

-John Cockroft 1947-



DREAM QUEST



DREAM QUEST

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DREAM QUEST

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DREAM QUEST is an amateur magazine of fantasy, science fiction, and weird fiction. It is published irregularly at 495 North Third St., Banning, California. Price: 10¢ per copy, 3 for 25¢, 6 for 50¢, 13 for \$1.00. We welcome material; payment is made at the rate of a free copy of DQ for each acceptable bit of material, and a quarter page of free advertising for each 1000 words of material. If a check appears here you had better send some money if you want more issues of this mag. Trades arranged with other fanzines.

the gas jet:
* EDITORIAL *

Well, here you are -- DREAM QUEST #1. And everybody, especially the critics, immediately sigh: "Who gives a damn?" and return to their copies of THE SHAVER MYSTERY and Part III of Mandark.

But it's our sincere hope that some day this humble zine may rate among the top ten. Compared with FANTASY ADVERTISER, SHANGRI-L' AFFAIRES, FANTASY COMMENTATOR, GROTESQUE, and the memories of such defunct publications as VAMPIRE and SCIENTIFUNCTIONIST, our rating won't be much to brag about on next year's polls. And, of course, beside VORTEX all mimeoed junk pales into insignificance. But maybe, someday.....

The first, and we feel most important, business at hand is the asking -- begging; if you want -- for material with which to fill the second issue. Nobody likes an individzine -- neither critics nor readers nor editor. We don't want the second issue of our magazine to be an individzine; for that reason, you guys should send us material. We are going to stress variety -- you see something of what we want in this issue. We want the same cross section from now on, ranging in treatment from the type of Speer's article to the treatment given by Kennedy. And everything in between. We have leaned rather heavily toward reviews in this first issue, entirely without intention on our part; maybe we should continue that way. Anyway, we will accept just about anything dealing with fantasy in any form, unless it might land us in a dispute with the postal authorities or a libel suit. Keep the material rolling in! We'd like to print everything that might have gone to STFIST had it not died, from there on down (or up) to the type which is currently run in SHANGRI-L'AFFAIRES.

We also need letters of comment. As Burbee says, they make us feel that somebody reads the stuff we sweat over. Also they give us valuable ideas. And they enable us to eliminate the stuff that you guys don't like. And to add the stuff you would like to see. Don't hesitate to pan the hell out of anything in the issue if you want. We desire your honest opinion, and your suggestions. Let's make CAVE OF THE WINDS a mammoth department.

We desire to arrange trades with any and all fanzines, American, foreign, subterranean, extra-terrestrial, and inter-dimensional. If you turn out anything which might be called a fanzine, contact us and we'll arrange a trade with you. This goes for semipros like Gillings' and Cowie-Kull's too. For those of you who don't print anything, you can get subscriptions for money or free copies for material. For every acceptable article, story, poem, review, satire, drawing, or what-have-you we add one issue to your subscription. Anybody doing a regular column can have a free lifetime subscription. We will also give free advertising space for material -- say a quarter page for every thousand words. Fair enough? Okay, get your crud in to us.

We'd like to extend liberal thanks to all the guys who so generously contributed material to this issue. And a special thanks to Ackerman and Moskowitz, who sent their reviews without even being asked. With guys like that in fandom, we are beginning to think that maybe the so-oftenly-quoted prediction that fandom is going to the dogs is unfounded. We'd like to thank Gilbert Swenson for being good enough to take the valuable time necessary to write his prozine reviews; just remember that he didn't HAVE to do it. And to Howard Miller, associate editor and head artist, who gave physical, mental, and financial assistance to the buying of paper, stencils, and accessories. To all you guys who sent in dimes. To Kay-Mar Carlson, who gave us a gratis ad in his TRADER without being asked. To Charles Burbee, who added a request for material onto the end of a letter of comment in his zine. To just about everybody. We hope we have made the zine worthy of the help we've received.

And remember, if this issue isn't what it should be, that we have had to familiarize ourselves with a new technique -- that of mimeoing -- and that we didn't allow ourselves enough time to do a really bang-up job. With your help, however, we may be able to make this zine a top notcher in a few years. Let's hear from you!

