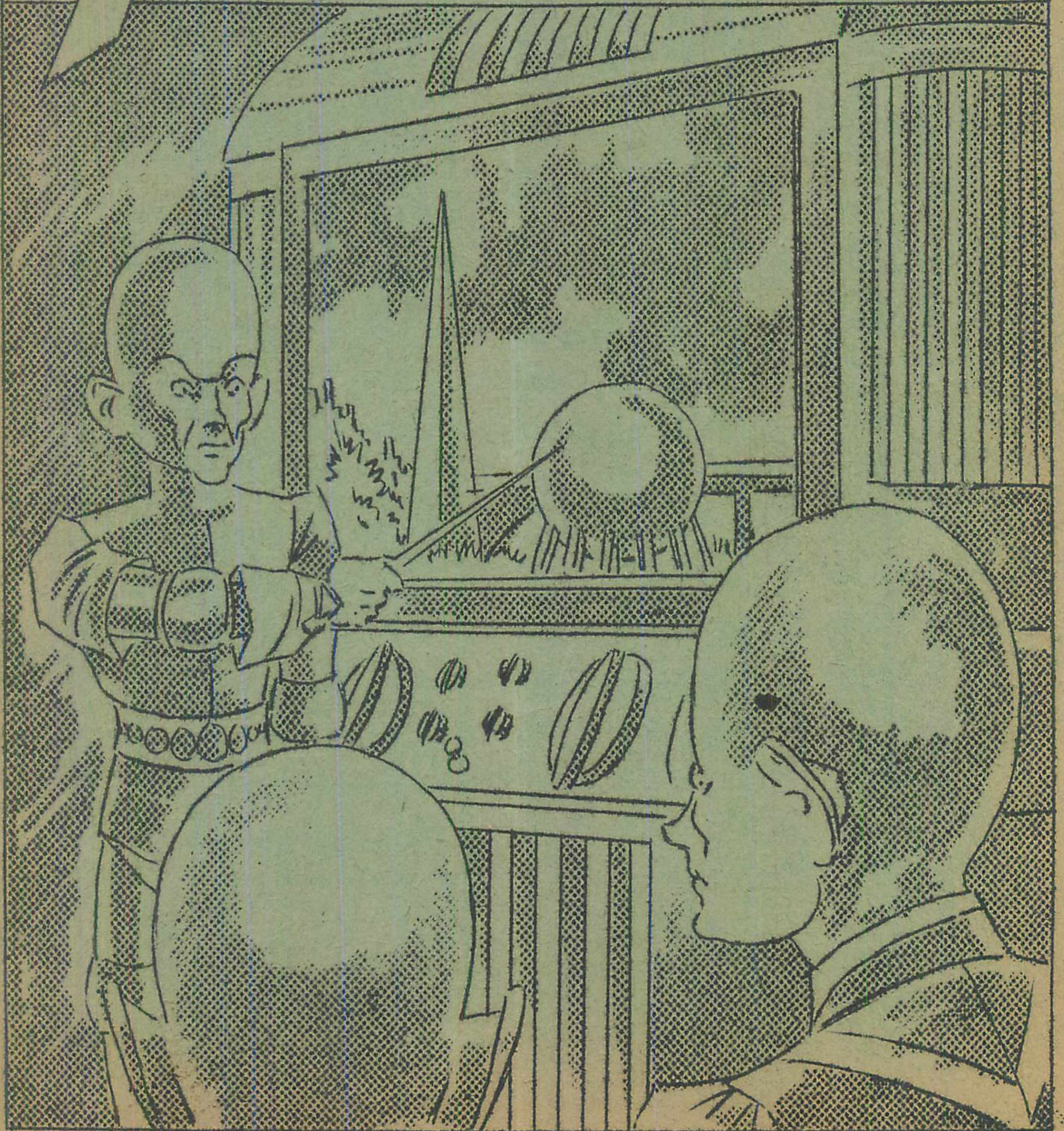


AD ASTRA

JULY
1939



AD ASTRA.

For July, 1939
Vol. 1, No. 2

10¢

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AD ASTRA, 3156 Cambridge Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, is a bimonthly publication. Ten cents per copy and twenty-five cents for a three issue subscription. For advertising rates see back cover. Advertisements exchanged on an equal basis with other fan magazines. AD ASTRA is an amateur publication and is in no way connected professionally. Literary contributions welcomed.....

WHERE'S HAWK CARSE!!

by Clifford D. Simak

"...Where's Hawk Carse?
Where're the good old days?"
Plaintive wail of a reader
writing an editor.

Letters of that sort are fewer now. There was a day when they blossomed on every hand. They serve one purpose ... to remind us that science fiction is changing.

It started to change back in 1933. The change has continued, perhaps will continue for many years to come. In other words, science fiction is developing. Bound by no particular rules or conditions it will probably continue to develop.

In 1934 a young man by the name of Stanley G. Weinbaum wrote "A Martian Odyssey" and made science fiction history. Meanwhile, Nat Schachner wrote "Ancestral Voices" and Jack Williamson, "Born of the Sun", two stories which would have found no place in science fiction prior to 1933.

That, I believe, was the turning point. I do not mean that the three authors I mention did the job alone. They are outstanding examples of a change that was bound to come. Neither do I mean to cast aspersions on science fiction written before the publication of those stories. Prior to 1933, science fiction had gone through the first writhing development and was emerging as a recognized story-type.

Those old pioneers in the publishing and writing of science fiction had laid the groundwork, without which no further development could have taken place.

Within the past year or eighteen months there has been further and marked development. Humor at last stands on its own feet in science fiction. Human interest is being stressed. Characterization has come into its own. The definition of science fiction has broadened to include off-trail stories that would have garnered rejection slips a few years back.

