



AD ASTRA

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CONTENTS PAGE

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COVER ILLUSTRATION.....	Julian S. Krupa.....	cover
EDITORIAL.....	The Editor.....	2
GUEST EDITORIAL.....	John W. Campbell, Jr.....	3
THAT MOMENT OF HORROR.....	Henry Kuttner.....	5
BIOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING.....	Gerald W. Meader.....	7
BOOK REVIEW.....	Erle Kershak.....	9
FANTASIES THAT BECAME FACT.....	J. Harvey Haggard.....	10
FARWEST FACTS.....	"Farwest" Jack Erman.....	11
WHAT FAN MAGAZINES?.....	Robert W. Lowndes.....	16
HEART AND HACK.....	Harry Warner, Jr.....	17
OPEN LETTER TO H.G. WELLS.....	Joseph Gilbert.....	19
AD LIB.....	The Readers.....	21
RESUME OF ASTOUNDING.....	Richard I. Meyer.....	22
ADVERTISEMENTS.....		23 & 24
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO THIS ISSUE: INTRODUCING "MID-WEST Fan News" #1.		

AD ASTRA, 3156 Cambridge Ave., Chicago, Illinois, is an amateur publication for the Science Fiction Fan. Published bimonthly. Subscription rates: 10c per issue; 25c for three issues; life subscription \$5. For advertising rates, see page 25.

The opinions expressed in this magazine are solely those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the staff, nor of AD ASTRA....AA invites literary contributions, articles of general interest to science fiction fandom...unique, startling, expositive...essay-type material of opinonative nature, of lasting interest. Controversial articles are not barred, but they must not contain any personal slander, and must not overstep the bounds of literary decency.

Your comments, suggestions, and criticisms are solicited. The next of AD ASTRA will appear approximately February 20th. The Editor

"Editorially....."
by the Editor

And, with this issue of AD ASTRA over three weeks late, I come to the last page, guiltily known as the "editorial alibi section". Although the road to hell is paved with good intentions, we did have every intention of getting this number in the mail on the 20th of Dec., 1939. Obviously, we didn't; the shame-faced truth is, #4 and #5 AA, have been quarterly, rather than bi-monthly. We hope to make up for this deplorable fact by issuing #6 in thirty days, thus taking the edge off of our tardiness and catching up with the bi-monthly date of AA's publication schedule.

In the way of excuses, I might remark that "even margins" aren't fun. Realizing, though, that neatness of format was the magazine's biggest weakness, it was decided that henceforth a "dummy" issue of AA would be prepared on galley forms. This meant twice as much work, even if the element of uncertainty was eliminated. Your editor, having, discovered there are only twenty-four hours per day, during which at least one-quarter-----is generally spent sleeping, was particularly hard-pressed, when he learned that only a pitifully small portion of that time was available for science fiction. And then, that was out, of the one-quarter day generally spent sleeping. Consequently, though aide-de-camp Meyer did a heroic hare of the labor, besides his regular work as Business Editor, AD ASTRA is late.

This month we present something we had no idea would appear, a few weeks ago. It came very unexpectedly. One day, when I was lounging in 3156 Cambridge headquarters, Richie Meyer flung a #1 Amazing Stories dangerously violent on the floor. "Dammit, Mark!" said he, "things have come to a pretty penny!" I looked up in surprise and, then saw the reason for the outburst. He had been reading some contemporary S-F news-sheets. "So, you'll put out another fan magazine, and be happy," I replied sarcastically. "That's just what I'm going to do!" Rich cried with vim. As a result, you'll find the first issue of his mag. "MID-WEST Fan News", included in this issue as its debut. In future issues, his mag will appear as a separate publication, obtainable by subscription through 3156 Cambridge. But, the rest is explained in the pages of MID-WEST. Thanx to him, we're introducing it in AA as a special treat to our subscribers and I feel sure that you will all show ybur appreciation by subscribing immediately to the newest of Mr. Rim publications.

This issue of AD ASTRA is respectfully dedicated to ASTOUNDING... SCIENCE-FICTION, the third professional magazine to appear in this special series. In connection with the event, Mr. Campbell has written his guest editorial, and elsewhere in this issue will be found a concise statistical resume of ASTOUNDING for handy collector's reference. From now on, dedications will be presented at rare and appropriate instances, for we have covered the "big three" and the other pros are of comparatively recent date, thus making a statistical resume of their existences unnecessary.

The cover this month is reproduced by permission of AMAZING STORIES, it being the Krupa drawing to "War with Jupiter" by W. Lawrence Hamling and Mark Reinsberg in the May 1939 issue. Last issues reproduction, as well as the one on the cover this issue, are from personal "original" collection of your editor, and, if you wish, there are many fine examples of science fiction art which will be reproduced. Copies of all drawings may be obtained through AD ASTRA by sending in 10¢.

Incidentally, readers of AA might send 20 cents to W.L. Hamling, for a copy of the 1st issue of STARDUST, superb, printed, semi-pro with material by many professional authors and S-F luminaries. Next AA will feature a great article by Don Wilcox, which you won't want to miss. "A word to the wise....." Mark Reinsberg.

Science fiction and its fans are a queer pattern of paradoxes, a lovely stumbling ground for authors and readers alike. Because science fiction is a unique sort of material, it necessarily re-

aches a unique sort of mind, and, consequence, a comparatively small group, widely scattered. Because of the differentness of the material and the unusual trend of mind needed for its appreciation, it has a strong tendency to build up walls about itself, to bring forth groups and organizations seeking meeting of similar active minds. It makes personalities important in its field.

The authors of science fiction are personalities to the fans to a greater extent than, perhaps, in any other field of fiction. There is an intent and personal interest in the leading writers; new authors recognized as new ones almost instantly by nearly all fans, and their work carefully studied. There are the old favorites who are well and favorably known. Surely, in such a field, author success will tend to be stable and lasting.

And, surely, it is not. In no field does the turnover of authors proceed as rapidly and as finally. In no field is leadership so apt to shift rapidly and with such completeness.

Yet science fiction fans feel they are peculiarly faithful to the leading workers in the field!

They aren't and can't be, because they're far more faithful--and rightly so--to a philosophy that inevitably leads to rapid shifting. The very basis of science fiction is a changing future; a constantly bettering, different, tomorrow, and an equally complete dedication to the idea of progress.

Three things, then, lead inevitably to a rapid change of leadership: the fact that the field

GUEST EDITORIAL

No. 2

by:

JOHN W. CAMPBELL, Jr.

Editor:

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION

* is specialised and
* that, in consequence, comparatively
* few men can write
* in the field, and
* write well. The leading authors must
* be able to write, have a strong and
* logical imagination, and a sense of

drama----a series of qualifications that vastly reduced the possible number of authors. Second, that demand for progress and change. New ideas and new methods of presentation and development must be worked out. And third, the increasing demand that arises when author A turns out a story not only presenting a good idea, but presenting it in well-handled form with a good sense of drama and a keen choice of words, for all stories to match it in quality. Then, naturally, when the quality of Author A's work becomes a standard; inevitably author B, a new man, turns up with yet better handling and science.

The early days of science fiction were the stable days. Then, a powerful new idea served to make a story, and only the exceptional yarn presented characters and an idea. New ideas were easy to present then----not a tenth of the possibles had been used. It's very different now----and the authors who could think up ideas by the ream, and characters not at all, have gone. He was succeeded by the author who thought up the plot--action in a strange locale, by the ream, and outlined a character in solid blacks and whites, without shading, or made characters by mechanical tricks.