--DEN Wilson

REFLECTIONS

-ooo-

Narcissus,
Peering in his pool,
Said, How clear, serene and cool
My image is... And I likewise;
Hypnotized by his own beauty;
Lost in self idolatry.

.....Yet... Would he have known
Such love's complacent warm,
Had he seen himself.....
....In storm.....

--Marijane Nuttall

AN ARKHAM "MUST!"

DARK OF THE MOON, Poems of Fantasy and the Macabre, edited by August W. Derleth. 418 pages. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin, \$3.00.

Sometimes priceless treasures of entertainment and relaxation are tossed casually aside by the poisonous apathy of prejudice. It is unfortunate, but true, that many of the most devoted of literary people cannot understand that poetry, when well done, has a charm and significance that often transcends the loftiest prose.

In the field of the weird and fantastic, and -- yes -- even of the scientificfictional, superb work in the poetic line has been created, and August Derleth, displaying a phenomenal reading range, has collected and had the courage to publish, in the largest \$3.00 Arkham House book on his lists, an anthology of such verse. Despite the magnitude of all that has gone before it, I believe that Dark of the Moon rears up as one of the top books in the Arkham House chain.

The reader may not care for poetry; the reviewer happens to be crazy about it; but every true fantasy fan must be warned that if he passes up this book he will live to regret it.

The old masters are here. And they belong here, for, unlike the prose collections of the supernatural, this is to all intents and purposes the first comprehensive anthology of fantastic verse ever published. The only thing similar available is a small section of a pocket book of verse edited by Louis Untermeyer, which no more than whets the appetite.

I would have been sorely peeved if Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven" had not been included. Probably one of the most popular and well-known poems in the English language, the gloomy profundities of Poe place it squarely in the designation of macabre verse. As it was, I missed "The Bells" which was not included, though "Ulaluma" is present.

There are so many selections -- 160 of them, often as long as a standard short story -- that a comprehensive review is obviously impractical. However, of the tried and true you will find William Blake, Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas More, Goethe, John Keats, Thomas Hood, Longfellow, Tennyson, Richard Garnett, James Whitcomb Riley, A. E. Housman, Edward Arlington Robinson, Robert Frost, Joyce Kilmer, William Rose Benet, etc., etc.

Of the oldtimers, J. Sheridan Le Fanu's twelve-pager "The Legend of the Glaive" should prove of particular interest to the fans, as will the seldom-anthologized poems of Fitz-James O'Brien. Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" is scarcely to be missed, nor is James Thomson's "The City of Dreadful Night." Fans who have read many quotations from Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" will be pleased to find that famous bit present in its entirety. Walter de la Mare's famous "The Listener" is present with two other selections as is Amy Lowell's "A

Dracula of the Hills."

But what makes the volume an unqualified "must" for every lover of the fantastic, whether he has a taste for poetry or not, is the last section of the book, where Derloeth has included liberal sections of the "moderns" whose stories we enjoyed so well in "Weird Tales," from whose pages many of the selections are made, as well as from literary fan magazines and rare, long-out-of-print collections.

Vinceñt Starrett, who is slated for immortality because he is represented by a short story, "Penelope," in "The Moon Terror and Others" (the supply of which has proven inexhaustible through the decades), has seven poems; the first of which, "221B," is in memory of Sherlock Holmes and Watson, and though inappropriate is still enjoyed without prejudice. "Extraordinary Visit" has a rocket ship motif, and the others will be found to be quite clever and worthy of anthologization (come to think of it, I've read quite a number of them elsewhere).

H. P. Lovecraft is represented by his entire story-length narrative poem "Psychopompos" from "Weird Tales," the complete "Fungi from Yuggoth," enjoyment of which remains unimpaired by Winfield Townley Scott's revelation that they are strongly patterned after some of the work of Edward Arlington Robinson. In addition we have "The Messenger," and "The Ancient Track." Of the group the last mentioned is perhaps the most original. Though it is doubtful that any of Lovecraft's poetry is slated for immortality, I can almost guarantee their enjoyment to the fantasy reader.