Now we come to Hawk Carse, the giant of the old days. He could stride through a story today just as thunderously as he did then ... for Hawk was a character, a hero who stood apart from the wooden people who walked woodenly through the yarns of yester-year. He was different -- he was Hawk Carse and Hawk Carse alone. He couldn't be anybody else.

But if Hawk Carse came back to life again it would have to be in a different sort of story than the one in which he paraded at the turn of the decade. Hawk Carse stories probably were tops then, they still stand as wonderful examples of one stage of development in science fiction. But they wouldn't be good enough for today .. even as the best story of 1939 probably will not be good enough for the science fiction of 1945. The Hawk, himself, will live. He is immortal.

Hawk Carse is used here merely as a symbol. There were others like him, immortals who will live forever in the heart of science fiction. (continued on next page)

*		*
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*	WHERE'S HAWK CARSE!	*
*		*
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What I have said of him, I beleive, applies to all the others. The creator of Hawk, I'm sure, if he reads this, will agree with all I've said.

When Hawk Carse was read and loved most of the characters in science fiction yarns were without distinguishing marks... just men and women of rather pallid cast used to carry forward the action of the story. For in those days the action of the story was enough to turn the trick. Today, no reader is going to get excited over a mere trip to the Moon or a little jaunt back into time. There has to be more than that to a story now. But that was exactly what many of the first stories were... mere journals of pointless adventure, tomes of weighty scientific text-book stuff and paragraphs of description concerning alien peoples and conditions.

In claiming that little attention was paid to characterization and the other niceties of story writing in the old days, I'm not casting a blanket indictment without including myself. A few of my stories were published then and my characters were just mouthpieces to explain scientific apparatus and scientific theory. There were exceptions, of course, but most of us who wrote then were guilty of the things that I have pointed out.

The development from those early days to the present has been gradual. Some outstanding authors have gone ahead to

blaze the trail and the rest have followed. By this I do not mean the authors imitated one another. What I mean is that one man opens a new avenue along which science fiction may be developed; others follow and help develop it. Perhaps one author will do this once in a life time. Perhaps an exceptional author will do it several times. Most of us will never do it, but we can follow where the others lead. The classic example, of course, is Weinbaum. But many stories have been accused of imitating him, so much so; it has been said by some one, that were he alive today, he could not sell a story. This is rank libel. To my knowledge, not more than two or three stories have ever deliberately imitated Weinbaum. Though many stories and many writers have been influenced by him.

Today, the science fiction story stands on its own feet as a legitimate story. It has all the essentials of a story in any other field. It has characterization, human interest, humor, deeper insight into the fundamentals of humanity and the scientific world.

One would naturally believe the more stories that are written, the narrower the field would become as the ideas are used up. Curiously, this is untrue. The very fact that many of the old ideas have been exhausted forces the author to seek either new angles to old ideas, brand new ideas or new approaches to telling of the story; all of which spells better science fiction.

The development still continues. I beleive it will continue. With all of ((over))

space and time from which to draw the stuff of which it's made, it cannot help but develop further.

The "good old days" have served their purpose and are

gone ... for which the editor, the writer and the reader may be grateful. We are moving toward a greater conception of science fiction and its possibilities. Let us, therefore, adopt a slogan:

"Let's look to the future!"

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*****
* ***** *
* * *
* * FUTURE TRENDS IN *
* * FANTASY by *
* * *
* * Jack Williamson *
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* ***** *
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A fantastic thing seems to be happening in the history of fantasy. In the decade and more since those pioneers, Weird Tales and Amazing Stories, first appeared, the fantasy and science fiction fan has usually been forced to content himself with a small handful of magazines. For the last several months, however, new titles have been blooming out incredibly.

There are now upwards of a dozen publications regularly publishing fantasy and science fiction. This is a situation without precedent. It is only natural for the interested fan to wonder what it is all leading to.

Is the fantasy-science fiction field destined to remain on a par with the western and detective groups, with a large number of successful magazines? Or is the current boom merely the prelude to a dismal collapse?

Well --- The reader must be warned, at this point, that these comments are not to be

taken very seriously. Writing in a little shack on the Llano Estacado, a thousand miles from the nearest editor, I have no idea of the returns on anybody's May issue. Probably, even by the time this appears, the march of events will be overtaking my mistakes. But the prophet being not without folly, even in his own country, here are some speculations on what is to come.

Recently, I was beginning to fear the results of the current multiplication in magazines. Obviously, the average reader is going to buy and peruse only a certain number of publications every month. Quite plausably, too, after he has read a certain number of stories of any one type, he might tire of them and look for something new.

It seems, in fact, that there are cycles in popular literature. At one time the westerns will be in the lead, at another, the detective books. Once there was a fad for gangster stories. Then the G-man rose in popularity, and the gangster books quietly vanished.

I was beginning to be afraid that too great a flood of new magazines would bring on disaster. I feared that the magazines would cut into one another's circulations, that they would be forced to reduce rates and number of pages, and that, in the end,

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 * * FANTASY by * *
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 * * Jack Williamson * *
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even the original magazines would have been wrecked. Several things, however, now cause me to take a more optimistic point of view.

One thing is the quality of the stories in the new magazines. I had feared that there wouldn't be enough good material to go around, and that it would be necessary to fill up the books with second-rate material. Evidently, I was mistaken.

"The Black Flame" by Stanley G. Weinbaum, is a case in point. Apparently there had been no place for this story in the older magazines. It was one of the outstanding stories, however, I feel, of last year. Its publication, I believe, shows that Startling Stories fills a place that was previously empty. Thousands of admirers of John Taine must feel that, by bringing them the 70,000 words of his "Tomorrow" for fifteen cents Marvel Science Stories has justified its existence.

The first issues of the old Amazing were filled entirely with reprint material. While the element of cost must have been considered, it probably would have been difficult to get enough good new science fiction stories to fill the magazine. There were then only a handful of trained science fiction writers, among them, Merritt, Burroughs, Leinster, and Cummings. But now, evidently, there are enough competent writers to supply excellent material for a considerable number of

magazines.

