt like smiling as he sat down, his hand darting toward the telephone. He hadn't dialed, so I knew someone had called him. "The police, maybe," I thought happily. "This is going to be good!"

His lips didn't move and the message escaped me, but I had an idea that a badly frightened butler was on the other end of the wire. Suddenly the receiver quivered in Kirkland's fingers. The color left his face and a muscle at the corner of his mouth twitched. The black instrument clattered on the desk as his eyes fastened on the satchel---on me. For an instant he seemed unable to comprehend what had happened; then his face writhed into a mask of horror. I told Norton to raise the revolver. Kirkland sat there as if paralysed, bulging eyes staring at the muzzle of the gun.

"You know what's happened, Kirkland," Norton said. "You're going to get the same thing Vincent got---a slug in the brain. You know I'm not Norton---I'm that other thing you locked in this case of steel! But Norton is going to kill you, at my command!"

"No! No! Chris----"

Norton fired. The bullet left a neat blue hole in his forehead. The fat body collapsed onto the floor, spilled out of the chair like hideous jelly.

I told Norton to return to the laboratory---the place

where I has hidden so long. He is here now, writing this narrative.

I have had revenge. That should ease the torture, cool the fever in my soul, but nepenthe is beyond all hope. I must banish all memory, destroy it utterly; for nothing can ever right that hideous wrong; nothing can ever atone the pain and physical estrangement in a world of shadow and nightmare torture.

Now, if this story is completed before the police arrive, I shall give Norton his last command: to carry this black satchel---and all it contains---to the basement and throw it in the furnace. I cannot bear to live another hellish day. . . .

THE TOWERS OF SILENCE

by Emil Petaja

Vultures brood in a silent row
Where Parsee dead are carried below,
To three grated circles on Malabar Hill;
Grisly tasks they are fain to fulfill.

Priests and mourners are presently gone,
Left is one hapless boy alone to look on.
Will the left eye be plucked, or first the right?
Is it Nirvana? Or endless night?

Mosaic of light in old Bombay
Vermillions, mauves, then is whisked away. . . .
And the watcher perceives a strange dispoise,
For the feeding vultures are not alone.

Grave-wrapt intruders with lichen'd faces
Stalk the gratings in purposeful paces---
For the vultures divide their terrible feasts
With cold dead comrades, tomb-spawned beasts.

CANADIAN FAN ACTIVITY.

by Nils H. Frome

As a result of the war, the Canadian government has embargoed all cash subscriptions formerly sent by Canadians to American magazines; we can trade for them, but Canadian currency must be kept at home. As a consequence the American pro magazines, such as *Weird Tales*, *Amazing*, and many others now have exclusive Canadian editions with almost completely different stories and illustrations. A Canadian rival of *Weird Tales*, *Eerie Tales*, has also appeared on the scene.

Coincidental with this embargo, Canadian fandom woke up, and, like *Mycelium*, started to throw up tangible signs of its presence. Leslie A. Croutch has the distinction of being a kind of godfather of local fandom, publishing a monthly, *LIGHT*, at 5¢ per copy. Serious fans writing Croutch at Box 121, Parry Sound, Ontario, will receive a free sample copy. He covers science-fiction, fantasy, weird---and also has an occasional leaning towards the risqué. "*LIGHT*" is always glad to receive contributions from fans on the U. S. side of the line.

Another very good item is "*CENSORED*", perpetrated by Fred Hurter, Jr., Rosemere, Quebec. This sheet has probably the most striking covers ever to appear on an amateur publication. Contents are good, but Hurter seems to be having trouble getting contributions, and probably would like to receive a few stories and articles. *CENSORED* by the way is quarterly, 10¢ each or 3 for 25¢.

Two other fan magazines are somewhere between conception and birth: "*VULCAN*" at 10¢ per copy published by Gordon L. Peck, 214 West 15th Ave., Vancouver, B. C., and "*GOON'S GAZETTE*", published by John Hollis Mason.

All these magazines exchange with other fan-mags, and all are anxious to receive American subscriptions and manuscripts. If you will pardon the chest-thumpings of a loyal Canuck, you Yanks that think all the good fan publications are on your side of the border should write to the above addresses and see what's what!