He was succeeded in turn. The higher quality of the material became, the tougher competition--and the more care went into making a story.

From this end---the Editor's Desk---the reaction to the "old favorites" is frequently interesting. The typical expression of that reaction runs: "I was very

glad to see a story by John J. Oltimer. We haven't heard from him in years, and his "The Blasted Rockets" was welcome. The best story in the issue was "Thoughts Can't Die" by Richard Newguy. Newguy's a real find. His plot isn't new, but he's worked it up in a way that really puts it over. Next best was.....Finally, "The Blasted Rockets" was all right too!

Some fade away quietly; some flicker in and out a while, and are finally dropped. And some, change with the years, developing as rapidly as the magazines, and stay on top, of course. But how many can you name that have stayed on top for five years? Seven years? Ten years?

Science fiction is now beginning, it seems to me, the last phase of rapid change. There should be a new stability-----but that stability of authors can come only when all the top men have reached a level of genuine literary value comparable with that of the general magazine field. When science fiction presents material worded as carefully, plotted as powerfully, and characterized as accurately as the best material in any field, then, and only then, can a true stability be maintained. Science fiction presents basically different plots----but it has, and never had, any excuse for presenting those ideas and plots in poorly constructed and poorly written stories. A good idea presented badly means simply that what might have made a great story in the hands of a good writer has been wasted for all time, for never again can that idea be both new and powerfully presented.

Like any pioneers, the early writers staked out vast tracks of the virgin field, and used ideas, profligately, wasted the resources with criminally faulty methods of utilization.

Today, truly competent writers are developing those ideas exposed, but never really used, into stories far stronger than was the early material. In early science

fiction, to expose the idea was enough; today, some use must be made of it.

Nowhere in the field is that more forcefully illustrated than in the screwy-animal story. Time after time, stories had appeared in which the heroes went to a strange planet, and the author then conducted them through the local zoo, though he called it the local jungle, displaying one weird animal after another, winding up with the hero whose feet were tired and a reader who had lost all interest in the author's tour de force of animal-thinking up.

The complete failure of science fiction to make proper use of its possibilities is beautifully demonstrated by the astonished joy aroused by Weinbaum's stories. Weinbaum usually thought up only one or two strange animals----but he positively staggered science fiction by its unique and unheard of idea of using them as characters!

This issue of AD ASTRA is dedicated to ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION. Properly, I think, the question arises as to just what ASTOUNDING is dedicated to. The foregoing may, I think, indicate the answer. ASTOUNDING is dedicated to the proposition that all men may be created free, but they are not created equal. Some are good writers, and some merely have ideas. Some can expose an idea--and some can make of it a story--that is worth remembering. We want only the latter type.

ASTOUNDING is dedicated to the idea that, in rapid rejection of the authors who do not improve---with the field, science fiction.. fans know what they're doing. We will accept only stories....which are well written, well plotted, and use their basic idea.

And we will continue to have a high author turnover till the quality of science fiction is all up to the level of the best in other fields. Some of it is in the last few months. All of it will be.

 *
 * THAT MOMENT *
 * Of *
 * HORROR *
 *
 * by *
 *
 * Henry Kuttner *
 *

Weird fiction is one of the most difficult of all types to write, and it attracts nearly all authors, modern as well as classic. Inevitably few masterpieces of fantasy are produced. But occasionally we read a story that sticks in our memory, because it has produced a real emotion or mood for a fleeting time. An effective weird tale should give us what the Scots call a "cauld grue" -- a moment in which intellect is in abeyance, and emotion rules, the emotion of half-instinctive fear. It is this that makes us look up from the pages of a book to glance at a dark doorway. Nothing is there, of course, and we know it. Yet if a weird story can make the reader feel, however briefly, that he may not be alone it has fulfilled its purpose.

Too many modern writers, in an attempt to achieve this affect, smear horror upon horror. Vampires and incubi pop up on the first page, and each scale and tentacle of every demon is described in minute detail. The result is often sheer boredom.... Restraint, that vital factor in a weird tale, is omitted. I can recall no great masterpiece of fantasy that poured such floods of fear upon the reader's shrinking head. Most of these classics are remembered for the single moment of stark, abysmal terror that created a mood not easily forgotten.

Often this effect is achieved, by strong contrast. Atmosphere, characterization, style and sometimes irony may play their part, but in the ghost stories of James, the ultimate horror is heightened

by the antiquarian data and the earthy, familiar touches that have gone before. Not until the climax as a rule, does James introduce, the inexplicably supernatural. I recall one charming tale by this author in which a man, digging for treasure in a dark well, uncovered a recess containing a mouldy sack. He pulled the sack toward him; it fell against his body and put its arms around his neck. The ghastliness of this unexpected, horrible situation is irresistible.

The same writer mentions a man who, dozing in his armchair, found himself sleepily stroking the back of his dog, crouching beside the chair unseen. The moment of horror occurs when the man realizes, that he has no dog, and when the faceless, hairy thing at his side rises into view.

In Wells' famous "Red Room", the ultimate horror occurs when, the candles that form the only light begin to go out one by one, while the narrator frantically, and vainly tries to rekindle them. In Vincent O'Sullivan's "Business of Madame Jahn", the climax is reached when a corpse, floating unsupported in air, cries to its murderer, "I have been dead for many days." And in "The Wendigo" of course, the unendurably horrible suggestion of what Defago's feet resemble after his sojourn with the Wendigo, is sheer genius to my mind at least.

One touch of horror. One moment of revelation and fear. In "The Beast with Five Fingers", it is the description of the fat, pallid hand crawling like a spider on the desk. In "The Shadows on the Wall" the shudder comes not when the shadows of the dead appear, but when their murderer, armed with a sword, systematically slashes empty air where those who cast the shadows should have stood.

In Morgan Robertson's "From the Darkness and the Depths", a story of an invisible octopus that is washed aboard a ship, I recall a sailor, gripped by the

unseen, sliding toward the scuppers as he screams and claws the deck. In Lovecraft's "Dunwich Horror", I remember the description of the dying half-human monster, and especially the ghastly tentacles which "changed color" as the thing breathed. In Belknap Long's fine "Space-Eaters", I shuddered over the inexplicable, white object that ran down a tree and elongated like an arm, as it pursued the fleeing victim.

These situations, lifted from their surroundings, are meaningless save to those who have read the tales in question. For that reason I have tried to choose stories which most fans have read or should have read. As I say, the single scenes are ineffective save as integral parts of the whole. A weird yarn need follow no arbitrary formula or pattern; it can make its own laws, so long as it achieves its purpose. But I believe that all good weird stories possess this single moment of horror which surpasses everything else in the epos. It is easy enough to prove or disprove this. What weird fantasies do you recall off-hand? And why do you remember them? What scene is called to mind when you think of "The White People" by Machen, for example, or Bulwer-Lytton's "House and the Brain"?

It is necessary to utilize the emotions as well as the intellect in writing a weird tale---a good one. Any capable author can turn out a ghost story which will be

enjoyable reading and provide brief entertainment. But in order to arouse any real emotion in the reader it is vital for the writer to feel something of that emotion himself. He must, for the nonce, at least half-believe that he is a character in his story. He must hypnotize himself into feeling that character's emotions.

A certain restraint, of course, is advisable. More than once, when I'm writing a yarn and have, my character in a tough spot, I find myself unconsciously emitting the most extraordinary sounds--- gasps---groans-----horse rasps and the occasional, "Ooooooh God"! If anybody is in the room with me at the time, they are startled, to say the least.