The one thing that has changed my opinion most definitely is the appearance of Campbell's Unknown. He announced that it was not to be science fiction, nor was it to be another Weird Tales. And the first issue proved his boast.

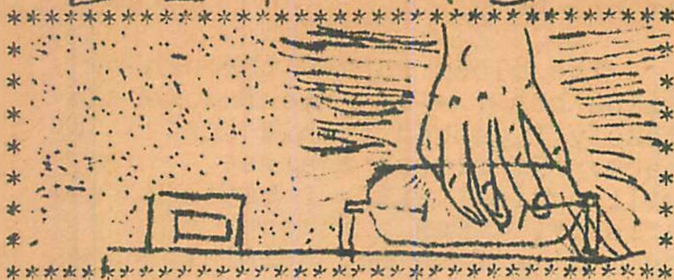
Eric Frank Russell's "Sinner Barrier", by itself, might have been classified as one of the few perfect science fiction tales. Yet it had a significant difference. "Where Angels Fear" might have been published in Weird Tales. But still one feels the difference. And it is hinted at more strongly in "Trouble With Water". The announced aim of Unknown is to fill a previously empty niche. I believe it does. And I believe its success in doing that points out the real and hopeful future trend in the fantasy field.

So long as each editor will take the trouble, as Campbell did, to discover and fill a vacant niche in the hall of magazines, I don't believe there is any danger to the field as a whole --- in fact, it looks as if the widened interest in the general field ought to help all the magazines. With a hundred million potential readers in America, and a hundred thousand of them enough to insure the success of a pulpwood magazine, it is hard to see any reason for alarm.

Of course, I have no way of knowing the circulation figures of Unknown. But I noticed that the stands were pretty well stacked with the first issue, and that the copies melted away very rapidly.

I think that is a significant sign.

"BEYOND the GATES"



By Mark Reinsberg

AN ULTRA SHORT STORY from an idea suggested by Erle Korshak

THE cellar was jet black and I inched my way down the narrow, unbannistered stairway, cautiously, lest I fall the remaining ten feet to the damp cement floor. I realized, the professor must be waiting impatiently for my return with the new catalyst tube -- the minute three inches of glass and fine wire which was destined to revolutionize modern warfare by causing enemy shells to explode prematurely in the air. Muscles tensed, I sought the next step. As my full weight shifted to the wooden slat it creaked dangerously, cutting the forboding silence like a knife and alarming my nerves into an incoordinated panic. Suddenly, I lost balance, and emitting a cry, plunged into the stygian darkness, my head cracking the cement with a dull, sickening thud.

Strangely, I felt no pain; though bright lights quavered before my eyes --- spectronic flames that waxed hotly through the very core of my brain, fantastic auroras that blinded me --- even as warm blood seeped from the concussion. Then, once more it was dark, the wallowing ebony of unconsciousness.

It might have been an eternity later that I picked myself up from the floor. I was startled by the lack of pain -- there was nothing to indicate my fall, not the slightest throbbing or sensitiveness. In fact, I felt queerly exhilarated, and in wonderment advanced to the tool bench. Somehow, I could discern it quite clearly, though I knew the basement was never bright

enough for that, even in the daytime.

I reached for the desired catalyst tube, and as my hand closed about it I received a terrible jolt. As if the tube were of a substance, MY FINGERS SLIPPED, UNCHALLENGED, COMPLETELY THROUGH ITS LENGTH!

In astonishment I stepped back. The glass tube seemed material enough; I was not! My whole body appeared to lack three dimensions, though its outline was incredibly accented by a ghastly emanation. Horrified, I brought my hands up. I could not feel my own body!

"Professor Stone!" I shrieked, but the tumultuous noiselessness of fear mocked my frantic cry. I staggered against the shop bench only to sink far into its frame; the outline of my arm penetrating solid wood. In abject terror I fled the cellar, each step seeming to melt into the stairs. I stumbled through the oaken door, bursting into the blindingly illuminated living room.

Unsteadily, I looked down upon my body -- seeing NOTHING!

My mind was a chaos --- I thought my sanity had departed. Terrified, I cried out for my servant -- for the professor, vainly believing they would hear me. But I made no sound. Deep concern visible on his face, my servant entered.

"James, speak to me," I de-

"Beyond the Gates" (continued)

manded, flinging myself directly into his path, "for the love of God, speak to me!"

Unheeding, he strode through the very spot on which I stood. He had walked through me. I could hear the thud of his footsteps as he made his way into the dark cellar --- in search of me!

I waded through the walls to my laboratory where Prof. Stone still waited. Then utter rage surged within me. The professor had not been spending his time fruitlessly. Cunningly, he had traced the exact plans to my invention -- the one I had asked him to look at. The two-faced devil --- and I absolutely helpless to prevent him though I stood at his side. His motives were clearer than ever. That invention could be turned into a weapon, a relentless implement of war, far more destructive than any in use. He would sell it to the highest bidder, the damn thief. If only ----

With the sound of James' return he concealed the plans and innocently rose to his feet. The leer of triumph diffused as the servant came into view, his face ashen with anxiety.

"Quick, come with me," he beckoned soberly, leading the professor across the house to the cellar door. I could see the surreptitious bulge in his vest pocket, a horrible potential menace to humanity. Only he knew of its destructive qualities; if I could remove him --- But I was powerless.

James came to a halt at the head of the stairs leading down into the gloomy basement, drawing the treacherous professor alongside. The servant's lips moved silently, whispering words I could not hear. All I could see was my chance --- my opportunity for revenge. Ah, at last! Stone poised quizzically on the top stair, peering into the basement gloom.

With every fiber in my soul, I willed; I launched myself blindly at his body.