EXCERPTS FROM THE LETTERS OF H. P. LOVECRAFT (Cont. from page 5)

will land anywhere professionally, but am circulating two carbons among the gang... There is a good deal of actual Providence color in this story. The house inhabited by "Blake" is none other than #66 (Lovecraft's house), and the view of Federal Hill is also genuine. However, there's no such church as the one I describe. The nearest prototype is a Victorian brick edifice which lost its steeple in a storm last summer while I was away...

THE JUDGE'S ELK TOOTH

by Francis T. Laney

"May not a malignant doom hold the soul tomb-bound, with naught but the feeding of the worms to break the grisly silence? Yet what spirit would meekly brook such imprisonment? Might not the mind, though indeed held to the mortal tenement by nameless bonds, rise nathelless from the crypt and drive the rotting body once more through the very motions of life? In Azathoth are all things resolved...Azathoth is the end...Azathoth is the beginning...if ye seek, what may ye not find?"
Chronicle of Nath, Rhe-Mehl edition.

The polling place was in an empty store building sandwiched between a beer parlor and a pool hall. Cracked and peeling, the leprous walls looked down upon a black and splintery floor, while a stale reek reminiscent of a small-town railroad station lay heavy over all. Flimsy canvas booths glaring in their newness, long folding tables, and a few rickety camp chairs sat lonely in the center of the deep room.

"You will sit here, dearie," said the fat woman, as Myra entered. "When they come in, Mrs. Burns asks them their names and you check them off of the list of voters and call their names to me. That way we get a double check."

Myra was a pale, under-nourished looking girl, whose fine dreamer's eyes made the neat shabbiness of her clothes pass unnoticed. Her father, now dead, had been a brilliant lawyer, but dead brilliance does not always clothe and feed unworldly young ladies; particularly when they are prone to play Bach instead of bridge, and buy the Lovecraft omnibus with their lunch money. A more practical turn of mind is needed for material success. Then too, burying is expensive, and the dead lawyer's estate had barely paid for his coffin. A friend of her father's had taken pity on her and gotten her a job as election clerk in the third ward; so Myra Moffet, already gasping in the stale air, sat leafing the list of voters.

Soon they began to come, faster and faster; fat and thin, tall and short, clean and dirty, sleazy sports coats and honest denim, faded gingham and frilly voile, clean breaths, bad breaths, beer breaths---the sovereign people exercising their franchise. A constant gabble rose and fell with a numbing arrhythmic beat, and with each new arrival the air became more stagnant and overpowering. Straining to catch the voters' names, Myra's ears throbbed after but a few minutes; in the dazzle of the unshaded light, her eyes could scarcely focus on the thumbled pages.

As the morning wore on, she became faint and dizzy. Half-forgotten names and faces flitted through her numbed mind, and she began to wonder if she could keep from confusing these mental images with the actual voters. Once she left her place for a bit, but after a few minutes of the monotonous routine she was in worse condition than before her rest. No longer fully conscious of the individuals before her, she was checking them off automatically as they

her names, when a sudden break in the confusion brought her out of her daze.

"James V. Wilson of Parkhurst Apartments?" she inquired. "What a stupid mistake! They have you on the records as being deceased."

"Must of been another James Wilson; I'm nigh onto seventy-five, but I'm still purty spry."

"I'm sorry, but I can't give you a ballot. Obviously there's been some mistake, but you'll have to see some of the men down at the city hall if you want to vote today."

"Why goldurn it, I've voted for every Republican president sence ol' U. S. Grant run the fust time, and I ain't goin' to quit now. Gimme one o' them ballots, and don't you torment an old man like me no more."

"You'd better get an affidavit from the city clerk," said a young man standing nearby. "I'm a law student and I don't believe she is allowed to let you vote under the circumstances."

"Circumstances, hell!" growled the old man, pounding his cane on the floor. "I'm goin' to see Judge Poindexter, by gar! Thought I was dead..." he stamped uttering through the grinning crowd.

"Say, didn't old Poindexter kick the bucket a while back?" asked the law student. "Seems to me I heard something to that effect."

"Why I knew him well," exclaimed Myra. "Judge Poindexter was one of my father's dearest friends; in fact he was almost a second father to me, but then I've been out of town since Dad—for a couple of years."

"Maybe this wasn't the same man; I couldn't swear to the name, but..."

"Come on, snap out of it. I'm in a hurry," shouted a man in a grey waiter's jacket.

