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LAST CHORUS

REMEMBER THE ROOSTER THAT WORE RED PANTS

EDITOR & PUBLISHER - WALT LIEBSCHER

LOWMEDES':

MYFFSAW

As Warner points out, this is indeed an unrewarding business, particularly in the matter of actually giving a clue to the writer's favorites. Tomorrow I may suddenly remember several selections and mentally kick myself for having nominated those I did. Or a re-reading of any of these might make me wonder what I'd been drinking the first time that made me think them so wonderful. Or introduction to new material might leave any of these nominations far in the background. However, one small virtue in listings of this sort does obtain -- it may serve to introduce to some reader some work which will give him, if not as much pleasure as the writer obtained from it, enough to make it well worth the bother. Or these nominations might start a train of thought in some reader's mind which will eventually end at leading him to an uncovered field. Either eventuality is enough reward, both for the writer and the labor of stenciling and publishing. ((Very well put, Doc.))

BOOK-LENGTH STF "Red Snow", by F. Wright Moxley. The one fault this tale has is that the beginning is now outdated, in that it was supposed to begin in 1935. Obviously it didn't, not in this time sequence. But if the reader will suspend disbelief to the extent of imagining himself to be living back in the early 30's, prior to the curious and tragic event of that seemingly innocuous day in August 1935, all is well in this best of bitter, satirical and strangely haunting novels of human twilight, ending as it does with the last man's thrusting over the borderline of extinction. The "red snow" is never explained, and needs no explanation; we accept that it happened, that for a few seconds, a precipitation, red and flaky in nature, was observed; that it penetrated any and all inanimate substance, and that humans noticed a brief tingling sensation as it touched them. Thereupon it vanished and was never seen again. But from that instant, the human race, and of all the life-forms on this planet, only the human race, was sterile. I've only started Wylie's "Generation of Vipers", incidentally, but I doubt if he can improve upon Moxley, in vituperation upon man's faults.

STF. SHORT STORY "Greater Glories", by C. L. Moore. I think the most enduring science fiction stories are those which are not based upon mechanical inventions, or any tangible advance of the physical sciences. This because the thrust of real discovery can, with one swoop, make a hundred science fiction tales obsolete. That science fiction story which endures must, therefore, be primarily a work of fiction, subject to the most rigid tests of literature for its staying power. It must be more than an idea, more than a clever plot-vehicle, as so much of even the better stf throughout the years has been. And it must thus have a universal theme and a basic sympathetic quality which will make it viable, as a story, to persons who may have never read science fiction before. ((Again I agree wholeheartedly.)) "Greater Glories" fits this bill, for its theme is the realization of love -- a theme which will never become obsolete so long as homo sap remains in any recognizable form. The seeds of human greatness in a dying man created the woman he loved, yet she was not a figment of the imagination. Forces beyond our comprehension came into being, and she was brought out of a far-flung world for a brief moment before the glory died. There is far more in this tale than is apparent upon first, or even fifth reading; if you have it available, go through it again; you may be astonished.

BOOK-LENGTH FANTASY "The Moon Pool", by A. Merritt. In most sober moments, I might try to think of something better, but must admit that this one seduces me into re-reading more often than any other. And for all my knowledge of what is coming in the next chapter, I still find the suspense well-nigh unbearable.

FANTASY SHORT "Thirteen O'Clock" & "Mr. Packer Goes to Hell" by Cecil Corwin (nee Cyril Kornbluth). This yarn, with its sequel, has captured some of the essence of Lewis Carroll and some of the essence of L. Frank Baum combining them with pure Kornbluth to make an utterly delightful bit of whimsy, satire, and magic. Considering the shortage of copies of the two issues of Stirring Science, and the absence of book publication, I tremble at the thought of my perishable copies returning to the primal dust in a few years, considering the current rate of disintegration.

BOOK-LENGTH WEIRD "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" by H. P. Lovecraft. One needs to read the complete version in "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" in order to realize the butchery perpetrated by Weird Tales, despite the fact that the version in magazine form was entirely acceptable for a first reading. Architecturally, as well as in delineation of character, this strikes me as easily the best of H. P. L.'s longer efforts and is in no way weakish as a horror tale. On the contrary.

WEIRD SHORT While I'd be the last to extol it as a completely acceptable story in the published form, the accolade must still go to Wilfred Owen Morley's "The Long Wall" because it's the only weird tale I've read since "Dracula", contemplation of which actually frightens me. Nuff said.

FAVORITE NON-STF NOVEL Imden has an epigram: Joyce is highly proficient in his native dung. Not to be outdone in caustic comment, I add: "Ulysses" shows remarkable ingenuity in a task which never should have been undertaken. Be that as it may, I still regard it as one of the monuments of English literature for its approach alone.

FAVORITE NON-STF SHORT STORY I'm not positive this classifies as a short story or not; it might be called a novelette these days. But my selection is "The Law of the Wolf" by Boris Pilniak. It's in a selection of Soviet writers stories entitled "Azure Cities".

FAVORITE NON-STF NON-FICTION "A New American History" by W. E. Woodward. The first and only American history I read for pleasure and often re-read. Woodward has his faults, but they are few, and the virtues far outweigh them.

FAVORITE FANZINE Nothing can ever replace "Sweetness & Light".

FAVORITE STF AUTHOR John Taine. His least good (I've never read a poor Taine story) give the best in the field a stiff race. ((What about 1287 or "Tomorrow". I thought they were both gestunken.))

FAVORITE FANTASY WRITER H. P. Lovecraft. I've read his tales innumerable times and they wear exceedingly well. His output was much larger than one thinks.

FAVORITE PROZINE No comment. I read Astounding, because I consider it the only stf magazine now being published. It holds my interest, and once in a while, something better than that.

FAVORITE FAN Whichever one thinks most highly of that sterling poet, that incomparable writer, that hardly understood editor, ((Gosh, Doc, I'm blushing.)) that abused FAPA president, ((Hey, I was never FAPA pres.)) and that (now you fill one in), Doc Lowndes, of course. ((Oh, piffle, diffle.))

HIBATF

By the Head Bloch
or
Vice Versa

How did I become acquainted with fantasy? Well....
I picked up all my information in the gutter.

F U N T A S Y

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\_\_\_\_\_

Years ago I wrote

I did a lot of foo.

en.

e years, see? And

Liebscher asked me

go again.

I write about? The

he rooster that won

ed, "Ghoul of My Dreams"

the theme-song on

• This program ran

gram that has to ru

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o horror show is.

e the actors scream

radio. There's IN

TED FRIVY with its

the Postmaster Gen

ad a copy of ESQUIRE

about horror progra

ies for radio produ

IVAN: No, Doctor Bubblebutt. This young man is a reporter.  
 DRUGGIST: Reporter, eh? Wait until de halfwit gets here. Then I will show you an eggshperiment dot will make your hair curdle and your blood stand on end.  
 IVAN: The doctor injects worlf-blood into a man's veins and he turns in a werewolf!  
 FRED: Fantastic! Amazing! Thrilling Wonder!  
 SOUND: DOOR OPENING, EVEN THOUGH NOBODY CLOSED IT  
 JERK: (IN, STRANGELY ENOUGH, A JERK'S VOICE) Uh -- hello folks. Here I am, ready for duh experiment.  
 DRUGGIST: Good. Just lie down here on the table and let me strap you tight. Wait -- move your big fat --  
 IVAN: Ah. I have the needle filled with wolf-blood.  
 FRED: You don't mean this injection will actually turn this man into a wolf?  
 DRUGGIST: Better than a date with Lana Turner. Now you will see somedings, Mister Reporter. Now---I make de injection!  
 SOUND: BLOOP OF HYPODERMIC NEEDLE.  
 JERK: Ulp! (AD LIB ULPING TO POINT OF NAUSEA)  
 FRED: Why...he's changing...he's getting all covered with hair!  
 DRUGGIST: You see now? He is a wolf -- a werewolf!  
 IVAN: (EXCITED) Wait -- he's breaking loose from the straps! Look out!  
 FRED: Help! He's coming after me! Make him drop that chamberpot!  
 SOUND: WOLF HOWLS AND SCREAMS  
 FRED: Oooh -- now he's throwing it at me -- oooowwww!  
 SOUND: CRASH  
 IVAN: Look, the reporter is unconscious! Now we have to fumigate!  
 DRUGGIST: Neffer mind...quick, schtick a needle into de jerk and turn him back to a man...hurry before he gets so hairy I can't find his skin! There!  
 SOUND: BLOOP OF HYPODERMIC NEEDLE  
 IVAN: There. He's turning back into a man again. And the reporter is coming to.  
 FRED: Where am I? What happened?  
 IVAN: The wolf attacked you. You passed out.  
 FRED: Wolf? I didn't see any wolf. It was all a dream. There are no such things as werewolves.  
 DRUGGIST: Oh no? Look at that great big puddle in the middle of the floor. There was a wolf here....and he wasn't even...house-broken.  
 FRED: (IN HORROR) GOOD GOD! It's....it's the Mark of the Monster!  
 MUSIC: BRING UP TO A POINT WHERE IT BLOWS OUT ALL TUBES.