The blood surged through my veins hotly --- shrieking soundlessly I pushed at his turned back. Emptiness against matter, will against will, I battled feverishly. For a moment failure seemed to face me, horribly, then --- by all heaven --- he slipped, seemingly of his own accord! He fell those ten feet as I had --- fell crushingly to the cold, hard pavement. A scream of horror escaped from his throat before his head cracked fatally against the cement. Then, silence.

Revenge --- I had done it, killed him! Killed him by sheer will.

James stood, shocked to rigidity. He stared awfully into the emptiness, gazing at something --- something.

I leaped to the head of the stairs, invisible and unnoticed by his side. My soul shrieked in anguish at what I saw, my brain reeled almost to madness. It explained it all --- Lord have mercy. For at the foot of the wooden stairs, lying silent in expiration were TWO bodies ---- one of them mine!

I AM DEAD!

(The End)

NEXT ISSUE

AD ASTRA presents its feature fiction story:

"THE LONELY WANDERER"

by

W. Lawrence Hamling

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 **
 ** "They Dared to Dream" **
 ** by **
 ** W. Lawrence Hamling **
 **

Science fiction is one of the most unusual types of literature in existence. It is a type specified for a select group of fearless people. This can be readily understood upon reflection of its past history.

Science fiction was not founded as an accident. Rather, by a group of men who were aware that they were creating a new field of literature.

Edgar Allen Poe wrote fantasy and science fiction not in catering to popular demand, nor in a sense of public achievement, but motivated by some mysterious, inner emotion. There was some subtle force that probed his mind, encouraging him to accomplish what others studiously avoided. Urging him to delve into the mysteries as no one had dared to do before. Some called it the product of a demented brain, others actually realized what this man had begun, but they feared to accept it.

Poe was not alone in those early days. He was one of the Immortal four who felt that strange urge --- that urge to write of the universe -- of life -- of death -- of the past, future -- of dark probability. Yes, there were others, such as A. Conan Doyle, Jules Verne, H.G. Wells. These men were not afraid to face ridicule and laughter. They knew they were right; they dared to dream!

Privileged indeed are they who possess the ability to read it; Privileged indeed are they who understand it! Privileged indeed are they who realize its value!

 **
 ** Have Fan Magazines A Use? **
 ** by **
 ** Harry Warner, Jr. **
 **

This is a question often asked, and often answered. Fan writers have gone into it in great detail, and much blood has been shed over the subject. When all is summed up, I think that the answer will be found to be: YES!

Not that science fiction cannot exist without these little efforts -- that's silly. It's not a question of which came first --- the fans or the authors. The fans were always there I suppose, but they weren't fans until there were authors to make them fans. Thus, science fiction existed in magazine form for a number of years before a fan magazine was begun. It got along very well during that length of time, and if all fan mags would suddenly fold up, I don't think that you would find the pro magazines gasping for breath.

But that's not the point. Granted that fan magazines aren't essential; nevertheless, they do have a function, and a very vital one at that. There can be no stronger link in fantasy than that between author-editor-reader as John W. Campbell Jr. has said to me. And I believe that, over a period of time, an author can find the best reaction to his work in fan magazines. Better than what the editor can tell him surely --- the editor's job is to make money, and can only pick out the stories that will make his magazine sell. Oftentimes, these are not the best. And while letters in the readers' sections of pro magazines are an aid, perhaps in one issue only four or five will comment on the one particular story.

((Continued on page 12))

 *
 * AN INTERVIEW with *
 *
 * JULIAN S. KRUPA *
 *

 * By Richard I. Meyer *

It was already 5 P.M. and I was still on the bus, bound for Mark Reinsberg's apartment. "Gosh, late again. I suppose it's O.K. -- if only he won't leave without me." Strange to say, he delayed his departure long enough for me to catch him just as he pulled away. The occasion was our anticipated trip out to Argo, Illinois, where friend Krupa resided. We had first met him in the editorial offices of Amazing Stories, where the four of us -- Palmer, Krupa, Reinsberg and I joined in a somewhat riotous day, terminating long after the rest of the staff had gone home.

Mark spoke: "Rich, I didn't mention it before but I've only handled this car alone since Tuesday. Just learned to drive. But you needn't worry, I can handle this jalopy good for the short time I've had it." (A jalopy it was -- a '31 Olds, to be precise -- and plenty run down!)

"What -- whew! Fine time to tell me! Well, take it easy -- it's my neck." A few seconds later I again spoke: "Mark, don't get irritated fellow, but I prefer to hold my hand on the emergency brake -- just in case."

After forty minutes of nerve racking narrow escapes we turned into Argo. Having passed our street by several blocks, Mark attempted a detour -- only to wind up in a particularly desolate part of nowhere -- and worse yet -- stuck in the mud! Argo was just recovering from a modified deluge.

The episode cost us an hour of futile exertion -- until two fellows came along and lent a "hand" (The "hand" costing fifty cents apiece). Eventually, we pulled up in front of Krupa's home, pathetically late. Julian answered at the door, dressed in his overcoat -- ready to leave.

"Thought you'd never get here", he said, smiling, "I expected you over an hour ago. I was just on my way to an appointment set for later in the evening -- but come in -- take off your coats. We'll go into my study."

As a study, it was a surprise, and a marvel of compactness. A large bookcase crammed with books and magazines occupied most of the right side, further supplemented by a tall filing case, Julian's drawing board mounted atop a stand, three chairs and finally a desk. All this in a room 8x5. The walls were decorated by several framed diplomas and some large drawings by Krupa. Oh yes, a window and a door.

Explanations were forthcoming on our tardiness and we repeated our rather hectic adventures, ending with laughter. We talked on an astonishing variety of topics, science fiction and otherwise, before Reinsberg gently steered the conversation to subjects closer at hand. Following his lead, I ventured:

"How about that interview for AD ASTRA you promised down at Palmer's? You know, very little is actually known about yourself."