"I'm sorry. Just a moment..."

As the afternoon dragged along, Myra gradually forgot the whole incident. Judge Poindexter had indeed been a second father to her. A typical public man of the old school, he had served several terms in congress in the days when a representative had other interests than voting himself a pension. No matter what he had to do, he was never too busy to romp with Myra; or, as she grew older, to loan her books from his large library. One of Myra's earliest recollections was sitting in his lap playing with the big elk's tooth that hung on the judge's watch chain. And now this young fellow said he was dead—still, he didn't seem to be too sure of the name. Perhaps...

Myra's wife went soulgathering; the monotonous routine and stifling atmosphere seemed to have paralyzed her brain. She became a helpless automaton drifting off on a sea of apathy. It seemed to Myra as though she were viewing the room from above, from the rafters

point outside of herself, from which she could soar to a dizzy height from which the milling of the crowd looked like the purposeless activity of a swarm of ants, and then swoop down close enough to see her own pale face raised inquiringly at some new voter. Perhaps she would faint, she thought in a moment of comparative lucidity. She hoped that she could at least finish the job and collect her pay; God knows she needed it.

As a vaguely familiar figure caught her attention, her senses suddenly returned to her. The young law student was indeed mistaken, for here came Judge Poindexter striding through the crowd; the old man, Wilson, hobbling at his side.

"Myra, my dear girl, I've not seen you for months. But where are those rosy cheeks I once knew? Are you sure you're not ill?"

"Oh judge, I'm so glad to see you! I thought---well, I must be too tired."

"Well you should be through here pretty soon, and then I'll take you for a ride in the country. A little rest and some fresh air, and you'll not even know there is a third ward. You'll come, won't you?"

"I'd love to," said Myra, smiling happily at Judge Poindexter. Her eyes drank in every detail from the jolly wrinkles around his eyes to the well-remembered elk tooth on his vest. "Just looking at you makes me feel like a carefree little girl again."

"Well you are my little girl, you know. By the way, I've fixed up Mr. Wilson here with the necessary papers so he can vote. I think you'll find everything all right now, Mr. Wilson; be sure to look me up any time I can do something for you. I'll have to run along now, Myra, but I'll meet you out in front when the polls close."

As the judge turned and walked away, Myra noticed something white drop to the floor.

"Oh Judge Poindexter, you've dropped your elk's tooth!" she cried, and jumping up, she ran around the table and stooped to the floor.

Her piercing scream brought the whole crowd around her, but when they asked what was wrong, she could only howl and gibber, as she pointed to the fat white maggot which wriggled in her hand.

(Advertisement)

-- L I G H T --

A Canadian Fantasy Fan magazine of distinction. Published monthly by Leslie A. Crutch, Box 121, Parry Sound, Ontario. 5¢ per copy.

A sample copy sent free on request.

Serious contributions invited.

LANEY BLASTS THE FAN FIELD.

An Editorial by Francis T. Laney

Why is it that so few fan magazines are worth reading at all, let alone keeping permanently? A man may be a non-professional writer and still turn out worthwhile work, but why should most amateur fantasy and science-fiction magazines be so largely devoted to insipid banalities and asinine, if scorching, personal attacks on someone? Lacking experience in the publishing end of the fan-mag game, we couldn't say if a lack of usable stories and articles is responsible for the barnyard aroma hovering around most sheets, but it seems to us that anyone willing to have his name at the masthead of any publication should have enough strength of character and plain good taste to forego the muckraking, and to omit much of the perpetual childish blat "from our readers". A good letter, if of general interest, deserves publication, but how many fan letters are that good?

We'll grant that the readers of any amateur magazine should be encouraged to contribute to its contents. Theoretically, however, the subscribers to a sheet of this type are discontented with the commercialized drip served out by the current crop of professional hacks, and are looking for an occasional taste of the real thing. While few amateurs are capable of developing an idea into a first rate story, we maintain they can at least try. Furthermore, if enough of them try often enough, we contend that some pretty fine stuff will be developed. No one can fully appreciate good writing, until he has wrestled more or less fruitlessly with the subtleties of expression. No one is going to develop a worthwhile writing style by dashing off a careless letter filled with cheap coined words, a letter which can be accurately condensed into, "Why do you run such bilge as 'xx'; give us some more 'yy', he's tops!"