AH! BORSCHT

--Enawder Toesoff

In Russia in the days of old  
 The ruler was the Czar  
 His wife was the Czarina  
 Their home was on the Yar  
 The Czar was hale and hearty  
 His wife a gal of means  
 And when they pooled their talents  
 They produced a few Czardines



Knowing all causes, one could predict with certainty the particular progression of events and effects leading an individual from childhood to corpsehood. But no one knows, or can even imagine all causes.

From as far back as I can remember my interests have been centered on things fantastic. I say "things" because the interest is more fundamental than fantasy or science-fiction; it has its roots in science, and art, and music, but mostly science.

I did not read Verne. Leaving children's fairy stories behind, though now I read them with pleasure again, I read science books whose mysteries and implications of adventure held me spell-bound. I did not read of Tom Swift and of the inventions he made - Paul de Kruif, whose science I now realize was truly fantastic literature, was my idea of a real writer who wrote of a marvelous, wonderful world. But let's get down to facts --

I'll never forget the name of the boy who introduced me to a prozine - Lester Barker of Maukato, Minnesota. It was summer of 1934, and I was sixteen, ripe for the prozines. And the story I read had me lying awake all night in glorious imaginings. There was a feeling inside of me that I had discovered something, something wonderful, something that combined my love for science and fantasy in a most daring combination. It was a new adventure.

The story -- "Colossus" by Donald Wandrei. That story, in fact the whole issue of Astounding Stories in which it appeared, have long been favorites.

You might think I purchased further copies of the magazine. I did not. Not then. Believe this or not, but I knew nothing of newsstands or pulp magazines. Such magazines had never been in our home. And I did not know they existed. My father, a school teacher, did not forbid my reading this copy of Astounding Stories, but there was a frown on his face. I championed the stories and begged for further issues, for my parents to buy them for me.

Christmas, 1934, and I found a copy of the January, 1935 issue of Astounding Stories beneath the tree. It was from my mother. The ice had been broken, and since then I have never missed an issue. When I branched out into Wonder Stories with a story "World of Singing Crystals", and a cover with a large, thin, white being with glaring eyes, my parents said nothing. When I encompassed Weird Tales and Terror Tales, my mother said of the former: "Those covers!" and of the latter: "That trash". Of the latter I soon agreed and when I studied psychology I knew. Of the former I ripped off the covers (though carefully preserving them out of sight to be pasted back on later) and continued reading.

Some time about 1936 Doug Blakely and Ollie Saari sent me a letter announcing a correspondence club for science-fiction fans. That started the correspondence side of the life of a fan. The first fanzine contact was a publication called The International Observer, which I found exceedingly interesting. From a letter or two to the editor of Astounding Stories in which I reviewed fantastic material found in other magazines, Claire Beck asked me to do a column for his Science-Fiction Critic. This column "Between Other Covers" was my first active writing effort, and I have pooped along erratically and intermittently ever since. My first publishing effort was the fanzine Frontier, which I thought was pretty darn good though its circulation gave another indication. The first fan I ever met was Paul Klingbiel, who at that time knew nothing of Fandom so probably



cannot be classified as the first fan. At the Chicon I met some of the legendary figures of Fandom -- then came this war - ..... ((Ah, those were the days. Remember, Don, you stayed at my apartment, you and Klingbeil, and how we gabbed, and you youse persued, pardon, perused my collection, and how I showed you my first fan article, which was later published in "Stardust", and oh, so many stuff, how fun, how fun, how fan, how fun.))

But to get back, later I discovered authors who wrote in books and other magazines, and I count as my chief discovery in those fields John Collier. ((Of whose delightful creations, I think "Evening Primrose" is one of the most delightful literary concoctions ever perpetrated upon delighted ((horrors)) readers.))

Well, that's how it began. It will change, transform, grow, but it will never die, this interest of mine in the fantastic.

#### PLANNING YOUR OWN FUNERAL IS A SERIOUS UNDERTAKING

Oh! My God!!!!

It's Bloch Again

My funeral is an event  
That I have often planned  
I'm sure that it shall be by far  
The finest in the land.

The sermon must be sonorous  
A stately paen of praise ((euphonorous?))  
That all men shall remember me  
And how I spent my days.

My coffin shall be made of gold  
With finest ermine lined  
So I may lie in luxury  
To this I am inclined.

And when I am interred at last  
With ritual grace and such  
It won't do me no goddam good  
For worms will gnaw my gutch.

#### THOUGHTS WHILE CONTEMPLATING MY NAVEL

--Odgen Nash Rooster

A purple calf  
Might get a lalf

Ladies in chemises  
Never fail to plises

I like ladies in pajamas  
That reveal their panoramas

Women who wobble  
Get men into twobble



## SCARE ME FRANKIE, I'M A MORON

Don't look now, fellow movie goers, but this is a review of that sterling production, "The House of Frankenstein". Before we go any further I must give out with some recapitulation concerning the former monstrosities which were but forerunners to this last and final, we hope, splurge into the realms of pitiful, man-made creatures.

No doubt most of you are familiar with the Universal Pictures' Frankenstein serial. In the first chapter, just plain old "Frankenstein", the monster was supposedly destroyed in the old mill, by fire, but not after he got a bit playful and picked petals off a daisy with a little girl, and then picked the legs off the little girl. Also he destroyed his creator in a fit of ungratitude. In chapter the second, "The Frau of Frankenstein", we find the monster being fished out of the water, which conveniently trickled in under the mill, thereby saving him from the conflagration. This time the second in a long line of mad doctors decides that our little monster is lonesome, an astute observation, and decides to whip up a bride for him. Now wasn't that touching? La Bride, however, doesn't go for Frankie's, now labeled indestructable, monster. About this time the electricity gets tired of all the folderol and blows the joint up, the castle I mean. Thus we see the first demise of monster's bride and the second end of monster. You see, in the first chapter Frankie made a mistake and gave our monster two ends; he just happened to have the spare part of a used corpse laying around and couldn't bare to see it go to waste.

In chapter three, "The Son of Frankenstein", we come to the frozen motif. Frankie's son finds the monster frozen in a hunk of ice. After much ado about horror, the monster decides he is tired for the nonce, and jumps into boiling lava to cool off. This is what Universal calls super colossal hot stuff.

In the fourth episode, "The Ghost of Frankenstein", we are introduced to another mad doctor who digs monster out of the revivifying lava. Monster makes faces at the audience for an hour and once again is cleansed by fire. This time we have an added effect; the fire is so hot that monster gets prickly heat all over his puss, so bad it festers even.

Somewhere in the interim "Dracula" has dropped in to pay his respects, and plague the world with himself, a daughter, and a son. However, all he does is make people anemic, so foeey on him.

Now the script writers let us down. In the short interval between chapter four and chapter five, "Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man", our now familiar monster has had his face lifted. Nary a single sign of the prickly heat blisters do we see. This is sort of disconcerting for there are rumors about that monster not only had his face lifted, but that he uses Channel No. 5. Wolf Man, hearing this startling secret, becomes so enraged he decides to tussle with monster. By this time all the people in the village of Frankenstein are madder than all billyhell. They're getting tired of being disturbed by monsters five or six months just so Universal can fill its coffins, pardon, coffers. The villagers get a real big fury rolling, and, in a dramatic scene which would put Burroughs to shame, destroy the dam and shove all the purling waters at our battling beauties, who are now going at it hot and heavy.