I once wrote a tale in which, the protagonist was buried alive. And I did my damnest to feel as he would have felt. I visualized the darkness, the weight of earth pressing down, and, the difficulty in breathing, even to the extent of holding my breath. Whether or not this had anything to do with it, the published story, proved popular with readers.

Now I do not recommend carrying such literary exercises too far. But I do feel that visualization and emotional projection are important if one wants to write a good weird tale. Without these factors, it is next to impossible to create that moment of stark, shuddery horror that makes such stories as "The Empty Birth" and "The Damned Thing" remembered.

** Are YOU planning to attend the CHICAGO 1940 WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION? Which dates would be more convenient for you; sometime in August, 1940, or Sept. 1st, over the three-day Labor Day holiday? **

** The answers to those two questions must be learned at once, for, the Convention Committee must plan the entire event, many months in advance. Would everyone please drop us a few lines telling if you are planning to be in Chicago for the Convention, so we will have some idea as to how many to expect...and, also include your preference on the date the Convention should be held on. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

** All communications regarding the Convention should be sent to the Chairman of the Convention Committee, IFF Headquarters, 3156 Cambridge, Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

MID-WEST MARKY

 * BIOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING *
 * * *
 * SEABURY QUINN *
 * * *
 * by: *
 * * *
 * Gerald W Meader *

Seabury Quinn was born in Washington, D.C. on January 1, 1889 where he lived until 1917. He practiced law for seven years, having acquired two law degrees, LL.B. and LL.M. At the outbreak of the World War he entered training camp, expecting to serve in the infantry, but, possibly because of his legal training, was transferred and assigned to intelligence work. After eighteen months of active service, he was honorably discharged and, as his parents had died in the meantime, he decided to knock around for a while.

His first position was with the old "Casket", a trade magazine of the Funeral Directors profession. For the next eighteen years he served successfully as reporter, assistant editor, managing editor and editor. During his residence in New York City he married a girl, with whom he had gone to school. They have one son, born July 4, 1926, in Brooklyn; Seabury Quinn Junior. The Quinns now reside in Washington. Seabury (Sr.) is five feet, ten inches tall, weighs 190 lbs, but be assured that "none of his fat sags".

Seabury's principal form of amusement, other than reading and writing, is walking; he just follows his nose in all kinds of weather, day or night, whenever the fancy takes him. No doubt many a story has been evolved while on these wandering walks which he delights in.

Everyone has pet peeves. Seabury has three. Americans who aren't 100% sold on America; people who try to mind other people's business; and people who don't

think the moderns are turning out just as fine writing, both prose and poetry, as any of the "classics".

He started writing while in the army, having long periods of duty in which there was nothing more exciting to do than sit beside a telephone. His first accepted story was published in Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine in 1918, and dealt with what was then a novelty in that magazine, a vampire.

When Weird Tales started he was one of their first contributors. The first tale for them was "The Phantom Farmhouse", published in the October, 1923, issue. This has had a considerable effect on weird literature, and is still occasionally mentioned.

5 years later when Weird Tales republished it as a "reprint", in March, 1929, it won first place in the reader-vote. Following this story and "Out of the Long Ago", a story of werewolfism, he turned to fact-articles and ran a series of weird crimes in Weird Tales for about a year. Followed that with a series on the Salem witchcraft persecutions, which ran for almost another year. Title of this second series was "Servants of Satan". A must on your reading list, if you have not already enjoyed this fine story.

Seabury has written stories not of a weird nature, for several other magazines. A series, twenty seven in all, of the Military Intelligence under the general title of "The Washington Night's Entertainment" appeared in Real Detective Tales. Following these was a second series called "The Problems of Professor Forrester", which ran through some eighteen or twenty adventures. During the brief life of Magic Carpet Magazine he had a story in every issue, these tales dealing with the adventures of a soldier of fortune.

He was more interested in the weird, supernatural and fantastic than in straight crime detection

so that when Real Detective Tales changed its policy and became a "True Story" book, he was not sorry to give up detective stories to devote himself to a study of the supernatural and give the results of his researches to readers through the exploits of Jules de Grandin.

In 1925, while casting about for something to write one Sunday afternoon he hit upon the character of Jules de Grandin, and his foil Dr. Samuel Trowbridge. He hadn't intended writing more than one story about de Grandin, but editorial and reader response was so immediate and enthusiastic that for the next thirteen years he did practically no other stories. De Grandin became an institution in Weird Tales, and has ninety five stories published about him; this being something of a record. The first de Grandin story was entitled "The Horror on the Links" and appeared in the October, 1925 issue of Weird Tales. This was a "reprint" in the May, 1937 issue. The present editorial policy of Weird Tales' of shorter stories has concluded this series, in Weird Tales at least, for the time being.

A book on Mortuary Jurisprudence and numerous articles relating to the Funeral Director have been published in various Trade-magazines. Seabury has also been a lecturer on the staff of one embalming school and a guest-lecturer at another. He is now under contract with one or two trade-magazines. His articles are as interesting as his stories. His time is pretty well taken up, with writing partly under contract, and partly as free lance.

Here are some of the reasons, that make Mr. Quinn the success he is today in his chosen field: He believes that the fact that a story is published on pulp paper does not excuse the writer from giving it everything he has, both as to material, plot and style. He builds his stories, laboring over them for hours to polish them, and select the exact word he needs to express the exact mean-

ing he desires to convey. He spends hours in research, gathering data for each story with all the care he gives to the preparation of a fact-article. He is a slow workman, seldom turning out more than 1500 words a day, and putting it all down in longhand before transcribing a rough draft on the typewriter. This rough draft is then polished with as much care as possible, and from the revised version a fair copy is made for the editor. The necessary study for "Uncanonized", Weird Tales for November, 1939, required almost three weeks. The story was set down on paper in a little more than ten days. These pains-taken methods have born fruit; Quinn has held his popularity for almost twenty years of continuous writing, while a lot of pulp authors have fallen into the discard and been forgotten.

He has always been interested in the Funeral Director and Embalmer, and is one of the very few authors, if not the only one, who has always given us a boost; most authors picture the Funeral Director as a vulture and a robber. His story in the January, 1940, issue of Weird Tales, "Mortmain", has as its hero a Funeral Director. This is something that he has wanted to do for a long time. His story is very accurate and a truer and fairer picture of the Funeral Director than any I have ever read.

Seabury has written many stories for Weird Tales other than the de Grandin series; he is a part of the magazine. One of the outstanding fantasy stories of all time; past, present, future, is his tale of "Saint Nick"; "Roads" appeared in the January, 1938 issue. If you haven't read this delightful tale of the Yuletide Spirit, do so by all means. This if none other, makes him the Dean of Fantasy in my humble opinion.

By the AMERICANISM expressed, in some of his stories, Quinn has earned the hatred of members of foreign-minded groups, who have not been slow to express their

displeasure. One story of his, "Washington Nocturne", a story of the Unknown Soldier, which appeared in the May, 1939, issue of Weird Tales, which attacked both Fascism and Communism, was particularly unpopular with fellow travelers and followers of European dictatorships. The Communists accused Quinn of being a Fascist, the Fascists accused him being a Communist. Nearly a year after the story's publication, people of these political beliefs are still writing to Weird Tales, bitterly denouncing Quinn and suggesting that he has outlived his popular-

ity as a writer, which is absurd. He has also received many abusive and insulting letters, from the same sort of Reds, and Parlor Pinks, saying that he isn't fit to contribute to Weird Tales, some of them go so far as to "make it so hot for him" that he'll be glad to stop writing. This will give you an idea of what a writer finds himself up against in these days of conflicting "isms". But it is to the credit of Seabury that these threats haven't stopped him from what he feels is right.