There is a wide open field for amateur criticism, but personalities and cheap insults have nothing whatever to do with criticism. The quality, good or bad, of a man's work is not in the least affected by the fact he is a son of a b---. Proof-reading is not a critic's job either, though some of the boys seem to think so. A few constructive remarks from the readers will improve any publication, but next time you write to your favorite sheet don't forget the "constructive" part of it.

Then all these silly feuds and bickerings! What peanut minds these Martins and Coys of the fan world expose when they cut loose! Just a bunch of cheap exhibitionists on the rampage, immature children mentally regardless of the age on their birth certificates. Stow it, fellows, it does make dreadfully dull reading! If any of you are really serious, though, we would be glad to arrange a duel for you. We would suggest Flit guns at five paces, though some of the boys might find a manure spreader more familiar.

Now, after having raised particular hell with the well-known principles of "unity, coherence, and emphasis", and probably laid ourselves open to a blitz-krieg or two; we would like to outline our ideas as to what a fan magazine should be. First, legible reproduction, with few or no typographical errors, on good quality paper. Second, an impersonal viewpoint on the part of all contributors. Third, in each issue AT LEAST ONE story, poem, or article worthy of a permanent place in one's collection.

CONTRADICTION

by Duane W. Rimel

Where is that house I saw among the trees
That beckoned to me with those grasping arms
As if to reach with nighted claws and seize
All passersby, and woo each with its charms?

Where is that crumbling pile that haunts me yet
As I stroll through dim alleys of the night
And stare at paneless windows, to forget
That silhouetted house of demon-light?

Once when I wandered down those lanes of yore,
Still searching for that ancient, lost demeane;
I saw a gabled roof that hinted more
Than passing glances could have lightly seen.

Some dim suggestion called me to that door
And when I paused upon the threshold bare,
It seemed I'd seen that mouldering place before,
As if some fate had led my footsteps there.

Yet it was not the thing my eyes had sought---
Some vague, dim essence was not quite the same,
As if a curious mist had softly wrought
A metamorphosis without a name.

Spellbound, I paused outside the mouldy door,
Yet certain that the whim had led me ill;
And then I shuddered when I heard the floor
Creak spectrally beneath the window sill!

But when I thought to leave that rotting place
That stood in strange surroundings, out of place;
I thought I heard an elfin time-bell ring
Upon my ears from caverns deep in space.

Then, when I flung the crusted door full wide,
I knew that time had rustled many a page;
For recognition came, and death had lied.
It was the house, but in an alien age!

OLD LENA TUPPIT.

by Emil Petaja

SAVE THAT it lay in Southwark, somewhere between Southwark Street and Bankside, I can't recall now for the life of me just what street it was where I met her, if indeed I ever bothered to ask.

London was in blackout.

Tendrils of drenching fog probed at me and caressed me wetly, like phantom fingers, as I made my way almost blindly down the desolate midnight street. I found myself longing frantically for the neoned brightness and raucous clamor of Broadway, thinking "Damn young Randall Kent's Boston aunt anyway!"

Of course she was worried about him, in her tight-mouthed way, after he'd flown overseas, without her permission of course, to attach himself voluntarily to that branch of the R. A. F. sometimes called the International Squadron. So somehow she'd gotten wind of my business trip to England, and bustled down on one of her rare trips to New York to insist I look up her nephew. More damned nuisance trying to track him down. I hoisted my overcoat more firmly around my chin. Why, if old Rand Kent hadn't been one of my closest friends at Princeton, I...

"Would you be giving an old lady tuppence for a cup of something hot?"

The sudden request was voiced in a blend of plaintive whining and a curious restraint that hinted at surviving but sadly frayed edges of respectability. I turned. Saw nothing but a dumpy grey blur.

"Sure a night like this is one for fiends upstairs and downstairs as well."

"Not a night for idle strolling," I admitted, wondering how in the devil an old beggar woman expected to maintain herself on a completely deserted and dismal blacked-out street such as this one. Perhaps she has no place to go, I guessed. She agreed volubly, babbling on in a peculiar rasping voice as she walked along beside me.

"I'm looking for a tavern they call Duffy Miller's. Do you know if I'm headed right?" I asked. I'd begun to suspect I was lost some time past.

"Not far off, sir. I'll show you the way, that is if the Almighty'll keep those devils upstairs from spitting down blood and fir long enough."