"What do you mean?" Krupa countered laughingly, "I had my autobiography published in Amazing only a short time ago."

"But", Reinsberg interjected, "that was composed by Palmer."

What we want is something personal --- something that's not generally known."

"Let's start from the beginning," I suggested. "You were born ----"

"In Poland, January 7, 1913," Julian supplied.

"Fine, keep it up," Reinsberg applauded.

"Well," Krupa continued, settling back in his swivel chair, "I might be called a "born" artist, as I've been interested in illustrating since I can remember. Got my first start with the birth of my strip, "The Adventures of Richard Arnold". Julian slid open one shelf of his file and unearthed a large stack of drawings, the entire "Richard Arnold" strip. These we scanned eagerly, viewing a series of excellent drawings, rendered understandable by graphic illustrating even though the script was in Polish.

Krupa spoke: "It was an instantaneous success and I had a lot of fun doing it --- even though there were times when I got in ruts that tested my enthusiasm to the breaking point. No, I never ruined a single drawing in its composition, and there was always something happening."

"Just how did you finally get into illustrating Amazing?"

"On a bet," Krupa replied, "I was arguing with a fellow down in the layout room of the newspaper. During the heat of the battle, he wagered that I couldn't get a job on a professional magazine. That burned me up, and when he put ten dollars down I accepted the challenge. I had heard of Amazing, and went there first. Saw Bollin, the art director, who immediately took me in. I won the ten dollars and since then --- But you know the rest."

"Well, say Julian, science fiction isn't your only interest? What are your hobbies?" I asked, breaking the silence.

"Oh, I've always wanted to organize an orchestra of science fiction fans. But seriously, I am greatly interested in good music -- I play several instruments myself. Then, of course, photography --- amateur movies; some day I'm going to shoot a real s-f movie -- when I get time. I'm a liscenced operator and own a regular rig -- sound equipment and all."

"But getting back to science fiction," Reinsberg said, "do you intend to follow up your present work or have you other plans?"

"Confidentially, I have several ideas in mind under the category of cartoon work, that if I ever get around to, would be almost as enjoyable as s-f art. I discontinued my original cartoon when I started working for Amazing. I also have a few good plots in case I ever get around to writing. I imagine I could take some of the ideas from "Richard Arnold" and evolve a darn good tale, also. You know, I wrote my strip too."

"A darn swell job too," I commented.

"Plenty of action, if that's what you mean." Krupa laughed.

"Wish I could read Polish," Mark lamented, observing a particularly exciting episode.

"I'm getting to the end of the page," I remarked finally, "so how about a nice juicy item to close this interview up -- you know, a bit of news?"

Julian pondered, then his face brightened. "Oh, yes, "The Adventures of Richard Arnold" are to reappear. Just sold the entire strip to a South American Syndicate -- to be reprinted."

"AD ASTRA"
a poem by
Mark Reinsberg

1

The moon, a golden crescent
In the ebon sky;
The stars, each silv'ry pinpoints
Infinitely high;
And there, to the west, lies Venus;
There, to the south, is Mars --
Ah, you must choose between us --
Among the eternal stars.

2

Up from the misty ages,
E're since Cretaceous slime,
Man has watched -- and wondered;
And will, to the end of time.
Eight new worlds to conquer,
When the ways of this orb are known;
Step by step -- forever.
Till space becomes his own.

3

Rest for the individual --
Too soon, we call it death;
But none for man, the mighty,
Until his parting breath.
(And man, a flick'ring second
On the seas of time ---
Though to us an eon;
Tis naught to Him sublime).

Continuing:

"Have Fan Magazines A Use?"

The composite ratings such as ASTOUNDING and AMAZING give help, but they don't give reasons. By reading the fan magazines diligently, any author can discover just why fans do or don't like his work as a whole; and also what they think science fiction stories should be. Perhaps these are only opinions of a few inner-circle fans, but as a unit, they are a pretty good composite picture of the average science fiction fan. Therefore, I appeal to every professional author who reads this article -- read and support the fan magazines. It will pay you in the long run.

END

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Hagerstown, Md.

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answering advertisements.

"AD ASTRA" ("to the stars")*****

AD ASTRA

"AD LIB"

What our readers have to say...

JOSEPH GILBERT of Columbia, S.C. writes:-

I have been reading fan mags only a short time, but no sooner does one put out one issue, than it folds its mimeograph like the Arabs and silently steals away. Perhaps I am just sensitive to extra-sensory perception, but somehow I have the feeling that AD ASTRA is not going to make things lively by blowing up in my face and leaving my hands empty, and a dazed look on my pen. I hope that cheers you up a little.

Seriously, AD ASTRA seems me by the lineup of features to be neatly on its way to take the place of the justly bemoaned "Fantasy". I do hope that luck, good fortune, and strong support will favor AD ASTRA and endow it with a full, happy life.
(Thank you, Mr. Gilbert Ed.)

RAY PAULEY of Spring Hill, W.Va. says:-

Received the first ish. of AD ASTRA safe and sound and after due consideration think it amply worthy of what comments I may have to offer.

I believe I may safely say that this initial issue of AA is equal in most respects to the initial issue of any of the fan mags that have made a recent debut in fandom. The cover was superb. Why not have Krupa execute a few interior cuts, too, hereafter. Those produced in this issue are about as punk as the cover is good. To speak of material, it was for the most part very good. I especially liked "An Interview with RAP" and "Writing". Your story was fair but for gosh sakes don't feature more than one piece of fiction per issue. I would like to see "Did You Know That" as a regular column. Also, keep the editorial at a full page; editorials always

interest me. Well, with hopes that a readers readers column may be forthcoming; hopes for a monthly publication; and a dine for the second issue, I remain, Yours for stf.