Thus endeth episode the fifth. Comes the semi-climax, chapter six. This was to be called "Chamber of Horrors", but the son of the cousin, of the brother, of the cousin, of the adopted son of the director of the picture was partial to Frankenstein's drawing power. After all, didn't the original



monster save the company from going on the rocks. So they handle it "House of Frankenstein". Next chapter, I hear via the hangman's vine, will be entitled "Basement of Frankenstein". But I digress, the foregoing was but a recapitulation and it was offered to you in hopes that you will better understand the review which follows.

## HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN

In the beginning we have Boris Karloff, who was the original monster, playing the part of mad Dr. Niemann. Boris became so fatigued when carrying all the makeup necessary to make monster gruesome that the company decided another stint ala monster would kill him. That is why he is the mad doctor. I might add he plays both parts assininely well. The decadent villagers of Wisteria cannot understand the vagaries of science. When they discover Mad Doctor trying to put the brain of a newly dead human into the carcass of a dog they whip up a kangaroo court and have him put in prison.

In the prison our Mad Doctor meets Hunchback, a fugitive from Notre Dame. Mad Doctor draws pictures all over the wall, and becomes obsessed with the idea of being a second Frankenstein, much on the order of Nero likening himself to a second Caesar. A playful bit of lightning strikes the prison and the floor of the dungeon, in which our playmates are incarcerated, conveniently collapses.

Out into the swamps, with the stark naked trees, the dry ice produced fog, and the Stygian gloom, go our intrepid adventurers. Enter the "Chamber of Horrors", which is a travelling show of unnice things, including the skeleton of Dracula, with the oaken stake still swimming around on Drac's floating rib. The "Chamber of Horrors" consists of every prop of every horror movie of Universal, and it gets from one place to another in two gypsy vehicles, salvaged from the Maria Montez technicolor opus, "Gypsy Wildcat". As the mad doctor has hunchback well in hand he commands him to bump off Lampini, prop of the chamber. Assuming the identity of Lampini, Mad Doctor sets out to eliminate all those there dirty cads who railroaded him into Old Bailey.

Soon our merry caravan arrives at a village, and, as usual, our Mad Doctor has a mad on at the Burgomaster. When Burgomaster's young dotter, her gay young blade of a husband, the Chief of Police, and old Burgo himself, pay a visit to the "Chamber of Horrors", they register disbelief when Mad Doctor displays the articulated skeleton of Dracula. Mad Doctor gets so wrathful over this lack of manners he removes the stake from Drac's ribs, and, after a profusion of veins, muscles, and innards, Dracula makes his 'grande entrance', in the person of, we retch, John Carradine; Lugosi being confined in bed with palsy at the time.

The scene shifts to the stark naked trees, the dry ice produced fog, and the Stygian gloom. Through this beautiful set we are allowed another glimpse of the coach which Dracula used in his initial effort. One would think by now he would have a later model. Our blood sucker comes upon Burgo his daughter, and her gay young blade, immediately gets acquainted, and is invited to their home.

When Gay Young Blade goes to the wine cellar for another jug of bubbly, Drac gives Burgo's daughter the evil eye and places a Draculean ring upon her finger. Now comes a new twist, the ring vibrates and gives off a sort of evil halo. After turning into a bat and killing the poor Burgomaster, Drac thinks it is time for a little lovin. Burgo's dotter shuffles out to the garden, looking as if she needs a physic, and carnally crawls under his ubiquitous cloak, just as Gay Young Blade discovers the dehydrated corpse of Burgo, then runs outside to see Drac flee with the femme. Madly our hero runs after the coach in which his beauty is ensconced, then falls into mud, exhausted, just as the police gallantly gallop on the scene.



Now comes the terrific, suspenseful, chase scene. Mad Doctor and Hunchback find out the police are chasing Dracula, and off they go in their gypsy caravan. Now there are three factions all mixed up in one real big chase. In front we have Mad Doctor and Hunchback, in back we have four horses, and on their backs (the horses) three policemen and Gay Young Blade, whilst in the middle of the fracas we find Dracula and the fair young maiden. The Mad Doctor's party decide it is getting too hot for comfort, so they throw out Drac's coffin, containing his beloved earth. Suddenly Drac's coach gets tired of this nonsense and goes over the cliff replete with our pulchritudinous damsel. In a touching scene filled with the bathos of "Over the Hill" Dracula pitifully crawls towards his coffin just as the paper sun comes up over the set designers hill. Dramatically our plasma pilferer crawls upon his coffin, coughing spasmodically, attempting to shade his body from the sun with his little finger. As the sun drenches the set we see the arm of Dracula, lovingly draped over his coffin, turn into some hand bones and some unfaithful reproductions of tibia and fibula. Our young wench emerges from the wreck unscathed, just in time to swoon in the arms of Gay Young Blade, who watches the Draculean ring fall off her fingers.

This should have been the end of chapter six, but how could it be? We still have Mad Doctor and Hunchback to reckon with. The next scene shows our Maria Montez coaches wildly cutting through the dry ice produced fog, the stark naked trees and the Stygian gloom.

Fade in the village of Frankenstein, and the gypsy camp. Painted on the backdrop we discover our old friend, the castle ruins, or Andy Frankenstein's Stubble Trouble. When Hunchback sees the wicked gypsy beat the dancing girl with a whip, he chokes the dastardly man and persuades mad doctor to take Dancing Girl with them. Dancing Girl is some hunk of stuff.

In the castle ruins the floor conveniently collapses, depositing Mad Doctor and Hunch in, of all things, a glacial cavern. After a little exploring Mad Doctor and Hunchback find a Birds Eye Monster and a Birds Eye Wolf Man. Somewhere in the ruins our two fiends find brand new railroad logs to fire and melt out our other two fiends. Wolf Man locates old Doc Frankenstein's records for Mad Doctor and our queer quatrain take off for Dr. Nieman's mad castle.

On the way Mad Doctor is most distressed, for Monsters flesh is becoming dessicated, requiring continual hot compresses to keel it's waning poop-deck; also to keep it from falling apart.

Comes now our ubiquitous fog produced from dry ice, stark naked trees, and Stygian gloom, to which has been added Dr. Nieman's mad castle. Then it gifts a Slavko Vorkapichish montage in which our five characters clean up the laboratory. I might add that Dancing Girl pitches in nonchalantly, all the world as if she were attending a sewing circle meeting.

The plot thickens; Mad Doctor has Hunchback kill off two more horrible cads who sent him to the Bastille. Wolf Man takes a peek at the full moon, decides to have a party, and collects another jugular vein. The villagers are frantic, and one discerning young man suggests a werewolf. Immediately the villagers go to the prop room, get the Frankenstein torches, and instigate their 369th monster search, through the fog produced from dry ice, the stark naked trees, and the Stygian, to which has been added some brush, necessary for the finale.

Back at the castle things are really poppin. Dancing Girl is in love with Lon Chaney, alias the Wolf Man. Hunchback tells her Lon is a werewolf. She turns on poor old Hunchback and calls him vile names, which makes him rear wrathful, so he goes to Mad Doctor and demands his brain be put in the body of Lon Chaney. Mad Doctor wants to bring Monster back to his full potentialities because he hates the human race and wants to kill them off. Now get this picture if you can: Mad Doctor wants to put Monsters brain in the body of Lon Chaney, Hunch back wants the body of Lon Chaney, Lon Chaneywants



to be cured of his wolfish tendencies, and Dancing Girl wants Lon Chaney and hurrah for the wolfish tendencies.

As Dancing Girl is so in love with Lon Chaney, alias the Wolf Man, she dramatically tears off her necklace and fashions from it a silver bullet bullet, with which she will end his suffering forever. Chaney takes another peek at the moon, which showers him with wolfish tendencies, and he chases Dancing Girl through the fog produced from dry ice, the stark naked trees, and the Stygian gloom. He catches up with her, they have a little tussle, then a little rosebud, then the ungracious lass shoots poor Wolf Man, but not until he has fatally and carnally smitten her. Wolf Man's paws sweetly turn into paper mache feet as Dancing Girl, with much verve, crawls upon his body and kicks the bucket simultaneously.