She seemed eager. Wants a pot of grog when we get there, I thought. Well, she'll have earned it.

Something about her voice fascinated yet repelled me; sent little cold frogs hopping up and down my spine. I tried to get a look at her, but all that presented itself was a hunched-over smear

of darker gray on the whirling fog.

This much I determined. She was old, agelessly old. And she wore a black fringed shawl muffled up about her face. A barb of stray light glinted on her hat, an altogether pathetic thing made up of an unshaped scrap of cretonne fastened on her dishwater hair by means of an elastic. There was a broken feather poked into it for a decoration. Another vagrant shred of light gave me at last a glimpse of her face. It was like pinched-up dirty clay. One side of it was completely covered by her scarf.

She's about frozen, I determined. Must get her out of this raw night air. What with Hitler's "fire-spitting devils" as she called them, the street was scarcely the proper place for a lady, even if perhaps she wasn't a lady. I'd certainly not be on it myself if it hadn't been for just missing young Randall, who I discovered with disgust was on week-end leave. Had to get this blasted letter to him by morning, when my boat sailed...

SOMETHING shivery and queer about that woman!

I couldn't quite tell what. Maybe it was the furtive way she jumped that black shawl up over one side of her face, whenever I turned to her...

She babbled on at great length. About the street, and how long she'd lived there. About the War. The bombings, and the great fire. Suddenly she stopped, and I felt her chilly skeletal fingers close over my hand. She pulled me off the street into blacker darkness.

"Is this Duffy Miller's?"

"No," she cackled shrilly, "but I've got something in here to show you, as will surprise you."

"I don't really think I..."

"Only take a minute."

She was ingratiatingly insistent. I allowed her to lead me into the darkness.

"Maybe you was thinkin' I'm one of those born-old hussies," she rattled, her horny claw vising down on my wet hand. "Well, this'll change your mind about me, it will! Do you have any notion who I am?"

I replied I hadn't an idea.

"I'm Lena Tuppit, that's who I am!"

"I-Is that a fact?" The name meant absolutely nothing to me.

"Of course they call me Old Lena Tuppit, now. For years they 'ave."

As she tugged me onward, into what seemed to be the shadowy entrance to a large theater, shrouded in heavy fog, it presently be-

came lighter.

I could see old Lena Tuppit quite plainly. She was a gnarled underslug hag, with positively fleshless fingers. When she turned to fling more excited words over her bundled shoulder I got my first full look at her face. I shuddered. There was a shrewish malignity in those hollow cheeks, and those jowls puffed up like a turkey's neck; and a maniacal glitter in those biting vulture's eyes.

I noticed again how meticulously she held the shawl up over one side of her head. Some hideous deformity she doesn't want me to see, I thought. She's off her noggin, I told myself, possessed with a violent desire to yank my arm away and run. But then, after all, a harmless old woman---

"Look!" she exulted with vehement triumph, her witch's forefinger indicating an ancient tattered billboard. I read, "Lena TUPPIT: Chanteuse Extraordinaire. The Pride of London!"

"In them days I was a queen, I was," said the hag. "I could've had my pick of all the young men in Lunnin!"

"This is astonishing!" I exclaimed dubiously.

She led me further. There were other signs, all in the quaint irregular script and flamboyant wording of several decades back. All shouted the praises of Lena Tuppit, The Pride of London. Some of them flaunted stereotyped drawings of an exquisitely dressed hour-glass of a girl, with witchery in her eyes. For some reason, the pictures convinced me. Somehow I knew they represented bygone impressions of the bedraggled old crone by my side!

"Now, sir," she shrilled, pushing open a large door somewhere in the fog. "Melody Music 'All!"

I squinted; stepped forward cautiously. Billowing clouds of fog swirled around my feet, around the door, dimming the vast expanse ahead of me. Strange how our feet made no noise on the floor; as though we walked on a heavy grey carpet.

At last I saw. The fog dissipated, drifted away from in front of me. The huge three-balconied theatre was ablaze with eerie twinkling lights. Gas lights. And there came a rustling of heavy silk dresses and fans, and adjusting of chairs, and waves of whispered words. The audience settled down then, for the lights were lowered magically. The curtain was rising...

"What in the devil..." I began in a shout.