RALPH C. HAMILTON of Wooster, Ohio flashes:-

I was well pleased with the first issue of AD ASTRA, especially the article by Campbell; so here is ten cents for the next.

JACK F. SPEER of Washington, D.C. writes:-

Speaking for both myself and Bristol --- since that latter's bosses have turned thumbs down on using the government's typewriter, time, and paper for personal correspondence -- I congratulate you on Chicago's first fan mag in year. The first issue shows several strong points, and many of the defects can be easily corrected.

Despite the rather hack nature of the subject, Krupa's AD ASTRA cover was an excellent piece of work. Of the interior cartoons, the one for the RAP interview was likeable, but that for Medium of Exchange not so hot.

The interview with Palmer was interesting, as were the Did You Know That items. "That" was repeated before one item, which is veddy bad. The introductory statement should have been boxed off or otherwise differentiated so as not to appear as an item.

Campbell was fair, good toward the end of the article. There is no justification for fancily set off headings to show that an article is continued from the preceding page, and they break into the flow of reading.

If The Father and the Fan had been smoothed out into better meter it would have been excellent. Germsback fair. Probably most fans don't like him, personally, any more. Medium of Exchange a little

too obvious. Smith interesting. Things concerning SGW repetition pretty much of introduction to Dawn of Flame, but suppose most of your readers haven't that book.

Madle among the best of the writers this time. Hamling re our sanity ditto. Think I'll sue Harry Warner or someone. I had an article in the first number of my FAPA magazine, Full Length Articles, entitled Samuel Clemens -- Scientifictionist, which devoted nearly half its length to a condensation of and commentary upon The Mysterious Stranger. Nell mentioned the article, as did someone else, but evidently Harry missed the notice.

EMRYS EVANS of Mountain Home, Id. comments:-

Your first number was very good, from the cover to that humorous story by Mark Reinsberg. Besides the humor I enjoyed reading the serious articles by John W. Campbell, Jr. and Lawrence Hamling. A suggestion -- number the pages of future AD ASTRAS; then we fans won't have to count them ourselves.

LESLIE A. CROUTCH of Parry Sound, Ontario, writes:-

This is something of a precedent with me, and AD ASTRA marks the first fan publication I have bought, and the only one that has held my likes as long as wanting the second issue. I haven't read them all by any means, but what I have - I find this one the better of them all!

Yours is the first I've had that used a stiff cover, and I must say it enhances the book as a whole -- and as a whole, 'tis nice. I see you'd like opinions, and being a fan of a very opinionative nature, here's mine:

Cut those scratchy drawings that you say are "editorially done". If they're yours, you oughta be ashamed of yourself! They distinctly lower the quality

of AD ASTRA.

The articles were good. And that little yarn about heavy water alright for a beginning. I realize that the first issue of any magazine is poorer than the following ones for the simple reason that contributors aren't as handy and don't actually begin coming in until the readers have sort of whetted their pens and hunched down to work.

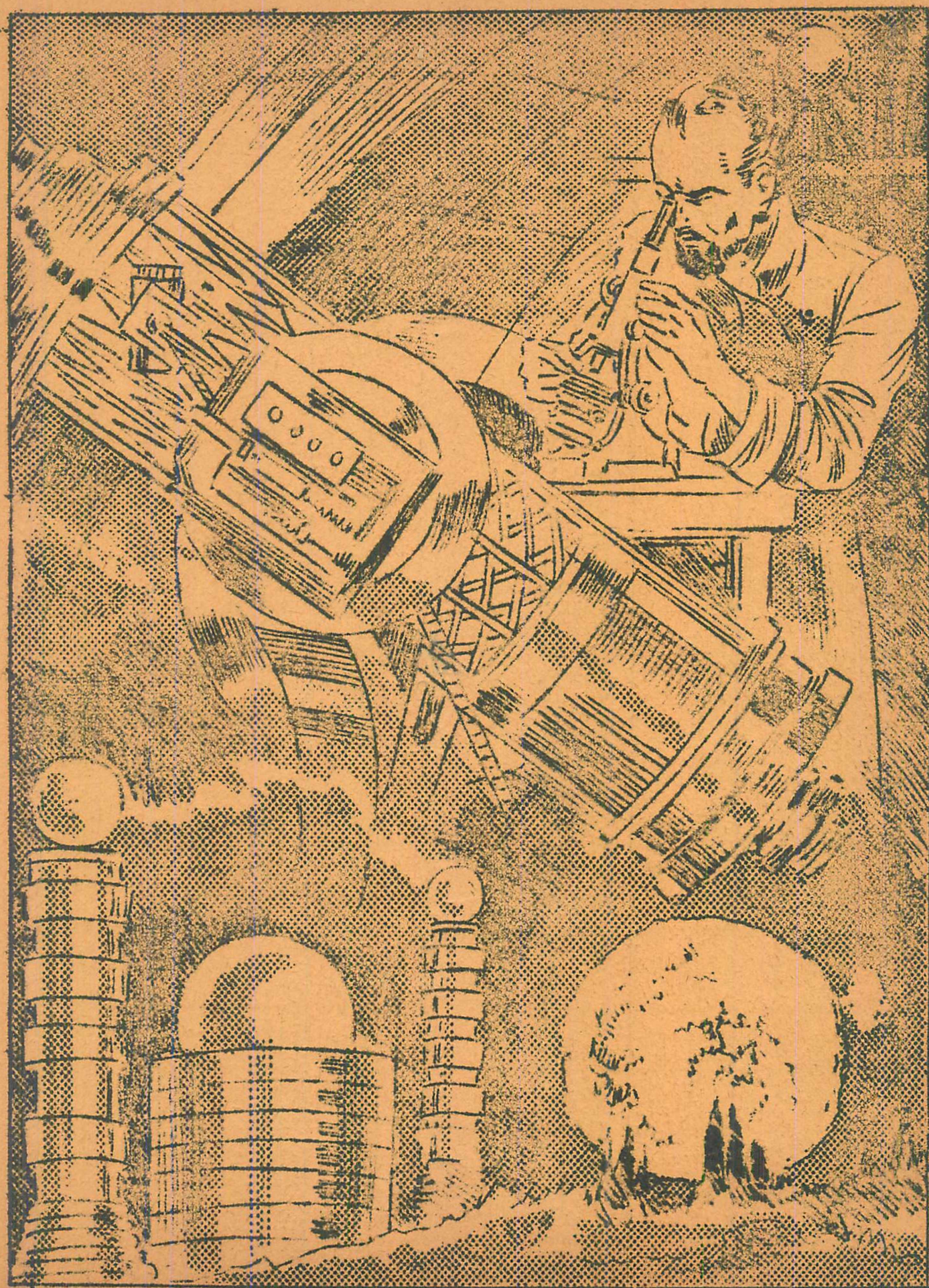
The cover: well done, the best I've seen yet in fact. Are contributions along this line acceptable? Can readers send in cover designs, pictures for the inside, and so on? Have you the facilities for using them? If so, why not tell your readers this in a forthcoming issue? Surely there are, among the readers, those who are tolerable designers and artists. Such things will help raise the quality of the magazine.