THE END

AD ASTRA'S BOOK REVIEW SECTION

by

Erle Korshak

"THE PRINCESS OF ATVATABAR"

by William R. Bradshaw

Printed by J.F. Douthitt, New York City; 1892.

The interesting part of this book, is that there are few collectors who possess a copy of this, one of the best of its kind ever written.

As a book it is a unique item to have. A large sized affair, with a very thick cover, the title in gold lettering. The interior is profusely illustrated with over fifty full page illustrations, all of which deal with the fantastic. In the preface, the author speaks of his combining the best features of Verne, Wells, Haggard, Stevenson, and Lytton into a super-fantasy, with realistic descriptions.

The story itself is keenly interesting, for it is one of the first stories to use the inner-world plot, much like Burroughs later did in his Pellucidar Stories. In this tale, a group of explorers in search of adventure sail to the North Pole. When they arrive there, they are caught in a great storm which brings the uncontrollable ship into a huge ice cavern. From then on they travel down an underground river and arrive at the inner-world, Atvatabar. The people of this land are very far advanced in many sciences and arts, yet are without modern weapons and the like, for they still use what are to us, ancient implements and clothes of 2000 years ago. However, they have already perfected super trains, a type of rocket ship, rays, flying belts, robots, and many other marvelous devices.

Lexington, the hero and leader of the Polar Expedition, falls in love with Lyonne, the high-priestess. The Magicians and Priests don't favor the newcomers to their land and subsequently declare war. But the explorers win, and the story comes to an end as Lexington and Lyonne are crowned King and Queen of the Inner-world.

The story is a most remarkable one when ingenuity and newness of plot are taken into consideration, for the book was written in the beginning of the 90s, it being a forerunner to many themes in science fiction now in common use. EK

(Mr. Korshak advises that the above book is for sale and quotes readers of AD ASTRA the special price of \$5. See advertisement page.-Editor-.)

These things have the essence of dreams but are not dreams. They are castles of imagery built with the building stones of fact. If facts and reality are solid, these things whereof we speak have the same solidity of those things you touch and those things you can see on a summery night high in infinite distances above.

I have a good friend who swears what I repeat is true. On the surface it bears the earmarks of superstitious hodgepodge, but underlying it are the elements of matter-of-fact substance. His own brother was far out on the sea, while he lay dreaming. In his mind he saw the decks of the ship swept by wind and rain, felt the vessel heave and toss in the elemental fury of tempest and storm, and as he stood in the hatchway, a massive dog ran from the rainswept decks and sprang up, placing its forepaws on his shoulders. It was only a dream, but a few days later my friend received a telegram saying his brother had died----at the same moment of his strange dream when the massive dog had stood glaring into his eyes. he calls it a strange coincidence, but shudders when he thinks of it. The gossamer stuff of wonderment and horror seems prone to underlie all coincidence. But no matter. TIME they say, is a cycle. The FUTURE runs back-

It is all a huge mix-up, if you want to consider the future and past is knotted up with the present, a tangled line of existence, that may carry many counterparts, with the PRESENT INSTANT of co-existence a strange coincidence of many chance meetings.

A century and a half earlier, in 1726, a man by the name of Swift was publishing a biting satire that was to remain forever as a classic by itself. Yet the success of Gulliver's Travels has nothing to do with the issue. What DOES concern us is that remarkable thing which he conceived, drawing his substance from nothingness, which was to precede (by a century and a half) the discovery made by enthusiastic young Hall with his 26 inch telescope.

In narrating of the voyage to Laputa, Swift ridiculed the science of the day, astronomy included, and in further revelations ((continued on page 15.))

FARWEST FACTS by "Farwest" Jack Erman

"..& the last--shall b first!"*
 --from an old Ceben proverb by Confuse-us. I always think its kinda*
 classy to start off a column with a quotation, donchu? In this case, I*
 mean the last LASFL meeting of last month shall b the first reported*
 upon.

Twas on the 5th Thursday of November---how well we remember---&
 all thru the land there was turkey on hand! & the imaginatives of LA
 did indeed have something to b thankful for that holiday, for our mems
 were invited to the home of Secy Yerke for a real oldfashond Thanxgiv-
 ing Turkey Dinner Delux (with all th' trimmin's), hospitably prepared &
 served by Bruce's Mother & Grandmother. Have Hodgkins, Pogo, Bradbury,
 Paul Freehafer, 4e, Morajo, Yerke, Daugherty & other stfians together in
 one gathering & U'r bound to have a greatime!

MERRITT PRESENT!!

(Hm,
 I guess that knockt your eyes out, I guess, I guess. & since U'r
 blind, now, I can safely reveal, without pricking our prestige, that
 our Merritt was ML Jr, stfan who's a student at Caltech, Pasadena.)

We
 lookt over our library again (recently removed from Bradbury's to Yer-
 ke's), & at our host's own collection. (Just noticed I've written 3
 'ours' in succession--my, how time flys!) Feature of the evening was
 an auction of recent issues contributed by new-mem Schrader. First 5c
 on each mag to go to Bill, all monies above a nickel to our Club-
 Treasury. Just to show U how crazy Californians can get, 23c was bid
 on the last month's Astounding & the purchaser then proceeded to give
 it away! Paul Freehafer, having a Famous Fantastic Mysterys he had
 read & wich was not due on the stands for another wk yet, got into the
 spirit of the thing & auctiond it off (the mag, my frend, not the spi-
 rit of the thing) for 17c! Bradbury buying.

I see by refering to my
 report in AA #4 that I had got asfaras Sep. 11. Backward, O backward
 Time in thy flyt! I had every intention, athatime, of chronicling the
 hapnings of our Leag meetings & other events wk by wk so that nothing
 woud b omitted & it woud not b too much work, the final article requir-
 ing only the assembling of the assorted paragraphs. But now I find 12
 wks to b recalld, & I am apalld, for 3 mos. is a lifetime in LA activi-
 tys.

To refresh my memory I acknowledge indebtedness to the Minutes of
 our Secy, Bruce Yerke; he has lent me the Record Bk. In fact, the fol-
 lowing coud b considerd a colaboration, as I have permission to quote
 where convenient.

At our meeting of 14 Sep we had 5 guests from Glen-
 dale. These included Roy A Squires 2d & Perry L Lewis. "When the Sec-
 retary walked in he found the room in the subdued lite of the wall
 lamps, whose effect was quite pleasing on all but the eyes. At the
 time of his entrance, a discussion about Esperanto was in swing, with
 one of the Glendale boys asking Fojak why any one should learn Esperan-
 to, because the ones that didn't know it couldn't understand you even
 then. He was pointing out that by learning Esperanto, you could only
 talk to 12,000,000 people, while if you learned French you can converse
 with 75,000,000 people. It turned out, however, that he had never
 tried to learn French. Another one of the faults found with Esperanto
 was that if a Frenchman, a Dutchman & an Englishman got together, they
 couldn't recite the poetry of their own countries in Esperanto. There-

fore, due to this hideous & insurmountable drawback, why should anyone ever bother to learn Esperanto?"

It myt b xplained here that 'Tubby' always uses one of Morojo's green & brown ribbons, wich makes his minutes very coloifful. Hence the 'italix' in the xcerpts, representing Bruce's brown emfases.