Old Lena Tuppit had disappeared from my side. And young Lena Tuppit, gowned in deep blue velvet edged with silver, walked archly out of the wings onto the stage, amid tumultuous applause.

She bowed, and sang. It was an old unfamiliar song, full of paradoxical smiles and tears. She was glorious, breath-taking. I tugged out my handkerchief to wipe away sudden tears. When I looked again, the fantastic illusion had vanished. Only fog was

left, stabbing me through and through like many sharp, cold needles.

"THAT was me, sir," mumbled a repellant voice at my side. "Many's the night I come here and see it all over again, in this dusty empty hall..."

I said nothing. We walked out to the street. I was cold, with a horribly intense abysmal cold.

Then it started. A terrific earth-shattering reverberation enveloped me. Blaring blooms of lightning penetrated the heavy fog. Buildings seemed to crash around my ears. Hails of falling bricks and stone... I screamed aloud in sheer maddened panic.

"They're at it again! Those devils up there!" old Lena Tuppit shrieked. A warning siren sent ravening fear scuttling down the street.

"Come on!" I shouted, groping for the old woman's hand. "I think that's an air raid shelter across..."

She was gone.

I ran across the street blindly, shouting for her to follow me. Then I pivoted at the sound of her familiar rasping voice raised in cackling laughter behind me. A scorching blaze of light illuminated old Lena Tuppit on the other side of the street. Her black shawl flung high, she stood etched grotesquely against bleeding flame; screaming out to the night; telling it who she was.

"I'm Lena Tuppit, that's who I am!"

A streaking shell of death struck just behind her. The concussion and searing all-enveloping flame that accompanied it sent me reeling and sobbing down an iron-railed stairway. I pounded frantically on the shut door. It opened, and hands pulled me in.

"This a-an air raid shelter?" I gasped.

"No, sir," said a polite Cockney-accented voice. "This 'ere's Duffy Millers', and I'm 'im."

A quick double scotch-and-soda did wonders. My hands lost some of their violent nervous shaking. The tavern was minute, cosily warm, and crowded. I felt ridiculously grateful for so much company, grateful also for the cheer of the smoky lights. Duffy Miller led me to a seat at the bar, and wordlessly proffered me a drink. I asked after Randall Kent, found out he was expected shortly.

"Duffy," I asked, "Have you ever heard of old Lena Tuppit? She's lived on this street quite some time."

Duffy Miller meditatively stroked his black moustache.

"She was a wonderful singer when she was young. Used to sing at that magnificent big Melody Music Hall across the street."

Still Duffy vouchsafed nothing, only scratched his nose, and nodded peculiarly.

"Duffy," I went on, "she was killed out there tonight. I feel responsible. I feel I could have somehow saved her, if only I hadn't left her."

"Old Lena Tuppit is it?" Duffy broke in. "Do I know her, you're asking? Well now, hin the first place she weren't a great singer when she was young. She were a street busker with high-tone toff's notions, and a drunken accordian-playing father. Has for Melody Music Hall---hit never was nothin' but a beer-and-chips tavern! What's more, hit were blown to Kingdom Come three months back in the big fire raid... the same raid as done in Old Lena Tuppit herself!"

I cried out, but he continued imperturbably.

"'Twas me that found 'er, all bunched up like a sackful of potatoes. I can tell you hit gave me quite a turn when I saw that face of 'ers -- with one ear and the lower side of 'er 'ead all scraped away, like it was tiger claws done it! That shrapnel those blasted heinies use sure makes a mess of it, sir..."