Enter Hunchback who picks up her limp body and carries it into the castle which is belching neon tubes and lightning from all openings. Hunchback, who is enraged because Mad Doctor didn't give him Wolf Man's body before it was killed, becomes an enraging maniac and attempts to dispose of him. Monster, seeing Mad Doctor getting the worst of the deal, does away with poor Hunchback instead.

Our villagers now emerge from the fog produced from dry ice, the stark nude trees, and Gygian sloom, and the recently added brush. Now we see the reason for the brush. The villagers set fire to it and our final fiends are forced from the castle.

"Oh, heavens", one man screams, "there's that damn Frankenstein monster again."

Slowly the fire pushes the two meanies into the big big bog and soon they are enmeshed in quicksand, which swallows them all up. Such untasty morsels causes the quicksand to burp.

Now the little brats that frequent such movies rush into the lobby to purchase their popcorn, while the elders get out their sen-sen to get rid of the bad taste in their mouths.

We are now ready for chapter seven. Why shouldn't we be! Who are we to frown upon monsters? I'm sort of a mild monster myself. I'm suffering from psycho-neurosis, brought on by excessive necking.

#### GARDEN OF FEAR

--Joe Hensley, HA 2/C

I walk alone,  
In a valley of stone  
On the shore of an unknown sea.  
And wings of night,  
In their batwinged flight  
Shadow the mouldering lea

The seas of time  
Cast an endless slime  
In this eldritch garden of Lethe.  
The greying walls  
Of its leprous halls  
Smile in a smirk of death.

Sullen, I peer  
At a sight I fear  
Cast in this abyss of stone.  
There on the beach,  
Like a rock crushed leech  
Is the face - that is my own.



AH! THE JOYS AND BLESSINGS OF CIVILISATION

## -Being a discourse Upon Life as We See It-

We are one of those insufferable bores: the scrapbook fiend. We go around pasting inimportant little bits of paper on large blank pages and ten years later throw the whole book into the furnace as so much excess baggage. This really does us a world of good in more ways than one: it helps destroy our inferiority complex because the physical action of hurling something into the flames (accompanied by shrill sounds of glee and hatred) release pent-up emotions; and it also helps establish a literary background. We can always refer to "that old volume of ours we burned last week." It impresses visitors from the farm. ((The only kind he ever gets.))

"Twelve judges working steadily married 367 couples Sunday, thereby legalizing some 1500 children, in one of a series of free, mass marriages staged by the public assistance department for couplets who have never been able to afford a wedding.

"The department gave each couple a wedding ring and a box lunch."

Too, that bit about the box lunch is not without interest. Only the more sentimental couples valued the ring, we presume, whereas the box lunch was something they could sink their teeth into.

No coaching please; if Junior didn't get that one, let him work on this: the next cartoon pictures two soldiers in an induction center, the one saying to his companion:

A clipping from a 1939 Argosy states that the Temple of Ishtar has been found in Mesopotamia, near a city called Mari. This particular temple dates back more than three thousand years before Christ, and presumably bears an inscription on a conveniently placed corner stone, thereby insuring for itself priority over all other temples of Ishtar found in Mesopotamia.



We next discovered a lithographed page of pictures which was to appear in Southern Star a good many years ago, but never did because the Star waned completely out of existence. At one time we intended publishing this page of pictures ourself but never got around to it, mainly because we lost the page of pictures until now. However, in looking over the photographs, we found that we had, sometime in the interim, added a wicked-looking handlebar mustache to the Lowndes visage. He would no doubt appreciate that.

We then discovered several newspaper clippings taken from Chicago papers about the time of the Chicon. Reading these, five years later, we blush. Messers Reinsberg, Korchask and Tucker outdid themselves when it came to garnering publicity for the convention. Apparently any lie was useful, providing it would see print. An example:

"SCIENTISTS," (the headline said, and:) "Odd Masquerade Set for Hotel Sunday."

"One of the strangest masquerade parties of the year will be held at the Hotel Chicagoan Sunday night.

"Merrymakers costumed to represent the sun, the moon, various planets, and a host of "futuremen" will be present, all members of the World Science Fiction Society, which will be holding its 1940 convention in Chicago with delegates from all parts of the United States as well as Canada and Mexico.

"On display at the convention is a model of a rocket ship."

(Ring in the irony Tucker, ring in the irony. Very well. Five years later a newspaper used this headline over a war story: "Rocket Ships Outblasting Older Craft.") What will future historians think when they read such headlines as these, and then delve into our "Scientist" conventions where actual models were exhibited?

Eureka: sex rears it's ---- head. (We refuse to regard it as ugly.) We find a still from a motion picture released in 1920, when motion pictures were real he-man drahmahs. The scene is that of the Court of the Emperor Constantine and there sits the Emp himself upon his marble throne, surrounded by eight lovely women with adoring eyes. The Emp, rascally old fellow that he is, has a smirk upon his face. You would too probably, were you in his place.

The eight lovely ladies haven't a stitch of clothing on. Whoa---we take that back. Upon close examination of the picture (with a glass, of course) we find that one of them actually has a sheet draped over her up-turned posterior. As for the others, beads, a bracelet (or armband) or two, and a few twigs seem to satisfy them. You are mistaken if you think they are using those twigs and beads to conceal anything.

Yes, the movies have come a long way, haven't they? ((Too long.))

Oh look: a valentine. It bears no date, no name, no clue as to the identity of its sender. It needs none; we know its origin only too well. Its message is sentimental, touching, adult. Where is she now, we wonder, and what does she think of us? Oh-- we know where her body lies but where is she?

She was a streetwalker; her mother used to do our laundry when we were a kid, and sometimes we played together. We gave her a few dollars one night when she was released from jail, broke, without lodgings, and under orders to get out of town--permanently. She did, and the dollars were never repaid. . . only a thin string of Christmas cards, valentines and picture postcards. Until TB stopped them.

And then to the nearly opposite end of the ledger; a nicely printed charter turns up, duly signed in india ink by the Ass't Secretary:

"Science Fiction League. At a Director's Meeting held in New York City, New York, in the United States of America, the Science Fiction League has elected --Bob Tucker-- a member of this League. In Witness thereof, this Certificate has been officially signed and presented to the above. (Member No. 68) - Charles Hornig."

Can't you picture those directors meeting like mad, dozens of times a day, as stacks of letters (and coupons) pour in, demanding the presentations of the



wonderful charters? How those wretched, over-worked men must have earned their pay! Busy men, they were; perhaps the board consisted of well-known scientists, doctors, lawyers, experts in varied lines of life, all dropping their own work at a moment's notice to rush over to the Gernsbach Building because some little dope out in the hinterlands of Illinois desired a charter.

(Incidentally, they serve wonderfully as rat-hole covers. The charters we mean. Rodents can't stand the taste of india ink.)

Letters. Suddenly we come upon a page of letters, kept for divers reasons. ((That's the way you spelled it chum. Could be the papers were music, and you were going to do the deep sea doodle?)) There is the one from Los Angeles, notifying us we had been elected President of the FAPA, and that we should feel duly honored. And too, there is the now-infamous letter from O. K. Smith, announcing the untimely death of dear Mr. Singleton. We examine the ink. Yes, it is tear-stained and thinned. Poor Mr. O. K. Smith, how he suffered from the loss of his friend, how his heart must have turned as he dashed off note after note to key people around fandom, making sure the dreadful news would receive widespread publicity.

Mr. Singleton of course has since been found, alive and well, but as much cannot be said for Mr. O. K. Smith. And perhaps that is justice. We have often suspected some outraged fan has committed Smithicide.

Here's a dress pattern. What is that doing in there? ((You could use it to clothe your shame!))

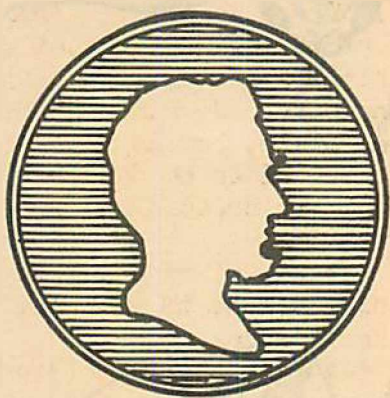
We don't believe we will throw this book in the furnace after all.