Clark Ashton Smith, whose mighty vocabulary is at times his worst enemy, rewards the patient with some stirring, truly unworldly lines. The quotable passages from "The Hashish Eater" would encompass most of its eighteen closely-printed pages. And the ten other poems by him in the book are none too many. A collected volume of Smith's poetry would be a heady drink to be sipped gradually, but nevertheless to be greatly desired.

"Metropolitan Nightmare," by Stephen Vincent Benet will amaze the average science-fiction reader, for this long narrative poem is unquestionably straight science-fiction (with a surprise twist no less.) One hot, sultry summer day, millions upon millions of termites invade the city of New York; and the people and press burst over with laughter at the thought of the Termites trying to find something to eat in this city of steel and cement, until one day a reporter warns a watchman:

"'Say, Buddy,' he said,
'You better look out for those ants. They eat wood, you know,
They'll have your shack down in no time.'

The watchman spat.

'Oh, they've quit eating wood,' he said, in a casual voice,
'I thought everybody knew that.'

----and, reaching down,

He pried from the insect jaws the bright crumb of steel."

SEVEN of the fantastic poems of Frank Belknap Long are here, previously obtainable only in fantastically rare limited editions, like THE GOBLIN TOWER, published by R. H. Barlow at his Dragon Fly Press in Florida, in a limited edition of 100 copies of which only twenty were ever bound and distributed. A 25-page volume, most of its poems were originally published in "Weird Tales."

I am unable to ascertain whether any of the Long poems are taken from his first volume A Man from Genoa, published by W. Paul Cook in 1926, inasmuch as I have never seen the contents of that publication listed.

The two poems published of Francis Flagg, like others read elsewhere, show remarkable ability in powerful presentation of subject matter, a predominating virility of spirit and aptitude of phrasing that leads me to believe that others may yet "discover" Flagg.

A liberal sampling of Robert E. Howard is rewarding, particularly in a work as outstanding as "Always Comes Evening," which almost tempts the reviewer to stick his neck out long enough to wonder if this is not a valid contribution to an anthology of great American verse. Howard shows adeptness at the ballad, and though he has some faults, not the least of which is a bit of clumsiness in phrasing, the fantasy fan will devour "Solomon Kanak's Homecoming" with relish.

Then there is Donald Wandrei's "Sonnets of the Midnight Hours," complete, which falls in the same category of weird poetry as Lovecraft's "Fungi from Yuggoth" and proves as enjoyable.

Anthony Boucher, Leah Bodine Drake, Mary Elizabeth Counselman, and Duane W. Rimel, all well-known to the fan and the "Weird Tales" reader, are present.

August W. Derleth treats us to a selection of his own work. Of all the present-day weirdists present, Derleth more than any other follows the modern style popularized by Carl Sandburg, which becomes evident even in an episodic poem like "Bart Hinch" which follows the line of Lovecraft's "Fungi" and Wandrei's "Sonnets," which, while patterned similarly, retains distinctively Derleth's own style.

Derleth has shown a good deal of Boston's proverbial "Moxie" in presenting this collection, which I recommend unqualifiedly. I only hope that the stubbornness of viewpoint and purpose which has exasperated many fans in the past sets its mind upon a series of complete fantastic or related poetry by individual poets, such as Clark Ashton Smith, Frank Belknap Long, Robert E. Howard, etc., for that would satisfy my equally tenacious viewpoint as to what constitutes books worth collecting.