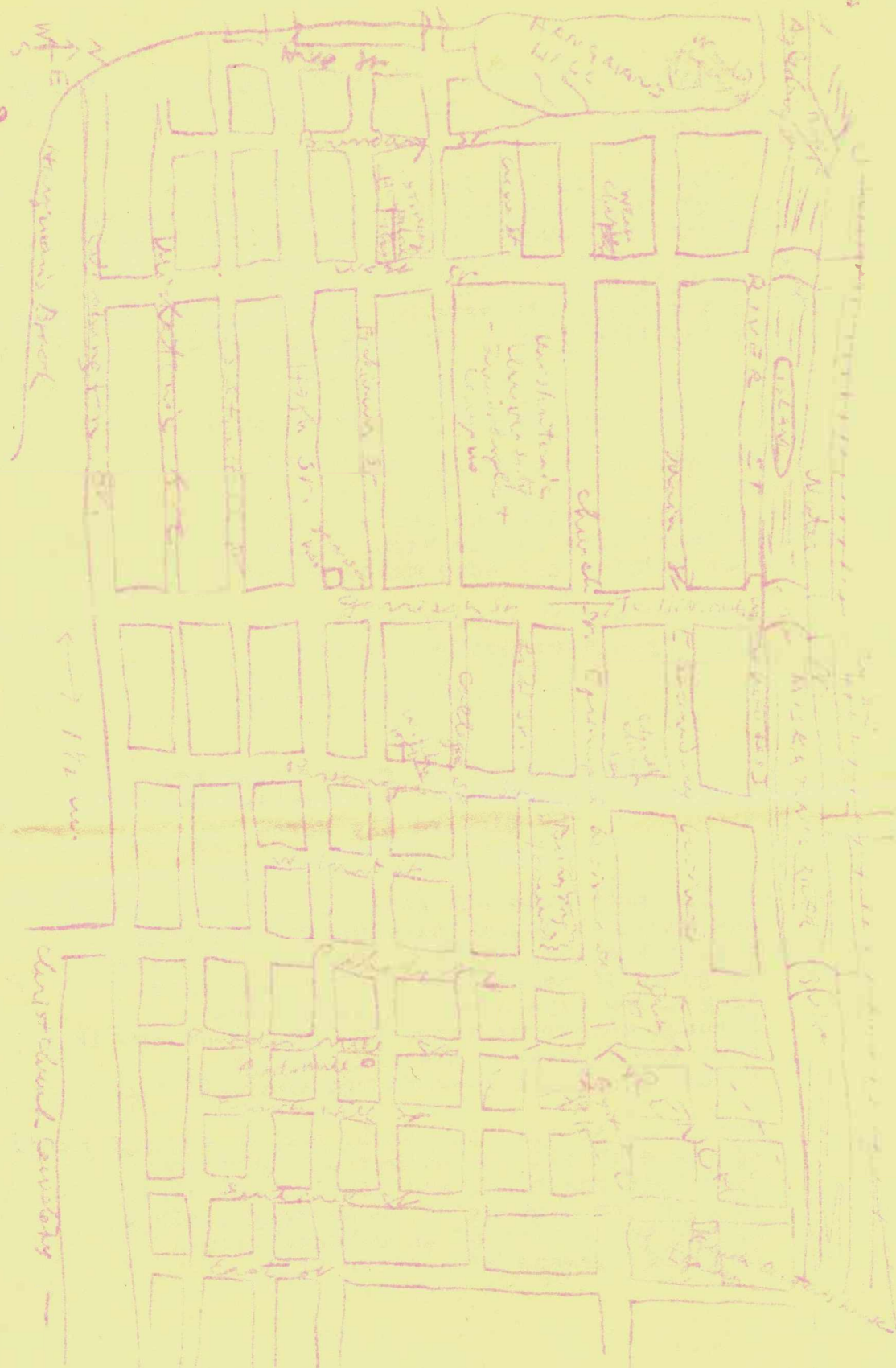
"An' if you'll pardon the liberty, sir," he added, staring at me sharply, "you need another drink!"

IN MEMORIAM: H. P. LOVECRAFT

by Richard Ely Morse.

Arkham and Innsmouth knew his questing tread
And kingdoms lying lost beneath the seas,
Within his keeping were the fabulous keys
To gates of aeons wherq his spirit fled;
From alien days a veiled figure led
Through monstrous lands and primal dreams that freeze
Even the Elders in their mysteries;
He braved them all---and now men call him dead.

Perchance he told too much, and so strange wings
Agleam with all the colour out of space,
Beat down one night and carried him afar
To join the pageant of those tragic kings
Ruling the future of an unknown race--
Immortal daemons of a dying star.



THIS MAP, though crude, is a tracing of H. P. Lovecraft's own sketch of ARKHAM, MASSACHUSETTS; the fabulous town so near to the hearts of H.P.L. acolytes. All the street names are in the master's holograph, and the map as a whole appears just the way it did to Lovecraft when he consulted it in order to make his casual allusions to Arkham ring true. (Published through the courtesy of Duane W. Rimel.)

THE ACOLYTE

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