#### ODE TO A BRIGHT URCHIN

--Ogden Nash Rooster

Ranoschnerd Gleep was a bright little boy,  
The things he could do with just one little toy,  
Astonished the world in more ways than one,  
But, alas, to poor Ranny it wasn't much fun.  
To make his toy auto fly, that's all he wanted,  
Not to be idolized, fawned upon, haunted.  
But, that is what happened when Ranny one day,  
Wound the thigamabob and up and away,  
Went his little toy auto, up into the blue,  
Just like our boy hero knew it would do.  
From then on our youthful inventory was stranded  
From childhood, for scientists cruel demanded,  
A twenty four hour report on the boy,  
Who astonished the world with just one little toy.  
So Ranny was put under care of the thinkers,  
Who gave him no rest, and watched, the stinkers,  
Till the poor laddy felt like a walking museum,  
And wished that no one in creation could seum.  
All this he took til that fateful day, when,  
The thinkers allowed him an auto again,  
With two bits worth of wire, a button, and wood,  
Then left him alone to do as he would.  
The wire round the button he wound the right way,  
And then our dear Ranny -- flew the coupe'.





Anyone  
Who leads me  
to a good book—  
That man is my friend"  
A Lincoln





WIEDENBECK 45.

BOOK SECTION





SPENCER:

ADVENTURES IN THE UNKNOWN

Carl H. Claudy - Grosset & Dunlap - 1933 - 50¢ per Volume

1. The Mystery Men of Mars.
2. A Thousand Years a Minute.
3. Land of No Shadow.
4. The Blue Grotto Terror.

These are juveniles. Perhaps, like me, you read and enjoyed them as a youngster. Very possibly you don't realize that you'd probably enjoy them today. Claudy, I think, deserves recognition as one of the finest science fiction writers, solely on the basis of these books.

Like most juvenile series, they concern some friends who have an improbably high number of improbably adventures. Present in each book is the familiar scientist, in two of them, a lovable old dodderer, in the other two our old friend the "mad scientist". The plots of the books are the old fundamental ones—trip to Mars, time travel, and so on. But at this point the resemblance to conventional juveniles ceases.

The heroes are Alan Kane ("Brains") and Ted Dolliver ("Brawn"), two well-portrayed young men of college age. Their adventures are handled with fair scientific accuracy and astonishing verisimilitude. The atmosphere of all the books is one of pure, freezing horror, magnificently sustained. The treatment of the simple subject matter is ingenious in the extreme. I am at a loss to account for the presentation of these stories as boys' books, for they are entirely mature in outlook, grim, terrifying, tragic and superbly written.

"The Mystery Men of Mars" (serialized, in slightly different form as "The Master Minds of Mars") is one of the best interplanetary stories I've ever read. The flight through space in a great gravity-repellent metal globe is realistically and impressively handled; the adventures among the insect-like Martians and their robot-slaves are hair-raising and unforgettable. The Great Brain - the Lesser Brain - the Metal Heads - magnificently original and suggestive pictures of a weirdly alien civilization - a tremendously powerful book! Ending, by the way, on a note of grotesque tragedy.

"A Thousand Years a Minute" does for the past what "The Time Machine" did for the future. Kane and Dolliver go back to prehistoric times, and have gosh-awful encounters with dinosaurs and other unpleasant fauna. Not exactly original, but the vividness is startling and the horror simply terrific.

"The Land of No Shadow" is for my money the story of the fourth dimension. Kane and Dolliver are cast away in its ghastly realm, unable to return; the book describes in harrowing fashion their lonely wanderings in the regions of grey lifelessness by a mystic colorless sea, with incomprehensible suggestions of unimaginable things and beings all about them. The end brings blank mystery. This is pure nightmare.

"The Blue Grotto Terror" is greatly inferior to the other 3 - a made-to-order continuation; hack adventure stuff about a super-explosive wanted by bad men who will stop at nothing to get it. Only in the final chapters does Claudy show what he can do when he wants--the explosive blasts a great shaft deep into the heart of the earth, and in a gold-studded cavern our heroes encounter a deadly, and inconceivably alien, life-form.

In addition to these four books, there are several magazine stories about Kane and Dolliver—I have read a novel "The Infra-Red Destroyers" and a short story - neither of which was quite as good as the first three books. The books, by the way, are superbly illustrated.



SIX NOVELS OF THE SUPERNATURAL - Edited by Edward Wagenknecht - Viking Press-  
1944 - \$2.50.

After a moderately interesting introduction by the editor, this book gets under way with *A BELEAGURED CITY: A Story of the Seen and the Unseen*, by Mrs. Oliphant. Published sixty-five years ago, this story is written in the leisurely, long-winded fashion of those times, yet there is to it a certain charming simplicity that makes the reading of it easy and, in an unecstatic fashion, pleasant. It is about the French town of Semur, invaded by frightening invisible presences who eject the entire population of the city except a sick man and a mystic. The invading forces turn out to be the spirits of the departed, who, sick of the bungling of the yet-alive, have returned to set things aright. This is an ingenious and rather impressive idea, and Mrs. Oliphant's treatment of it makes interesting reading. The feeling is inescapable, however, that she shies away from exploring to the full her notions possibilities. More irritating, to me at least, was the quasi-religious attitude manifested throughout the story; I am always made uneasy by stories which take religious dogma very seriously. All in all, *A BELEAGURED CITY* is distinctly readable, but it will go on no-one's list of "ten best".

This moderately pleasing story is followed, rather dramatically, by a masterpiece: Walter de la Mare's *THE RETURN*. It's about a prosaic little man who finds one day that he has taken on the appearance of a certain 17th-century Frenchman of dark reputation. And his mind, moreover, begins to think in unusual and disconcerting ways, as though it, too, is undergoing a sinister metamorphosis. The man is married -- can you imagine the complications? De la Mare treats with delicious skill the possessed man's desperate attempt to convince his wife and friends of his identity and to adjust his life to the quite paralyzing development of his being someone other than himself. Inevitably, it's a rather dizzying story, and I must confess that one reading has not sufficed to make me quite sure what the author was driving at. It's a profound piece of writing, and somewhere in its mazy subtleties I got lost. Nevertheless, I enjoyed it tremendously, and sometime I'm going to tackle it again and solve its curious enigma. It's beautifully written, fascinating and deeply moving; fantasy at its dazzling best.

Next comes *THE WHITE PEOPLE* - not the wonderful tale by Arthur Machen, but one by Frances Hodgson Burnett. If that name rings familiar, don't puzzle over it: she wrote *LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY*. Don't let that scare you though; *THE WHITE PEOPLE* is written with intelligence and skill. I, who incline to be hypercritical, found it absorbing all the way through. The plot is simple and, I regret to say, very obvious, but so well handled you forgive the obviousness. It's hard to say anything at all about it without revealing the "surprise" ending - let it suffice that the heroine has the strange faculty of seeing a race or division of people invisible to others and marked by curious paleness of skin. You may find this story a trifle over-sentimental, but I think on the whole you'll like it quite a bit. At least, I did.

From the comforting atmosphere of Frances Hodgson Burnett we turn to the disquieting fancies of one of fantasy's greatest masters, Arthur Machen. In *THE TERROR* he concerns himself with a series of strange deaths, seemingly unrelated save by puzzling difficulty in determining their causes. The subtitle is "A Mystery", but *THE TERROR* goes beyond the realm of ordinary mystery fiction into a discomfortable region of the supernormal. The subject matter is rather on the sensationalistic side, and in other hands this might have been a mere shocker, but Machen handles it with great ingenuity, and, in case you don't know



it, he can write like nobody's business. The ending is rather abrupt and not entirely satisfactory, but I don't think it alters the fact that THE TERROR is a Grade A fantasyarn.