--Sam Moskowitz

THOUGH WITH RULE AND LINE (sic)
by Jack Speer

My first text tonight is from Eddington, Gifford 12:5--

" 'Knowableness to mind' is moreover a property which differentiates the actual world of our experience from imaginary worlds in which the same general laws of Nature are supposed to hold true. Consider a world --- Utopia, let us say --- governed by all the laws of Nature known and unknown which govern our own world, but containing better stars, planets, cities, animals, etc. --- a world which might exist, but it just happens that it doesn't. How can the physicist test that Utopia is not the actual world? We refer to a piece of matter in it; it is not real matter but it attracts any other piece of (unreal) matter in Utopia according to the law of gravitation. Scales and clocks constructed of this unreal matter will measure wrong intervals, but the physicist cannot detect that they are wrong unless he has first shown the unreality of the matter. As soon as any element in it has been shown to be unreal Utopia collapses; but so long as we keep to the cycles of physics [This is the potential; that was derived from the interval, that was measured by the scale, that was made from the matter, that embodied the stress, that expressed the potential, that was derived from the interval.....] we can never find the vulnerable point, for each element is correctly linked to the rest of the cycle, all our laws of Nature expressed in the cycle being obeyed by hypothesis. The unreal stars emit unreal light which falls on unreal retinas and ultimately reaches unreal brains ... Of the infinite number of worlds which are examples of what might be possible under the laws of Nature, there is one which does something more than fulfill those laws of Nature. This property, which is evidently not definable with respect to any of the laws of Nature, we describe as 'actuality' --- generally using the word as a kind of halo of indefinite import. We have seen that the trend of modern physics is to reject these indefinite attributions and to define its terms according to the way in which we recognize the properties when confronted by them. We recognize the actuality of a particular world because it is that world alone with which consciousness interacts. However much the theoretical physicist may dislike a reference to consciousness, the experimental physicist uses freely this touchstone of actuality. ... Each of us is armed with this touchstone of actuality; by applying it we decide that this sorry world of ours is actual and Utopia is a dream. As our individual consciousnesses are different, so our touchstones are different; but fortunately they all agree in their indication of actuality --- or at any rate those which agree are in sufficient majority to shut the others up in lunatic asylums.

"... If actuality means 'known to mind' then it is a purely subjective character of the world; to make it objective we must substitute 'knowable to mind.' The less stress we lay on the accident of parts of the world being known at the present era to particular minds, the more stress we must lay on the potentiality of being known to mind as a fundamental objective property of matter, giving it the status of actuality whether individual consciousness is taking note of it or not."

THE second text I will not quote, but synopsise. In Destiny

Times Three, the representative of the race which made and lost the Probability Engine denounced Prim and his companions who had found and misused it. By this super-race the Probability Engine had been used to forecast the results of alternative choices, merely casting hypotheses and working out the results mechanically instead of mentally. But Prim and his fellows had used it to force divisions in the time stream they belonged to, and actualized three possibilities from the crucial decision on handling atomic energy. After deciding that World II and World III were unsuccessful, and that the world based on putting atomics in the public domain, World I, was successful, the eight villains directed the Probability Engine to destroy Worlds II and III.

This reminds me of an amazing little story in an obscure fantasy collection entitled "A Moment of Time." I can't reproduce the cleverness of it, but as I recall, an old gentleman pulled out a watch and said, "The universe will end -- now," and put his watch away. A young man argued with him. "I can still see the world around me," he said. "Uno," said the oldster. "If the world had not ended at the moment I indicated, it would have now been as you think you observe it, and you would have been observing it as you now think you are doing." "But, by George," shouted the young one, "I can see it and I'm not addicted to illusions." "What is this you that sees it? You died along with the world a minute ago. That which now makes these extravagant assertions is merely the cut-off projection of what you would have continued to be if you hadn't died."

But Prim's gang had not destroyed the unsuccessful possible worlds; they had only placed them beyond their own observation. And the peoples of those worlds went on suffering from the wrong choices forced upon them when the wielders of the Probability Engine split destiny three ways. But they were not utterly beyond the possibility of observation by the eight experimenters, or by people in World I which continued to be within the time-splitters' ken. People in World II found that by intense concentration under the right circumstances, they could swap egos with their counterparts in World I; and citizens of World I who were not yet thus dispossessed sometimes had bad dreams which originated in their World II counterparts. And finally scientists in World II developed a means of bridging the gap which separated them from the happy world, and sent an invading force thru it.