DON'T change the format, whatever else you do. For this size is nice and neat, and makes it easy to bind, say a whole volume in one, as I may do later on. So DON'T change the format. What about a monthly instead of this blasted bi-monthly business which is becoming a drug on the market.

Certainly give us a readers' dept. What is sf or fantasy without that? Let us readers get together and pound the living blazes out of each other. But, let the interesting ones - letters be returned and made into an article. Howsaboutit?

(AD ASTRA is always willing to risk a stencil on those who are artistically inclined. If you've got talent, drop us a line --- that goes for anyone who knows how to work on a stencil -- and is interested in doing some illustrating.

BUT, I might add, as long as Julian S. Krupa so generously donates his time and skill to AA, you don't stand much of a chance. We do not intend to change the present format -- and hope to go monthly soon. Ed.)



"LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS?"

by Henry Bott

Through the soupy, foggy, atmosphere, laden with oppressive dampness, stumbles the weary figure of a man. He is clad in a rubber fabric suit equipped with a helmet and air renewing apparatus, for, in this carbon-dioxide saturated world, it is necessary to have the precious, life-giving oxygen supplied from one's portable source. Upon the traveler's feet are huge saucers, similar to snowshoes, to prevent his sinking in the soft, slimy ooze that bubbles about him. Surrounding him is a primeval jungle, filled with teeming, voracious forms of lower life. Amoeba-like animals roll hither and yon, and the ghastly struggle for life goes on, apparently interminably. The wanderer makes his way slowly along the notched tree trail, and from time to time consults a map fastened to his wrist. Soon he sights a long, lonely structure of concrete, and inside his helmet he heaves a sigh of relief, for he knows that once more he has returned alive to Post No. One of the first Earth to Venus expedition.

The above paragraph sounds as if it were taken from some current science fiction writer's imagination; yet, it is conceivably so. Modern science has given the matter of the possibility of any kind of life on foreign worlds serious thought, and has come to some definite conclusions.

True, life on Mars, or Venus, as we know it, would be very rigorous, and it would be, without question, a case of "survival of the fittest." Yet, it is possible that there conceivably might be such life.

We instinctively think of "life" as that which has to do with protoplasmic, hydrocarbonous material. But, is that necessary? No, say the bolder scientists. It is quite understandable that life forms may be based on elements than carbon and hydrogen. If you stop to give the subject a little consideration, you can readily see what I am driving at. Why should it be necessarily true that the strange impulse "to do things," which we call life, should depend on carbon

HEAVENLY BODY	Miles from Sun	Diameter in miles	Year as to Earth	Gravity as to Earth	Surface heat °F	LIFE?
SUN		864392		27.9	10000	0%
MERCURY	35960000	3000	.31	.27	195.3	20%
VENUS	67200000	7575	.61	.88	151.2	50%
EARTH	92897000	7918	1.00	1.00	60.0	100%
MARS	141540000	4216	1.88	.38	-38.7	35%
JUPITER	483310000	80728	11.86	2.64	-231.7	1%
SATURN	886120000	72430	29.45	1.19	-291.3	0%
URANUS	1782700000	30378	84.01	.96	-340.8	0%
NEPTUNE	2793400000	32932	164.78	.98	-364.7	0%
PLUTO	3680000000	?	243.16	1.?	-376.8	0%

and hydrogen? Since this is only a subject of conjecture, we cannot prove anything as yet.

Suppose we consider the possibility of life for each of the planets, starting with the innermost one, Mercury. Here is a barren, sterile world, perpetually holding one face to the Sun, the other to outer space. Here, too, is an excellent example of the improbability of carbonaceous life's existing on this world of contrasts. The side of the planet which is forever turned to Sol is intensely hot, since, day in and day out, it continually receives a good share of the radiation of the mighty Solar machine. It is so unbearably and so inconceivably uncomfortable, that no human being could exist on its surface for more than a few minutes, for he would be charred to a crisp.

And, on the other side of Mercury, which has never, excepting in dimly remote ages, received any heat from the Sun, one finds just the opposite conditions. Long before our time, this side of the planet had radiated away any heat it might once have had. So, it is rather obvious to astronomers that the temperature is very close to zero degrees, Absolute.

The existence of organic life on this ancient, heatless world is, to all practical extent, out of the question. But then, the idea of life based on some other element than carbon pops into the mind. Since we do not know of any such life on Earth, we are all too ready to assume that it does not exist. However, it is the general tendency of mankind to disbelieve until he can see it with his own eyes.