Oldtimers seen at the meeting of 21 Sep, according to Yerke, were E. Cunningham, Ron Reynolds, Guy Amory & Doug Rogers--"all friends of Bradbury". (Very sub-tle) "Visitor from foreign shores was Namrekca Yaj Tserrof." O, I remember that meeting; that was the one where everyone took to signing the register in some odd fashion, either hiser name backward or in Esperanto or Piglatin, upsidedown or ? Yerke records an "argument about the high & mighty cause of science taking place between Morojo & McMurtry (Pasadena Technocrat) attracted most of the club members over to that part of the room, & it was here that the meeting took place a short while later, the same of which consisted of reading the minutes & a letter from London" (Ted Carnell).

28 Sep: "Ackerman had with him a Polish version of Flash Gordon" (an original Krupa scientific cartoon strip) "which was read aloud to all by Bradbury." It was flippantly remarked that it sounded something like the Secretary reading the minutes." Later: "Numerous topics of trivial interest occurred, & finally one of the most trivial of all things happened: Herman Doepke walked in. He promptly sat down & fell asleep." When someone remarkt "I wonder whatever hapnd to Daugherty", in walkt Walt! Whereat we all bgan to "wonder" whatever became of....& named a dozen different absentees of long standing, hoping they woud walk in. This meeting will always b remembered as Daugherty's, & Walt will have cause long to recall it too. During a lull in the conversations he started out by saying he knew someone who knew all of us. Silly small thing to say! But it developt into the greatest case of detection in the annals of the LA imaginatives; nothing like it since the Great Hansen Case (when we had Louise Taylor Hansen---authoress of "The Man From Space, Prince of Liars, What the Sodium Lines Reveald"---etc in our midst a whole evening & coudnt get her to tell us who she was.) Daugherty kept shifting the sex of this mysterious person who knew all of us but didnt wish hiser identity disclosed. Walt was within 100' of himer 12 hrs every day. Heesh had a foto of 4e. Other clues. Certn of us finally became convinced as the 4th degree wore on that it coud b none other'n the celestial Celeste De Pinto (Sedepi), onetime clubmem & contrib'tor to Madge & that she must b living in the same apt. as Walt. Ryt after the meeting Russ, Morojo, Pogo, Ray & 4e rusht out to Daugherty's adres, beating Walt home & arriving just in time to catch Celeste coming down the st. with a b.f.! Boy, was she embarast! & the next day Daugherty moved---!

Oct 5: Louise Taylor Hansen returns! Miss Hansen--it was her bro's pic eich apeard representing her in the old WS---absorbd the attn:of one & all with her personly prepared charts on ancient continents, with historys, speculations etc. Dr Acula, also, was back; where he had been he woud not divulge, but he was looking very plump & his complexion quite ruddy;& persons have been vanishing unaccountably every day in LA... "The Quivero Jello Hour" put on a 10 min. play, featuring Yerke & FJA in half a dozen different parts. (This play was sposed to b a radio broadcast.) Script by the estimable TBY, the "general gist of the horror was that the 2 main characters get into a rock-

et & when they get out they think they are on the moon. When they are attacked by some horrible monsters they fight their way out, only to find they were only shot over the ridge into a Crash Gordon movie set up. This," concludes our comic secy, "made the members set up."

12

Oct: Paul Freehafer provided entertainment with the 3 records from THINGS TO COME suite. "These were pounced upon by the Secretary who set them going & refused to budge during the rest of the evening, while he listened entranced to the overpowering tempo of The March of Science & to the stirring and panjandrial picture of the Epilogue. War, Desolation, Attack, & the Brats' Ballad were also played. --- Unfortunately, Director Hodgkins seemed not to appreciate the masterpieces of melody, & set glumly smoking some Dromedaries, with his hands over his ears."

19 Oct: "For the first time in an unbroken career of punctual reporting of the horrible minutes of this organization, the Secretary had to say: 'There will be no minutes tonite.' The words fell like a cloak of doom over those in attendance. Such a stunning shock. A stinging concussion that left the members cold with horror. No minutes. No meeting. What was the use? Why even have a meeting? Why not all go home & think about the war situation? --- But no! WAIT! Like the sight of a water hole to the starving dessert traveler. Like the first faint part of the rim of the sun betokening the day to a marooned Selenian pioneer, there shines forth the lite of hope. A play! The Horrible Invasion. Seventeen pages of masterful fantasy. Perhaps this might offset some of the benumbing shock. It will! For Bradbury will be in the play!!!" To make a short story long, this play was a sort of farcical take-off on "The Legion of Time", the plot being that a group of persons who werent were trying to conquer the earth so they could b. "Members held their minds close," reports Yerke, "as they listened to the play, which was executed by Ackerman, Bradbury & Yerke. Bradbury did his part in executing it." Another entertainment feature of the eve was a contest with original illustrations by Krupa, Binder & Orban as prizes. A sonodisk provided by Joe Kucera, friend of 4e in Omaha, was played; containing dialog from 5 unidentified fantasy films. Morojo got all ryt & pickt the illustration from "World Reborn" as her reward, Bradbury was in 2d place & took "When the Half-Gods Go", leaving a panel-pic from an early New Amazing for Franklyn Brady. Here's how the ansrs of author RAHeinlein stackt up against the actual titles: "The Great Train Robbery" ("Old Dark House"), "Perils of Pauline" ("Hi Treason"), "Ecstasy" ("The Mummy"), "Snow White & the Dwarfs" ("Murders in the Rue Morgue") & "Grapes of Wrath" ("The Invisible Man"). Kwite a kiddie! He was awarded the booby prize, an original Bradbury...

26

Oct: When "Life-Line" Heinlein & his wife Leslyn walkt in, they carryd with them xtra editions of the Hollywood Gazette, ink still wet, wich Pogo was first to notice for one had headlines: POGO, YERKE, MOROJO ARRESTED IN CULT RAID! while the other's banner blazond: MARS-MOON ROCKET LANDS L.A., 4SJ FETED. These caused no end of excitement during the course of the evening as one member after another woud enter the sacred portals & eventually notice the newsheets. Ansr was, they were "faked up"; a fad current in LA. for a couple wks. Additional commotion was caused when Bradbury dond a realistic mask made by Harryhausen. 4iac. admits to being actualy frytend for the moment when Ray tapt him on the shoulder & he (4e) turnd to see this terrible toothy one-eyed fiend confronting him. His reaction was instantaneous as he leapt from

his chair oathng "Omigod!" Ackerman, obviously effected, for he forgot his characteristic "Sacred Science!", exclamation for stfans, reverting to the ingrained orthodox epithet. (Chicago's farfamed "Trudy" took one look at a snapshot of Bradbury in the false face & promptly dubd the Douglas. "Ickypuss"!)

9 Nov: "Upon entering the Little Brown Room, it appeared to be a continuation of the work left last Sunday--- the 5th, for the tables were piled high with copies of Futura Fantasia & Polaris in the process of being bound & addressed. Editor Freehafer of Polaris had enlisted the aid of member Bill Crawford." Aye, the editor-publisher of Marvel Tales (Everett editions) & Unusual Stories now has advanced to asst. stapler of Polaris, mimeomag! (This is not to cast w.-k. asp-ec-s on Freehafer's fanmag, wich is acknowledged by one & all to b the finest pub for the weirdist since The Fantasy Fan bit the dreamdust.) "On another table Bradbury, Editor of Futile Fan-out, was busy addressing copies of his really good magazine (as far as editor Bradbury is concerned) (Bruce is only kiddin'. Try Brad's mag & U will say "You can't keep a good fan down!" or, the same thing, "I can't stomach him!" In case U read this: just jokin', Ray; I still ryt for U, don't I?) to the thousands of subscribers." A surprise Guest of Honor was brot about 9 o'cl by LT Jensen in the person of Jerard Hennie, Professor of Geology at the University of Amsterdam, & one of the 6 famous Dutch geologists. Prof. Hennie discust lost continents & continental drifts, the exhaustion of the oil supply, aspects of evolution, etc.