As concerns Prim and his fellow Late-Middle Dawn men, and Thorn I and his acquaintances, then, World II and World III were actual, for they were knowable to these men's minds. Would they have been actual if there had not remained this possibility of communication and transportation -- if the Probability Engine, though failing to "destroy" them, had put them utterly beyond observation and capacity to affect? If this had been accomplished, would Worlds II and III not have been in exactly the same status as the hypothetical worlds which the True Owners of the Machine claimed they never actualized, but only postulated to test alternatives?

The envoy of the True Owners seemed to think there was difference. Human beings continued to live and suffer in Worlds II and III; there was no such suffering in the hypothetical worlds which resulted

From his race's proper operation of the Probability Engine, because the latter worlds weren't real.

I doubt that Sir Arthur would agree with him. The Englishman would point out that people in these hypothetical worlds could (thru the Engine) be observed to weep and wring their hands, and conduct their lives as if they didn't enjoy the results of the hypothetical wrong choices. If he didn't have an illogical penchant for believing consciousness to be the ultimate reality, Eddington would probably conclude from these signs that these unreal people were suffering unreal grief which was as poignant to them as real grief to real people.

THE temporal theory of Destiny Times Three is not altogether clear, but for the purpose of this discussion it will be convenient to assume that Prim and his lieutenants were operating on the theory of finite-valued probability, whereas the race which made the Engine accepted the theory of infinite-valued probability. Translating into English: Finite-valued probability here refers to the "Branches of Time" theory -- that a time-traveler or some other extraordinary event creates a new distinct branch on the trunk of time when he comes to rest in a past age and starts making changes therein. Infinite-valued probability is implicit in "Sidewise in Time," "Tomorrow and Tomorrow," and other stories, though I don't call to mind any tale which makes it perfectly clear. The idea is that from every particle in the universe at every instant there radiates a pencil of probabilities, each pencil containing infinite numbers of future possibilities. For purposes of dramatization, only sharply differing possibility lines are usually involved in a story, but it may be implied that there are continuous series of intermediate possibilities between these outstanding alternatives. For our purposes here, the main point is that in this theory the alternative worlds appear automatically, whether we do anything about it or not; in the "Branches of Time" school, they are only called into "existence" by the act of a time-traveler.

But what do we mean by "existence"? What is the difference between being and not being? The pragmatic theory of meaning states that a definition must enable us to become acquainted in experience with what the word stands for, if it stands for anything. If "existence" is defined in other terms than knowableness to people you know of, it loses its usefulness.

On this basis, when the temponaut who later returned to tell the tale stopped at 1776 and called a new branch of time into "existence," all he was doing was rendering known, and proving knowable, to us one of the infinitude of probabilities which, if they were knowable, existed all the time anyway.

And therefore the Engine makers' possible futures existed whether they observed them or not; and when the villainous Prim and his companions used the Engine to actualize worlds in which subtronic energy was kept to the elite, or attempted to be suppressed, their only crime was to render detectable to World I inhabitants unhappy counterparts in other worlds who would have been there anyway, suffering just as much grief for the errors of their histories.

If you have followed me, you may race on a little ahead and wonder why then any of us should try to make this world a better place

For the sake of other people. Surely "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is an extravagant doctrine; must we spend time sympathizing with the lost brethren beyond our ken? Even if this is a world fated to become, by our efforts, a better place to live in, there are countless others, though undetectable to us, in which men are unhappy; and if we do not try to make this a better world, the better world "exists" somewhere else. Therefore let me look to my own welfare and pleasure only, and let the world go hang.

The answer is that that is not the way human beings function. We are not driven to make sacrifices for ideals by a backgroundless desire that the world shall be a better place. We are driven to it by sympathy with people we have seen in person or in the newsreels, by calculations that what benefits others will benefit ourselves in unguessable ways, by training which makes us unable to be fully happy while seeing unhappiness around us. By such considerations as these the human machine is moved to try to improve all of the world that is known or likely to become known to its mind.

But what you can't know won't hurt you.