But now our luck turns. Mr. Wagenknecht is a distinguished man of letters, and I, whose utter incompetence as a literary critic has been devastatingly revealed by the secretary of Arkham House, feel suitably humble of criticizing his inclusion of Mary Johnston's SWEET ROCKET. But in mere honesty I must admit I think the story is utter drivel. It does, I admit, aim high: it's a quasi-philosophic and metaphysical work written with an obvious attempt at literary artistry. But the philosophy, though lofty enough, is vague, wishy-washy stuff, and the occasionally eloquent writing is more often trite. There is no plot; the characters just throw ecstatic remarks at each other about how simply beautiful life is. There have been some good dialogue novels, but this isn't one of them. There is a great deal of nature-description, most of it mere listings of varieties of flowers and trees, reminiscent of a not very inspired seed-catalogue. There is a lot of sententious phrase-making; "The kingdom of heaven is within you God is I am. (Does that suggest anything?) And many sprawling gobs of capitalized ecstasy like this: "All our 'movements' rush into the one. All our vortices approach with a fearful joy the Great Vortex. The Correlation will be established, the Summation made We go to join and strengthen the Ancient Heavens. The Ancient of Days draws and redeems and fuses and Ones another layer of his being. Faster and faster our age begins to see what is happening...the poet names it Life, Beauty, and Joy; the scientific man says Knowledge and Use; the philosopher says Energy and Substance in conscious union; the Hindu says the SELF; our people say God...All one." Somehow "one" doesn't seem the proper word to describe it. At least nowadays the notion that by saying, in italics and capitals, "I AM" you make all life beautiful seems about as remote from reality as anything could be and certainly it doesn't make a good novel.

But cheer up; there's one more story yet, and it's Robert Nathan's PORTRAIT OF JENNIE. ((Hooray)) This is one of the umpty-ump stories inspired by the time-theories of J. W. Dunne, and the best one I've read. It suggests such words as charming, delicious, quaint, delightful, and exquisite. Jennie is a little girl who gets mixed up in the uncertain mazes of Time; the story is told by an artist whose temporal path keeps crossing hers in such a way that she seems to grow older at a faster rate than he. This may sound rather confusing, but Robert Nathan handles it with easy and delicate artistry, making of a difficult concept a story that's charming, delicious, quaint, delightful and exquisite.

It would be possible to make a better selection than this, but three classics a very good story, a medium good one, and a wretched one add up to something describable at least as "very good".

--Cpl. Paul Spencer

PLANET PLANE -- John Beynon -- Newnes, Ltd. (England). C. 1937.

First published as a magazine serial, under the title "Stowaway to Mars," this novel by the distinguished science fictionist John Beynon Harris is based on a plot so moth-eaten as to be in sad tatters, but is written with such intelligence and skill that the most hardened fantasy-fan will find it continuously fascinating.

Around the end of this century, Dale Curtance, a champion airplane-racer, heads an expedition from England to the planet Mars, via rocketship. Hardly has the Curtance craft left the earth when a stowaway is discovered, a beautiful young woman, who claims her deceased father was visited by an intelligent machine from Mars (This seems to be a reference to Harris' story in Amazing Stories "The Lost Machine"). Landing on the red planet, the explorers find it inhabited by thinking machines similar to that the stowaway described; also, human



Martians in a state of suspended animation. The girl is kidnapped by the machines, and meets one of the humans, revived from aeons-long sleep. Sundry complications ensue, and in the end the party returns safely to earth.

There is nothing in the bare outline of this to attract anyone who has read much science fiction, but in the handling of this hackneyed plot is displayed a generous amount of ingenuity, serious thought, writing skill, and savage satire. Offhand, I cannot recall a more searingly realistic fantasy, one more faithful to the grim truths of life. The problem, for example, of an attractive girl stowed away on a rocketship crewed by men is faced without flinching or coyness, and throughout, the human relationships and character-drawing are entirely and refreshingly plausible. If the book has a fault aside from the ancient plot and a certain scientific insecurity in at least one important respect, it is, in fact, a tendency to depict things in a manner overly cruel.

Taking all these factors into account, I have no hesitation in pronouncing "Planet Plane" a minor masterpiece of science fiction.

"Sleeper of Mars," in the second issue of Tales of Wonder, is a sequel to this story.

--Cpl. Paul Spencer

LOST WORLD - Clark Ashton Smith - Arkham House - 1944 - \$3.00.

This second collection of tales by C. A. Smith is, it seems to me, much more satisfactory than the first, "Out of Space and Time." Only to a limited degree did that volume indicate what in "Lost Worlds" is demonstrated very forcefully: that in sheer grotesque fantasy Clark Ashton Smith is unsurpassed. The twenty-three stories in "Lost Worlds" are not of uniform quality; one or two are, in fact, distinctly disappointing -- but the book leaves you with a rather dizzy sensation of having peered into abysses of cosmic horror and having glimpsed only partly comprehensible realms beyond ordinary perception. Stories like "The Seven Geases," "The Demon of the Flower," "The Planet of the Dead," "The Light from Beyond," and others, magnificent in word-power, reveal vividly the bizarre and amazing entities and phenomena of such mythic lands as Hyperborea, Zothique, Xicarth, and Lophai.

H. P. Lovecraft, it is true, was a more skillful story-teller; yet the quality of his imagination was inferior to Smith's. He wrote more vividly, beyond doubt; but Smith writes with greater concision, variety, and restraint. Smith's limitations as a narrator are, I think, beyond question; hardly a story of his has an effective denouement, and he has yet to depict convincingly any emotion but a kind of dazed and dreamy terror. And while we are conceding his faults, let us not overlook his passion for pedantic and unfamiliar language. (I would not dare to count the number of times he uses such words as "coeval," "umbrage," and "anthropophagous.") Still, Clark Ashton Smith writes tremendously impressive prose, musical, cadenced, and mood-creating; and in this sonorous language he chronicles the quaintest and most horrific of events in the most astonishing environments ever, I dare say, conceived by mortal mind.

Smith's writing is exactly the sort of thing the present Weird Tales avoids, to its discredit: brilliantly written stories of extraordinary imaginative quality. As to Smith's originality, he owes much, it is clear, to Poe and Lovecraft and Dunsany, and perhaps also to Cabell; but he does not merely imitate, he uses the works of those writers as points of departure for his flights into uniquely Smithian realms.

And "Lost Worlds" contains a generous proportion of Smith's finest, and strangest, work -- both fantasy and science fiction. I warn you not to read all 419 pages in one sitting; however much you are tempted. Read only a story or two at a time -- for to absorb at once all this book offers of the potentially bizarre might easily drive any normal, or sane, brain to gibbering madness.

Physically, "Lost Worlds" is uniform with the other Arkham House \$3.00 books



clearly printed on good-quality paper, bound in black cloth with gilt lettering on the spine, and bearing a heavy-paper dust-jacket. The jacket is decorated, by the way, with photographs of five of Smith's weird sculptures.

--Cpl. Paul Spencer

THE MASTER OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT - Leo Perutz - Charles Boni PAPER BOOKS -1930

Further Information: 195 pp. 18 3-4 cm. This book was for sale in the paper-bound edition for 50¢ to subscribers to the PAPER BOOKS series, 75¢ to non-subscribers, as well as in a cloth binding designed by Rockwell Kent. The translation from the German was by Hedwig Singer. A four-page introduction by Dr. Fritz Wittels is included.