16 Nov: Guests present were Harold Taves, Pogo's bro Jogo, & Wm Schillings of San Francisco. "Forrest J Ackerman announced he had sent out a number of air-mail letters to prominent scientific-tionists involved or standing by in the present most bitter & blind of all scientifiction squabbles, asking them their opinions on the LASFL statement appearing in the Vox Imaginius. A copy of the form sent out & one reply from Robt A Malle was read. Having finished, Ackerman made a mad dash to the P.O. in quest of finding more such returns. Returning shortly in record time, he reported there was no soap, or letters either. Feelers sent out among the members showed sentiment was against any apology of any nature, & the matter was shelved until the next meeting."

The results of our next meeting r now history, 150 of our "To Whom It May Concern" forms having been mimeod & major portion distributed thruout fandom. Any interested party not yet having rcvd copy & wishing one will b promptly maild same without charge; simply adres request to LASFL, Bx 6475 Met Sta, LA.

Conscious that too much has been omitted from this resume, & more put poorly, I beg your indulgence, for my time is a tailor: it presses.

VOICE OF THE IMAGI-NATION (#4, now on sale). A partial list of the contributors to our current issue will convince U that here is a mag not to be missed! Tucker, Warner, Lowndes, Wilson, Reinsberg, Litz, Sullivan, Speer, Hemken, Hasse, Korshak, Wolheim, Swisher, Beck, Carnell, Dewey, Miske! It's amazing, the "forum of fandom"! Coedited by that diverting duo, 4ST & Morojo! Only 10c from Bx 6475 Met Sta, LA.*

("Fantasies That Became Fact", continued from page 10.)

gave information which the superior astronomers of mythical Laputa had supposedly found, unknown to European astronomers, regarding the planet Mars.

According to the non-existent (!) science of Laputa, the red planet was attended by two satellites revolving about it, the innermost of which was distant from the planet exactly three diameters and the outermost five, the first making its circle in ten hours and the latter in twenty-one and a half.

This, let us remind you, was wildest fantasy, and when we say wildest for that period we really mean wild. As far as the world knew at that time, Mars had no satellites! And therein occurred one of the most remarkable coin-

cidences ever to be known to science fiction.

One CENTURY AND A HALF later an astronomer by the name of Hall, utilizing a 26-inch telescope at the Naval Observatory, found the real satellites, afterward to be called Phobos and Deimos, "Dread" and "Fear", to be distant from the planet three (2.9) and seven (6.9) radii respectively and which revolved around Mars in periods of seven and a half and thirty hours.

And all we can do is to sit back and gasp at the amazing similarity of fiction from a man's projected mentality---thrust out gropingly--and a discovery almost precisely the same, not known to mankind for more than one hundred and fifty years later.

((This interesting series by Mr. Haggard will be concluded next issue with "Divine Prophecy", the third article to be presented.-Editor-.))

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O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

- "WHAT FAN MAGAZINES?" -

O by O

- **Robert W. Lowndes -

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

The time has come when the simple term "fan magazine" can no longer describe aptly the general outlay of amateur publications issued by active lovers of imaginative fiction. Mainly, this is because there are now several distinct types of amateur publications issued by these "fans" and that the original concept of the "fan mag" has greatly changed.

What was this concept? It was, roughly, an aid to the professional magazines. The original "fan mag", not counting those organs of pioneer science correspondence societies which dealt mostly with experimental and scientific articles, dealt in biographical sketches of stf. writers, editors, artists, etc., occasional stories, by these writers, "service departments" where oldtime "Argosy" etc stf was listed, forecasts on current policies, lineups, and acceptances of the various writers and general chatter about authors and in reference to their better-known stories. There were, as well, semi-scientific articles. These original fan magazines were entirely dependent upon and subordinate to professional magazines. They were real scientific fiction magazines.

When, however, the situation in professional magazines became such that their quality was greatly reduced and they were irregular in appearance, this function of the amateur fan publication, began to wither away. It did not completely die, but it did gradually begin to be replaced. And, while fiction by imaginative fiction enthusiasts appeared to a greater extent, the accent gradually fell upon organizations of these fans. Thus, we had the 2nd type of magazine; one which was primarily an aid to some particular fan-organization. It did, very naturally, cater to the professional publications, but was not

dependent upon them. Wherever the professionals failed them, there was ample material in the organization and activities of the enthusiasts themselves. These magazines were real "fan" magazines.

A subsidiary of this general type was the magazine issued by a single fan, independent of any particular organization. These consisted of fan-chatter, controversies, personalities, service departments, discussions of the professional magazines. But these amateur publications were by no means dependent either upon the professional magazines, nor upon any particular fan organization.

The last type to appear was, the amateur publication, in the FAPA, mostly, issued by an enthusiast of pseudo-scientific and or weird-fantastic fiction which ignored the professional magazine entirely and fan-organizations... as well. It was really an independent magazine, good, bad, or indifferent depending upon the editor's capabilities both in the technical field and in obtaining material.

There were, and are, publications which combine to a certain extent all these main features. But, the most interesting thing is this: there is not today one single fan mag that is dependent upon the continued existence of professional stf and/or fantasy magazines, and very few which are dependent upon any particular fan-organization. Thus, the original "fan magazine" is a thing of the past.

As this writer sees it, there are in existence now three general types of these amateur publications (these types somewhat similar, but not equal to, the original fan magazines). And, of course, there are the in-betweens, those things which analysts find so deucedly annoying and wish that

Third: the independent literary magazine, offered for subscription, published for the sheer purpose of exploiting the editor's urge for creation. It features stories, poetry, articles, and whimsy by other enthusiasts of imaginative fiction, has little or no interest either in professional publications or in fan organizations. Examples: "The Fantast", "Escape", "Sweetness and Light", "Futura Fantasia", and "Polaris". While none of these examples are as yet full-breed in this type, they most closely resemble it and they are, I believe, fore-runners of that type of "fan magazine" which will most endure.

magazine" which will most endure.

magazine" which will most endure.

by Harry Warner Jr.

by Harry Warner Jr.

—○—

zens of times, and answered as often;

...thors turn out masterpieces when they become backs so swiftly? The ans-

When an author first begins to

igence, or genius, or any or all of

fiction, and also dabble in fantasy more or less extensively. Like F. A. Kummer, for instance.

Naturally, you can't expect a writer to sell---not write---at least three or four thousand words a week of pulp fiction, and still turn out masterpieces every time. There are bound to be a bunch of bad stories; but at the same time, conditions are usually pretty favorable for some good ones too. For an author who writes extensively has one big advantage--he has experience. Which is something the ones in my first group don't have, and the ones in the second to a limited extent only, most of the time. But the trouble is that most of those who write for a living fall into a rut. Given experience and a modicum of sense, a writer who gets the breaks sooner or later comes to the place where he can write almost mechanically. Some of the Western authors, for instance, have almost unbelievable production rates. One Western hack writer, it is said, can turn out a full novelette in a morning's work; a novel in several days, and is not even forced to write, re-draft, and copy his work! Instead, he writes and submits just as it first flows from his typewriter. But this is nearly impossible in the fantasy field---there is too much need of decent plots there, fairly strong characterization, scientific accuracy, and a good power of description to allow such hasty work.