-THE END-

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

There has been fan fiction and fan fiction, in the past. This fan fiction has been good, bad, and indifferent. The general consensus of opinion seems to be that most of it was not worth reading. While occasionally a piece as good as "The Girl with Muddy Eyes" appeared, this apparently was so seldom that fan tired of searching the clay for diamonds and skipped all stuff in fanzines labelled "fiction" entirely.

Therefore it is purely as an experiment that we announce a fan fictional piece that is slated to be started in DREAM QUEST #2. We are going to begin publication of a serial, fictional in nature. If you peoples react favorably to it, the thing will be continued indefinitely, or at least as long as the author continues to write installments. If you don't like it, it will be junked right here and now, with nobody the loser. Not even the author -- for he has only turned out Part I and most of Part II yet; the rest of it is all in his mind. If you don't like it, the idea will never leave that place.

This serial's title is "The Dream Quest of the Unknown Cadaver." Actually, the only resemblance of the story to the title is the Quest. No cadavers do any walking -- or at least they are not central characters. The thing will be humorous and satirical in nature, and will be entirely picaresque -- structurally it is like a movie serial, not a novel. The author is new to fandom; his name is Gordon Elliott, and editor Miller found him in Long Beach, California.

We should like to announce one thing beforehand. Mr. Elliott had made this yarn a satire and parody throughout. It was inevitable that fen, as well as editors and authors, should be parodied in its contents. Realizing that we might end up with libel suits on our hands, we have decided to announce: Any fan who objects to being parodied or satirized please tell us so, and we will see that your name (or parody thereon) and your publications (parodied) shall be mentioned nowhere in the serial's course. And we won't reveal it if you do not care to be manhandled -- we don't want anybody to think you are a poor sport. If we receive no objections, we shall consider that we have been given clear license to satirize, and Mr. Elliott shall be free to proceed accordingly. Okay? ..Oh, yes, one more thing: this doesn't mean that all fen are to be punned and poked fun at. Only such ones as Elliott sees fit.

These chapters will probably run an average of five pages per part, although they may vary from that. As we say, the serial will be humorous in nature, and Mr. Elliott and we, the editors, assure all and sundry that no malicious intent is thought of at all -- the whole idea is fun, all the way around. We hope none of you take it seriously. We desire to remain in good standing in fandom, and Elliott doesn't want to be barred forever from membership because of a misunderstanding.

One way or another, we want your comments, pro and con. If you don't like the serial, it will be promptly canned with no hard feelings anywhere. If you like it, it will go on to greater glories. In any event, it is an experiment that will probably provide a few laughs somewhere in its pages.

Also in the next issue will be some more of Marijane's poetry. And number 2 of Peabody's Futurescope. Gilbert Swenson will dissect the proz which come out between now and then, and we hope that a lot of you fans will have your names on bylines in the issue. We would like, too, to make CAVE OF THE WINDS fill up a heck of a lot of space. If enough letters are received, we will make a twenty page letter column. And you may be assured that if no fan names appear in #2 it won't be on account of rejections by us.

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NOTICE: NOTICE!

The THIRTEENTH subscription received to begin with Issue #2 will be given for DOUBLE the amount of issues ordered. If order #13 is for three copies, the lucky guy will receive six -- and so on. Incidentally, this goes for you guys who already have #2 coming because of material submitted, too -- if you order #s 3, 4, and 5 and are #13, you'll have four copies ordered and hence get 8. Does this sound okay? Okay -- SUBSCRIBE!

HEINLEIN IN THE POST

by Gilbert Swenson

WE get the Post at our house, and we were just as surprised, I imagine, as the rest of the scientifictionists when the February 8 issue arrived, with the name of Robert A. Heinlein on the contents page, and a note and photo on the "Keeping Posted" page. Naturally, it was a pleasant surprise -- we looked for a wide popularization of stf, since the Post has a really immense circulation. After a reading of the story and a subsequent one, we have begun to wonder.