We have pretty nearly eliminated the possibility of life on Mercury, so let us next consider the planet which has played a great part in Tellurian romance and literature; namely, Venus.

Here is a warm, cloud-covered world, whose atmosphere is heavily laden with carbon dioxide. Yes, it is highly likely, that, if life exists on any other planet than Earth, it will be much like this one. For Venus has much that would aid in supporting life. While we do not know whether the silver-clad sphere rotates on its axis, we think that it most likely does. Some day, when we shall have some type of telescope employing the infra-red or ultra-violet light, we shall see what enigma lies beneath the moisture-saturated air.

Of course, the third innermost planet, Tellus, does support life -- life of a particularly conceited nature -- life of a malignant form -- life which insists on preying on its own type. The greater majority of life forms on Earth have the hatred for one another which seems to have been inbred in them.

Next comes Mars, whose capabilities for the support of organic life have been argued over ever since the telescope was turned on its surface. As on Mercury, violent extremes of temperature are found. During the day the temperature soars to normal, but at night, when Mars no longer absorbs the Sun's life-giving energy, and when the thin atmosphere permits the rapid radiation of heat, then the temperature drops to a very low point on the Absolute scale. This condition precludes most chances for the survival of or-

ganic life forms. But a surface covered with red sand, as Mars probably is, immediately suggests the silicon life base. Silicon, with its similarity to carbon, is a highly appropriate element to permit a logical departure from the conventional life-form standards, is it not?

Far beyond Mars revolves the stupendously gigantic mass of Jupiter. This majestic world no chance to organic creatures, since its atmosphere consists of Ammonia and Methane, and other more virulent gases. All suggestion of life is immediately precluded by this condition. It is more likely that one of Jupiter's moons, such as Io, Europa, Callisto, Ganymede, or one of the others, would support organic life, and even this is improbable, because these satellites are so far distant from the Sun.

Saturn, with its density, less than that of water; Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, with their enormous distances from the Sun, will unquestionably not support organic life. These last three are so remote from Sol, that they catch but the merest and most minute quantity of the Solar System's furnace radiation. How forbidding must the thought of living on one of these worlds be!

We have considered each of the planets of the System, and we have seen only two -- possibly three -- Earth, Venus, and Mars, who have conditions under which the seed of life could successfully propagate.

Most of us, with our inherent vanity, will not concede the possibility of the existence of non-organic life. Of course life would not have to assume the forms we know of. As a matter of fact, the chances are

strong that, due to increased or decreased gravity, due to dense or thin atmospheres, due to high or low temperatures, the supposedly inorganic life-forms, or creatures, would develop radically different shapes, more so than we can possibly imagine.

Consider, for example, an inhabitant of Jupiter. What would he look like? Well, due to the great gravitational attraction of mighty Jupiter, he would most likely be short and squat. The high density of the methane-laden atmosphere would give him an enormous set of lungs, if by any chance, he breathed in a manner similar to ours. And so on.

We might mentally construct these imaginary inhabitants for all the planets, if we so desired. But until the first intrepid explorer sets foot on an alien world -- we shall never really know. "Life on other planets?"

The End

Should AD ASTRA continue this new feature? It's up to you. We want to, of course, but we're guided primarily by your likes and dislikes.

Each issue we propose to feature a science supplement on the order of this by some fan or author. There will be no set topics; the writer can roam the universe at will -- with the only provision that the article must hold interest to the general reader. No highly technical material will be printed -- just down to earth language.

Could you write a "science supplement for AD ASTRA? Why not try?

Editorial

A weary, but happy editor lets off some steam... and finally relaxes.

Out a little late, but then the whole staff worked overtime. Writing from my little padded cell -- where the rest of the staff hustled me off, after finishing all but this final page-- I have just been informed that our faithful Business Manager has just had his relapse and will presently join me in this cozy little sanitarium.

Seriously, though, we're really proud of this, the second issue of AD ASTRA. It shows not only what can be done in one number, but also gives just a hint of "things to come". We definitely intend to maintain this pace -- constantly improving, always with an eye to the future. You're on a comet -- the tail of a comet -- and our motto is: "to the stars".

Two new features this issue. AD LIB, our readers' column, and something really new in s-f fan magazines -- our Science Supplement. These were part of the surprise we promised last issue; Krupa's TWO drawings are the other part.

We've improved the format at least a hundred percent. The mimeographing is much better, our headings are neater, and most important, the great lineup. Where will you find such a glorious array of names?

Something else new. The two thick, colored pages presenting Krupa's masterpieces. We're very proud of them. And we want to publicly thank Julian S. Krupa for the prominent role he has played in putting our magazine over. I know the many fans who receive AD ASTRA will chorus the appreciation expressed.

Much remains to be done before we will even slacken our speed. More pages must be added -- even as this issue presents more than in the first. To give these extra pages, we must have plenty of material -- GOOD material. We don't want any second rate stuff. We want things of lasting interest -- things that strike a common note of appreciation among fans and professionals alike. We need more material; we're going to get it.

We intend to go monthly as soon as a regular schedule can be worked out. We don't like this bi-monthly stuff anymore than you.

Above all, we are herewith launching a campaign for more support -- more subscriptions. It takes support to do what we plan to do -- to make it worthwhile. We need about twice as many subscribers to justify our next step.

And when we take that next step it will explode like a bombshell in fandom. It's big -- very big -- but we can't say too much about it now. Plans go astray. It may be the next issue -- perhaps the one after that, but when it happens -- you'll hear about it. That is, in time to reserve your copy of AD ASTRA.

Our statistical resume was squeezed out this issue due to lack of certain figures -- which are now complete -- but it'll be featured next issue, thanks to Jack Darrow. And the contest was called off at the last moment. It interfered with other plans. Everything was returned with regrets.

NEXT AD ASTRA
out about July 20th!

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