Review: Although one of the "borderline" fantasies that have a rational explanation, this volume's "rational" explanation falls far enough into the realm of the unknown to make the volume a peculiar cross between fantasy and science-fiction. This tendency, reminiscent in a manner of Lovecraft, becomes more like HPL when it becomes evident that the core of the entire plot is a legendary, terrible book known as the "Monster". "The story is related by Gottfried Adalbert, Baron von Yosch and Klettenfeld. It is his effort to clear up the deaths of the persons surrounding him, in which he was implicated. A postscript, by the "editor", at the end of the book tells use that the manuscript was found among the Baron's possessions when he was killed in the first months of the First World War as a volunteer at the front. The scene is Vienna. The Baron is visiting an eminent actor, with whose wife he had once had an affair, relates the mysterious suicide of a young painter, and a few minutes later finds the actor dying. The Baron cannot remember whether he is the murderer. Others die, apparently of their own hand, raving of horrors and flames, and "The Master of the Day of Judgment". Attempting to relieve his own mind, the Baron investigates, learns of the one-time existence of a painter known as "The Master of the Day of Judgment"--one Giovansimone Chigi, a 16th century master. Another man dies--this one of "heart failure". The Baron at last locates a copy of "The Monster", a book written by one Pompeo dei Bene, in the year 1532. Translated, it tells of how one Messer Salimbeni, an acquaintance of Chigi's, had promised Chigi to "give you back what you called the power of visions, and I can even awake it in those who never had it before." At night in the midst of the country, Salimbeni had lighted a fire, drawn circles, thrown incense. Dei Bene and his master, Chigi, suddenly see terrible landscapes form in the flames, animals leap about, thousands of people gather, wailing and moaning because they are condemned, a flaming sign in the skies "that glows in a hue I never knew before", a terrible voice crying from the storm. Chigi goes mad, and dies after painting an enormous fresco depicting the Day of Judgment he had witnessed. At the crucial point in the manuscript, Dei Bene's tale suddenly ends: the manuscript has been mutilated, and the last page cut out. "The Baron suddenly knows the answer. He rushes back to the summer-house--and to tell you more would be just as evil an action as the finding of that lost page of the manuscript. "There is nothing remarkable about the book, aside from the elaborately conceived plot. The character of the Baron is drawn beautifully even though he tells the story in the first person: the majority of the other persons in the story are very unpleasant-sounding Germans who were probably better off dead anyway. The translation is excellent.

--Harry Warner, Jr.



AFTER THE AFTERNOON -- Arthur MacArthur -- D. Appleton-Century Co. -- New York -- 1941 -- \$2.50.

Now and then, at infrequent intervals, and without fanfare there appears a fantasy which is so different, so compelling as to demand reading and rereading, a story whose flavor and savor will last long after most competitive writings are in limbo. Frank Baker rang the bell at least once, so did M. P. Shiel, Arthur Machen and S. Fowler Wright. I have just become acquainted with "After the Afternoon" (thanks to Walt) and want to throw my hat to the housetops in ecstatic praise.

What Mallarme achieved in the realm of pure poetry, what Debussy wrought with his impressionist, magical "L'Apré Midi d'un Faun", so has Arthur MacArthur performed in beautiful, limpid prose. Not one of us who has placed the poet and the musician on pedestals of genius but has wondered what happened to the faun when the afternoon was over. MacArthur tells us in as beautiful a fantasy as has ever been written, a tale of romance and tragedy, of glamour and enchantment.

Lykos was awakened from his sylvan slumber by a group of mischievous Greek maidens and promptly proceeded to fall in love with seductive Aoni. He prayed to Aphrodite for aid and after a rather hilarious conclave of the gods was granted the uncertain boon of becoming an immortal human who, upon the death of one body, human, animal, or vegetable, could transfer to another and continue existence -- for all of which he paid an agreeable, masculine tribute to the goddess of love. Lykos' life with Aoni was tender but short. Upon her death he took service with a Princess of Egypt and most of the story is of Memphis and the Egyptian court of 3000 years ago.

The Pharaoh was impotent and as an heir was demanded to prevent rebellion Lykos was selected as a vicarious - but potent - father. Seldom has a love story been so genuine and so enduring as that of the metamorphosed faun and the Queen. The fragile - yet robust - tale culminates in high tragedy. Lykos in his first human body is killed, transfers to the body of the Pharaoh (I wondered, irreverently, what happened to the Pharaoh's "ka"), again loses queen, child and life, takes partial revenge in the guise of an Ethiopian soldier, and, disgusted with humanity, seeks centuries long refuge in a grain of wheat.

What distinguishes the book is not the plot -- for the theme of reincarnation has been done time after time -- but the presentation of living characters with their loves and hates, greed, ambition, cruelty, and self-sacrifice. The author has studied thoroughly the times and people of ancient Greece and the Nile and gives them a vitality rarely encountered in other books. Men and women are not a writer's puppets but really live, commanding our attention and our sympathy. Under a symbolic guise of fantasy (and fantasy at its best) is a tale true and compelling. Seldom have I read anything so truly fine.

MEN WHO WOULDN'T STAY DEAD -- Ida Clyde Clarke -- Bernard Ackerman -- 381 Fourth Ave. -- New York -- 1945 -- \$3.00.

Mrs. Clarke writes as if she is a believer in the occult and the supernatural for her collection of 28 ghost stories is concerned with alleged apparitions that have appeared over the course of centuries. They are all taken from real life though their credibility will depend upon the reader's



predilections. This reviewer has spent a few nights alone in supposedly haunted houses and abandoned hospitals and has experienced absolutely nothing - except ennui. Maybe he is too insensitive to receive higher vibrations - anyway he is firmly a non-believer despite the Society for Psychical Research, Margery, Sir Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle (all of whom he has lectured).

The book covers (or uncovers) the ghosts of Walt Whitman, Napoleon, Oscar Wilde, Abraham Lincoln, the Duke of Buckingham, Henry Ward Beecher, and about twenty others, including possibly the most famous in all history--the "occupant" of John Wesley's house. Even Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, Houdini and David Belasco are not spared exposure. The stories are poorly written and unconvincing. I still prefer Scotch to any other spirits.

25 MODERN STORIES OF MYSTERY AND IMAGINATION -- Edited by Phil Stong -- 1942 Garden City Publishing Co. -- Present reprint price \$1.00.

When Phil Stong's anthology first appeared it met with an almost unanimous chorus of condemnation. Every fan was indignant partly at the inclusion of certain stories he didn't like and at the omission of some of his favorites. Certainly Mr. Stong was unpopular in the fantasy world. I have reread almost everything in the volume and rise in defense of the editor. Not for a moment would I argue that this is the best of all anthologies. That would be sheer nonsense when one remembers "A Touch of Nutmeg", "Two Bottles of Relish", "The Moonlight Traveler", "Sleep No More", "The Midnight Reader" and a score of others. What I do argue is that Stong has selected a number of lesser known tales, many of which are worthy of preservation.

Fans complained at the omission of all but one Lovecraft story, and that not of his best. But, in heaven's name, why any Lovecraft at all when the total of his writings were put out by Arkham House and there have been several smaller collections. Similarly with C. A. Smith and A. Merritt who are available elsewhere. If fans missed these volumes surely it is their own hard luck. I got them without difficulty -- now don't write and ask if I will sell or trade for the answer it emphatically "NO". There has been too much duplication in "horror" or "weird" anthologies and while I recognize the genius that went into "The House and the Brain", "The Monkey's Paw", "The Red Brain" and hundreds of others I don't want half a dozen copies of each. (Francois Villon's poems I collect in every translation as well as in the original and in every edition but no one else). Why squawk at the omission of favorites which can be easily found in other collections?

Frankly, I think Stong picked a few sour lemons. For example, "Naked Lady", "The Pipes of Pan", "The Man Who Knew All the Answers", "Truth is a Plague", yes I will heretically include Lovecraft's "In the Vault". On the other hand "Escape" is a masterpiece of simplicity, "Alas, All Thinking" has sustained grotesqueness, and "The Panelled Room" is terrifying. And so it goes. There are first, second and third rate tales in the collection but couldn't the same be said for all other anthologies? Of course each fan thinks he could do a better job (I'm sure I could) yet why not accept a book with at least half the contents worth reading and keeping? What issue of "Weird" or "Astounding" was perfect?

WORLDS BEGINNING -- Robert Ardrey -- Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Incorporated-- New York -- 1945 -- \$2.50

A provocative, readable and exciting story of the United States during the twenty years following World War II, presumably written by a newspaper man who experienced stirring events and tells of them in first class fashion.



Forebodings of even the most gloomy pessimist are fulfilled during the first ten years of riots, revolutionary outbreaks, racial bloodshed, labor troubles and Fascist government. Robert Ardrey is at his best in telling of those terrible times (about which most of us are more or less secretly disturbed) and his fictitious account of anti-Negro and anti-Mexican riots in Los Angeles had this reviewer sitting on the edge of his chair, gasping for breath. The picture is one of unrelieved disorder, confusion and oppression.