It would seem, that the place to look for masterpieces is from those who don't take their writing too seriously; spend plenty of time on a story; and don't worry too much over whether their work will go for nothing or not. The perfect example of this, I think, is E. E. Smith. He has a good position with (of all things) a doughnut factory; and writes only when the time is to be had. He spends two years on a story; more or less--Bloch wrote one in eight days of Smith's average length, but maybe there's a difference in the quality!--and it's about as good when it's in print as it's humanly possible to make it. An author whose existence depends on his typewriter can't afford to waste this much time, so perhaps it's best not to censure some of the hacks for not writing like Smith or Merritt. Even though they are usually capable of better work than they ordinarily produce.

A perfect example of the writer-who-writes, and the writer-who-writes-for-livelihood; and the way they'll attack a given framework, is to be had by comparing Stanley G. Weinbaum's "Black Flame" and Eando Binder's "Lords of Creation". It is said that Weinbaum wrote "Black Flame" and other two yarns in that huge novel for the love of his putting himself on paper and with no view of ever seeing it in print. Though I'm inclined to doubt that, it's very probable that SGW didn't expect to sell the novel, at least for years. If he were still living no one would be likely to know it existed, even. But his death brought it about. On the other hand, "Lords of Creation" is a typical Binder story.

Both deal with a man who is put into suspended animation and awakens in the future. The means of doing this are different; one is aware and the other is not. But they awaken alone, and set out to explore the world of the far future. They find it vastly different--in rather similar ways in both stories--a queen, or near-queen, fascinates them, and their love for a girl of a low caste holds both. The solution is different in the two yarns; but need I say which is better...?

Weinbaum, to follow up the comparison, was of course a much better writer than Binder is. Few can doubt the truth of that statement: even in Binder's earlier days he never turned out a true masterpiece of fantasy, that will be forever remembered. But suppose Weinbaum had been a hack--in a way he has, naturally, but not in this case--and had set out to write "The Black Flame". And suppose Binder were a chemist or a bookkeeper, or an editor, still had the ability to write, and set out to write "Lords of Creation"?

Don't blame that hack you're always censuring too much until you investigate! He might be just a lousy author--but then again--?

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H. G. WELLS

(an open letter)

by Joseph Gilbert

My dear Mr. Wells:-

Do you remember that preface, to your book, "Seven Famous Novels" in which you wrote:

"These tales have been compared with the works of Jules Verne and there was a disposition on the part of literary journalists at one time to call me the English Jules Verne. As a matter of fact, there is no literary resemblance whatever between the anticipatory inventions of the great Frenchman and these fantasies. His work dealt, almost always with actual possibilities of invention and discovery, and he made some remarkable forecasts. The interest he invoked was a practical one; he wrote and believed, and told that this or that could be done, which was not at that time done. He helped his reader to imagine it done, and to realize what fun, excitement or mischief could ensue. Many of his inventions have "come true". But these stories of mine collected here do not pretend to deal with possible things; they are excercises of imagination in a quite different field.....My early, profound and lifelong admiration for Swift, appears again and again in this collection, and it is particularly evident in a predisposition to make the stories reflect upon contemporary political and social conditions."

In other and fewer words, Verne was looking forward to greater mechanical changes, while your own stories reflected social predictions and views.

But is that what made "The Time Machine" one of the most enjoyable and forceful books in all litera-

ture? Is that the reason that the "Invisible Man", "In the Days of the Comet", "The Island of Dr. Moreau", and my own favorite, "The Food of the Gods", can be read equally enjoyed by garage mechanic and college professor alike? Is that the reason that "The War of the Worlds" can be made into a broadcast, forty-two years after its writing, and still convulse a nation into hysterics?

The real explanation, Mr. Wells is that you told a story, and told it with an enthralling realism, a force, and a vividness that has never been equalled. Sure, the sociology was there. But it was underneath, and not forced down the throat of the reader. These magnifitales of Time and Space, had a deep, underlying-thought, but to the casual reader, they were merely, mightily entertaining "escape". As imaginative escape they are unexcelled, and probably will remain so. They had a sheer realism, a power to convince that was almost unbelievable. If you wanted to go beneath the surface, fine and good, but if only wanted to read truly great stf., then the reflection on the surface was there, for your admiration, too.

But things were evolving, Mr. Wells. You blazed a trail, and such was the novelty of the trail that it could not long avoid exploitation. A magazine of imaginative fiction was started by a shrewd publisher, with more imagination than scruples. Its success exceeded everyone's dreams, and, thus stf. came into the world as a regular, profitable enterprise. Its earlier days saw some splendid literature published in this field. But today----?

You're right!

The real situation that developed, and which concerns you, though, was the fact that the writers of these pulps, had no real foundation to build on, no precedent to follow, outside of the previous one of that of a novelist by the name of Wells. So follow

him they did.

I don't know how many times the theme of time-travel, which originated with you, has been used Mr. Wells. I don't believe that anyone else does either. Nor have I any conception of the number of writers who have hacked their way through the thought suggested by the "Invisible Man". As for the conception of a Martian Invasion which was used in the "War of the Worlds"! Let's don't talk about that!

So you see, your short stories, your magnificent novels were combed for every suggestion which might make a science fiction yarn and gradually certain themes were used so frequently and were so identified with you, that those themes were branded as "Old fashioned", and you with them.

"Well", said those who appreciated genius, "Wait until he writes another scientific yarn and you will see how old fashioned he is".

You wrote that yarn. The title of it was "Star Begotten". But there was only wailing, and beating of breasts, and gnashing of teeth in the pro-Wells camp, when it appeared. This wasn't Wells! Not the Wells of the "Time Machine" and "The War of the Worlds". This fellow was only a preacher with a long, dull, fictionalized sermon.

That's what "Star Begotten" was, Mr. Wells; a sermon. You weren't telling a story; you were merely teaching sociology. Perhaps I can best sum up my impressions by quoting from a report I made on it some time ago. Somewhat as follows:

"-----bluntly this is rotten. Usually Mr. Wells is content to let the story point the moral. But in this garrulous and monotonous mass of words he talks, and talks, until it seems that he will never run down until eternity ends and Father Time dies of fallen arches.

"The story: A group of Martians, (presumably, the author does not

state specifically,) send down a barrage of cosmic rays to affect a mutation which will change Earthlings into Martianlings. The chap who is supposed to be telling the story, turns out to be a mutation.

One can almost tell a period, when the author will pull a soap-box out of his hat, and with a fierce look, bleat- "Unaccustomed as I am to lecturing-ahem-" and then a bombardment of tedious words that makes the victim groan in agony. What has happened to the immortal Wells of "The First Men in the Moon", "The Invisible Man", and "The Food of the Gods"? A prosey reformer has taken the place of the author of the swiftly moving, beautifully written novels which are due to take their place in the crowded hall of the immortals."

That wasn't very complimentary, was it? But I don't believe any stf. fan felt very complimentary when "Star Begotten" appeared. It wasn't science fiction, you know.

The motion picture "Things to Come", and "The Man Who Could Work Miracles" proved there still is that strange peculiar imaginative genius in you; that the Wells who just wants to argue, can be downed by a Wells who can still mix sociology with fiction so that neither get in the way of the other.

Perhaps that Wells has gone forever. No one grows younger. Certain it is that the Wells of today is not the Wells of Yesterday.

Don't mind Orson Welles and myself, H.G.; the truly Wellsian immensity of the cosmic concepts which you have created, have earned you life, life-long after we have become tiny particles of grit in the sands of time.