Little by little there are stirrings of democracy and freedom, political and economic, culminating in a widespread cooperative commonwealth movement that supersedes capitalism and private ownership in favor of nationwide industrial profit and work sharing. A stirring story, well told of humanity escaping from anarchy and tyranny. We can only hope that the first part of the prophecy proves false and the second part comes true. Fantasy only in the sense that it tells what one man thinks of the future.

THE IMMORTAL TALES OF JOE SHAUN -- John J. Meyer -- The Carylale Library-- 38 Caryl Ave. -- Yonkers, N. Y. -- \$2.50.

"A satire on the stark realities facing mankind. Spiced with the greatest love story ever told. Blended with bewitching fantasy on the five freedoms of the universe."

Thus the book is described on the blurb. Maybe it is all that and more but to this bewildered reviewer Joe Shaun's story is screwball, fantastic, utterly mad, incomprehensible and -- even worse -- badly written with stuffing of immature "wisdom", silly puns and ridiculous attempts at humor. Joe is an earth artist who manages by the aid of fairies and angels to secure transportation to various parts of the universe. He is in search of his "dream girl" whom, it appears, was his beloved in a previous incarnation as inventor on the system (or planet or someplace) Cerebroland.

Joe was really something of an inventor for he devised a gadget known as the Cerebroscope which permitted two way radio conversation with God, Saint Peter, rulers of the galaxies and almost anyone else. Joe, in company with Marco Polo, manages to get into Heaven and is well entertained by the Diety and saintly court. Next comes a visit to the City of Atro (exact location unknown), ruled by a gangster group headed by Attila, Genghis Khan and Hannibal. After declining an invitation by Cleopatra and Cortez (whose first name is given wrongly as Fernando) to form a universe conquering triumverate, Joe wanders about a bit, finally landing on Mentator world with its "collossal mind machine -- The Mentator -- transforming uncertain human logic into Certified Reason to prevent the catastrophic errors of inferior world thinking" -- figure that one out if you can.

Oh yes, Joe finds his eternal love but she ditches him so back to earth he goes to impart his newly found wisdom and reform humanity. A pathetic sort of book (privately printed, I imagine for no commercial publisher would accept it) written by a man who undoubtedly had grandiose ideas, muzzy perhaps, and certainly lacked the skill to present them. Not worth reading. ((Editor's Note: This book was also published under the title "Try Another World". With that title it stunk too yet.))

DONOVAN'S BRAIN -- Curt Siodmak -- The American Mercury -- New York -- 25¢

I missed "Donovan's Brain" when it first appeared a few years ago and have now read it in a pocket book edition, apparently unabridged. To say that the story deserves reading by every fantasy addict is an understatement. Briefly the book concerns the death in a plane accident of America's richest man and the preservation of his living brain by a cold and ruthless scientist. By the aid of blood circulating pumps, food serums, electrical stimulation and a form of telepathy the brain is kept alive and growing.



What starts as a study of mental processes on the part of the scientist, a determined attempt at communication, ends in mental control by the millionaire and the imposition of his demands upon the experimenter. An almost complete exchange of mentalities, habits, mannerisms, handwriting leads to horror and tragedy. The book throughout is sombre and tense with always an undercurrent of despair and doom. Effectiveness is aided by a deceptively simple style and continued restraint in the telling. Far above the usual "weird". ((Editor's Note: How many fens are aware of the fact that "Donovan's Brain" first saw publication as a serial in Black Mask, a detective magazine?))

THE MIDNIGHT READER -- Edited by Philip Van Doren Stern -- Henry Holt & Co. New York -- 1942 -- \$2.75.

Most of the contents of Philip Stern's anthology will be familiar to fantasy addicts. Fifteen tales are included, most of them culled from "Classics" in the field, yet well worth reprinting in a single volume. Mr. Stern very evidently avoided the pulps (how many anthologists seem to regard "Weird Tales", "Astounding", etc. as unclean!), concentrating upon old and familiar favorites -- not a bad idea for a desultory reader like your reviewer whose indolence makes him appreciative of compactness and availability.

Outstanding, of course, is Henry James' "Turn of the Screw", probably the finest story of psychological haunting ever written, but one which demands sensitive intelligence upon the part of the reader. "The Beckoning Fair One" by Oliver Onions is a masterpiece of horror. (Incidentally, an English friend just informed me that "Onions" is not pronounced the same as our well known scallion but is pronounced "O'Nion", something like "O'Brien" This bit of useless information is supplied gratis to all readers of "Chanticleer").

No one who has read "The Yellow Wall Paper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman will ever forget the terrifying last line. Thanks, Mr. Stern, for including the story. "August Heat" by W. F. Harvey is a ghastly short with implications that will keep one wondering. Montague James is represented by his gem, "The Mezzotint", Algernon Blackwood contributes "The Willows", Marion Crawford can still send tingles down the spine in "The Upper Berth". Allegedly non-fiction is Louis Adamic's remarkable "The Millvale Haunting", an account vouched for by reputable witnesses. And we must not overlook Mr. Stern's splendid introduction and discussion of factors which are essential to stories of horror and the supernatural. "The Midnight Reader" (still available at the publishers) must have a place in every fantasy collection.

ARDATH--Marie Corelli--Published dozens of times, my copy coming from the Henneberry Company of Chicago via a second hand book store.

More years ago than I care to remember but certainly before most of my readers were born I went through a spell of Corelli devotion. "The Soul of Lilith", "A Romance of Two Worlds", "Vendetta", "Thelma", and "Wormwood" are some of the titles I remember by name only with little recollection of their contents. A few weeks ago I ran across a second hand copy of "Ardath - The Story of a Dead Self" and tried rereading it but it just can't be done. I managed to plow or sleep through some hundred out of the 565 pages and then gave up. Marie Corelli, as far as I can recall from memory and from this latest attempt, was a pseudo mystic, a believer in transmigration, or perhaps reincarnation would be a better word, certain of another world of spiritual beauty. \* \* \* I strongly advise against reading it unless you are a reincarnation of some swooning Victorian miss who thinks love and sex have to do with daisies and violets.



## THE LAST CHORUS

So it gifs Channy 6 and the end of Volume I. I believe the mag has now hit its stride and I look forward to Volume 2 with high hopes.

The mag now has three regular and popular columns: MYFFSAW, HIBAWF and FUNTASY. I'm contemplating another: THIMB, a fan "This Is My Best". Each well known fan will pick what he thinks his best article, humor, poetry, etc., and I'll attempt to get reprint rights.

Bloch's "Funtasy" I know is an old friend of the older fan, and the newer members of our cuckoo clique will surely like it as well as the old. Bloch, in my humble estimation, is the best humorist in fandom.

As for the reviews, they continue to roll in, and Autolycus seems to be an inexhaustible source, for which I'm extremely grateful. And, thanks, Autolycus, for all them there lovely books.

Sorry to state there will be no more Wiedenbeck covers for the duration, which, incidentally, may not be very long, what with the atomic bomb, and Japan's bid for peace, the news of which just came in this morning. Photo stencils are impossible to obtain and Jack is allergic to drawing directly on the stencil. The cover design was executed by yours truly as are all the borders and doodads throughout the mag. Starting with next issue the borders will be intracater than ever, also beautifuller as I've discovered the infinite possibilities of half spacing.

No "Bibliopinions of Ye Ed" this ish. Haven't read very much lately. Been dissipatin and amourin, and stuff like that there; steady girlfriend. Promise a batch of reviews next ish though.

Ye ed is moving to California comes the end of August. Any communications sent thisaway after the third week in August should be sent to Walt Liebscher, c/o LASFS, 637½ S. Bixel, Los Angeles, 14, California. Write me and I'll send you some of that there liquid sunshine.

Next ish it gifs Laney's HIBAWF, Tucker's MYFFSAW, another hilarious Funtasy colyum by Bloch, an expose on the rigors of fanzine publishing and collecting. Reviews of course of which there will be a plethora by the inimitable Autolycus, and Laney, Spencer, Warner and Ashley. Some by me too.

I wants to thank you guys for voting for Channy in the latest poll, bringing it up to third place. Why don't you be nice to me and make it first next time.

And I want more letters commenting on this ish. How am I to know just what you like if nobody writes. I hate these guys who refuse to write letters of comment, yet make remarks about Channy in other mags. Taint right fellers, taint right.

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