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O
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"AD LIB"

(What our READERS say)

Opening up with a letter from JOHN W. CAMPBELL, Jr, editor of AST-
OUNDING and UNKNOWN: "Strangely; I enjoyed immensely E.E. Smith's
article on editing. Maybe I'm human, or something. But, at the same
time I had the unpleasant feeling of: "that's all right now, but just
wait--" hanging over me. Because, while Smith had seen only the first
part, I knew what we'd had to do with some of the others. You see,
type not being elastic, sometimes, to make pages fill, or to get it all
in, we have to cut or stretch a bit----which means some lines of edit-
ing. Some stories have to be cut as much as 30 lines of type, even 50
lines, simply because there isn't an extra page for the yarn. We try
to do the editing as painlessly as possible, naturally.

Also, sometimes the editor sees a different story in the author's
yarn and, by changing a few lines, shifts the whole emphasis of the
yarn. That can, of course, improve or ruin a yarn, depending on the
viewpoint. But sometimes that's necessary, as when the author's orig-
inal set-up would have fearfully offended some group. Lots of lovely
ideas in Heinlein's coming "If This Goes On----" have been ruthlessly
heartrendingly, torn out. Lord knows, he's got plenty left; but it
did hurt to have to take out the rest. But----if we didn't, they'd
have been apt to take out the magazine that printed it."

Rarely heard from MOROJO, west-coast live-spark of feminine fandom
writes: "Since I'm one of those AWFUL FUTURIANS it myt behoove U
not to publish anything, even a letter, by me til after the coming Con-
vention. ((Woman, what strange thots enter into thy head! Mr.)) How-
ever---

I'd like to say a few things about AD ASTRA privately because
I think U're certainly keeping your promise to give us better & better
material. This issue, Nov. '39, is most interesting. To be able to
publish articles by EESmith & JWCampbell Jr is certainly an accomplish-
ment.

He's "Arrival" is even more entertaining than his "Re-berth",
which I liked very much. (I watcht him write the letter, holding his
typortable on his lap, on the train on our way back to LA from the Ny-
con.) Ofcourse, I'm partial to Forry for 2 definite reasons: His pecu-
liar "styl" of writing intrigues me, & I like to read about the things
I do & see the way he tells about them.

It is so much more interest-
ing reading articles by Bob Madle, J "rv" Haggard & other of your con-
tributors, since having met them in person at the "W"SF.C. I have ev-
ery intention of renewing those acquaintances at the Chicon, aswel as
looking forward to meeting for the firsttime Bob Tucker, Harry Warner,
Wally Marconette & others in your "naborhood"---&....the Gray Lensman
GREAT PENSMAN!

Krupa's illustration swell. (There is another young
man I enjoyd meeting.) Farwest Facts always firstclass, don't U think?
Wolheim's article on Sex in Science Fiction good; that is to say, I was
very much pleased with its purpose. Ad Lib, essential."

From another non-s-f-fan reader of AA, MELBOURNE L. LEAVITT (for
the benefit of you dubious LAers thereabouts, he lives at 615 S. Manha-
ttan Place): "I am enclosing 25 cents, and would appreciate your
entering my subscription to AA for the next three issues. I believe
the magazine grows more interesting with each issue, and you have my
heartiest congratulations on its deserved success."

Hearing briefly from Paul. H. Spencer: "That last AD ASTRA, was a wow! I mean it, it was probably the best single issue of a fanmag I've ever read! Congrats! If AA were printed, FANTASY would be left 'way behind." ((To which we breathlessly reply: Thanks MR.))

IFF Member, Chicon booster THOMAS HINEDN, says: "E.E. Smith's article excellent, Campbell's superb. Krupa's work always good, this was very good. I always like to see something be 4e & boyoboy, he's here three times! Oh happy day! That makes it a super-swell magnificent issue of the first water. Wolheim's article showed some thought, and I quite agreed with him. Cover was not so good, or maybe the front side of the contents page is not a cover. If not, what is it. ((We considered the Krupa drawing the cover, and it was only because of the last minute rush to be off to Philly for the Conference, that we had to hurriedly cut the "cover" you, and several other discerning readers have criticized. We had intended putting the Krupa drawing on the outside, but in the last minute scramble, we didn't have time to cut a full page of solid type. MR.))

Ray J. Sienkiewicz of Scranton, Penn., who closes his letter--AD Astraly yours", writes: "I'm writing this letter to tell you that, your magazine, AD ASTRA, is absolutely, postively the best fan mag on the market. Don't ask me what market 'cause I do not know."

Postcarded from SAMUEL D. RUSSELL: "No. 4 AD ASTRA received this morning and contents noted with benign approval. Cover, however disapproved of; even if good illustrators are extinct, surely you could have drawn prettier lettering than that of a typewriter. Planographing of the Krupa illustration was excellent, and you chose a good one, too. Dr. Smith's article, of course, heads the issue in quality as well as order, being written by one of the few authors who realize that science fiction has a literary aspect. His opinions are refreshingly frank & to the point. Campbell's piece is likewise excellent; great length in stories is too often the result of padding rather than development. 4e's breezy accounts are, as always, invigorating reading; Darrow's statistical series is valuable to us guys with the holes in our collections; Madle's and Crutch's pieces are interesting informative; the book reviews should be longer; J. Harvey Haggard's article on Erasmus Darwin is a swell idea; Wolheim's bit on sex is rather wandering and vague." ((Sam got a lot on that postcard. MR.))

((AD LIB had to be cut short this issue, so we can't print all those letters of interesting comment we received from: Joseph Gilbert, Melvin C. Schmidt, Harold F. Benson, Henry D. Goldman, "Doc" Lowndes Gerald W. Meader, George P. Calvert, Harry Warner, Jr., Ray Pauley--E, rys Evans, Ralph C. Hamilton, and many other readers of AA. We promise you, next issue, an extra large AD LIB.

STATISTICAL RESUME: "ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION" BY Richard I. Meyer. To date there have been 19 issues of Astounding Stories (now Astounding Science-Fiction), including both the Clayton and Street & Smith publications.

CLAYTON'S
There were 34 Clayton issues published. From Vol.1;#1 to Vol.10; #3 they were monthly. There were 4 issues published bi-monthly, from Vol.11;#1 to Vol.12;#1

STREET & SMITH'S
There have been 75 issues of this

publication since Oct. '33 to Jan. '40, incl. From Vol.12;#2 to Vol. 24;#3. All were monthly. Harry Bates was Editor of the magazine when published by Clayton. F. Orlin Tremaine with Desmond Hall as ASSC, was Editor of the Street & Smith Astounding, until February '38, when John W. Campbell, Jr. took the former's job. Cover artists for Astounding, since its beginning in 1930, were Wesso, Brown, Rogers, Finlay, Frew Schneeman, & Gilmore. Price 20¢.

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and Editor Weisinger, we took your tip! The 1939 YEARBOOK of Science, Weird and Fantasy Fiction for 1939 is now ready..... will be in the mails soon after this page appears! In addition to the above, YEARBOOK received glowing compliments from John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of ASTOUNDING and UNKNOWN; Barnsworth Wright, editor of WEIRD TALES, Chandler Whipple, former editor of ARGOSY, and many others in the weird, fantasy and science-fiction field! Editors, authors.... and most of all, fans need this YEARBOOK -- it is more than an "item" or catalog of 1939 fantasy fiction! It amounts to an authority of professional fiction, containing, this year, all the information on all the science, weird, and fantasy fiction published by the regular fantasy magazines of three countries: United States, England and France!

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