Naturally, the inclusion of any kind of stf in a slick like the Post would have been welcome, since no slick has ever published any stf worth noting before, and that which has been published is all mainly borderline material; while here was true stf in the grandest tradition, namely the interplanetary tale. And Heinlein was always a favorite author, with such magnificent pieces as "Methuselah's Children," "Universe," and "Common Sense" to his credit. Yes, we were really pleased. We expected great things from an author with so magnificent a background as Heinlein. Unfortunately, we were disappointed.

The first story, "The Green Hills of Earth," has as its theme Rhysling, the Blind Singer of the Spaceways, mentioned in the old Heinlein future history in ASF years ago. The story is tied in directly with the Heinlein mythos -- mention is made of D. D. Harriman, hero of "Requiem." There, however, the similarity of this tale to the magnificent pieces of yore ceases. The great skill of the prewar Heinlein seemingly is gone. I am tempted to compare the style of this short to the style used so ineffectively by Heinrich Hauser in his history of the future, "Titans' Battle." That is just what "The Green Hills" reads like -- history. The plot of the story is that Rhysling, great blind bard, died a hero's death by repairing the atomic engines and allowing the radioactive rays to kill him. This could have made a magnificent (for Planet) if slightly insipid plot, if handled right. The writing just wasn't good enough to make the plot jell. We wonder if this might not put stf in more of a bad light with the Post's readers than any possibility it might have had of popularizing stf.

Heinlein later -- in the April 26 issue, to be exact -- landed another space tale in the Post's hallowed pages. This one was called "Space Jockey." The most that can be said for it was that it at least had a plot, while the other one didn't. Can this be Heinlein? The heartrending happenings in "Space Jockey" concern a spaceman who has a doting wife who constantly worries him by worrying about him. She is afflicted with spacephobia; you know the kind, weeping about their husbands' dangerous work. The poor guy, pity his unfortunate fate, is faced with the possibility of having to take a ground job. Then along comes the young son of the Big Boss into the control cabin of the ship when she is on the earth-moon run, and just about wrecks things. Of course, our hero brings her in safely, and straightens out everything with the little woman. If you care enough to find out how he does it, visit a second hand store. This might have rated slight praise for its writing quality had it appeared in PLANET. As it is -- phooey.

Mediocre. It is my personal opinion that the stories were rejected by Campbell years ago, and the Post accepted them -- by what chance I am unable to say.

Yes, the days of the 1941 Heinlein are gone forever, unless some radical change takes place -- either Bob's return to ASF or better stuff in the Post. ((Since this was written he has crashed TWS and SS -- just one more indication of Merwin's up and coming improvement of his zines!)) As it is, the stories are notable only for good illustrations, and the fact that they are stf in a slick. Maybe they will gradually get better -- after all, these are only the first two. At any rate, we certainly hope so.

THE END

ADDITIONS TO THE EDITORIAL

Since the editorial was written, some things have come up which could do with discussion; and, since this space needed filling, we decided to discuss them here. Better than leaving the space blank.

First, a note of correction. What I should do is re-dummy the forecast, but since I'm too lazy to do that I shall merely inform you about Peabody's futurescope. Number 2 of that department was written in the forecast for next issue on the assumption that #1 would be in here. However, the first installment had to be left out on account of lack of space. It will appear in the second issue. A department called "Bookdealers I Have Known" was also knocked into the future. And at this writing I'm uncertain whether Marijane Nuttall's poem, THE EVOKATION PRIMAL, will appear. If not, rest assured that it will show up sooner or later.

I'm also uncertain at the moment what kind of paper will be used in the first issue. If it is too thin, rest assured that it will not happen again. We will be more careful about future issues.

Now, about the cover. Cockroft sent me a gorgeous drawing suitable for litho. However, being as how as we can't afford such an expensive process, we had to mimeo it. My father cut the stencil. If some sucker would donate the necessary money, I'd have it lithoed for a future issue.

Remember to send in your material for Issue #2. Right now, everything is needed. Articles, fiction, humor, art, poems,.....leave us have piles of contributions.

That exhausts our wordage, and besides the space is about filled up. See you along about September.

--the Ed

~~14~~
DREAM COME TRUE

by Forrest J Ackerman

MOST OF YOU have heard of "The Cabinet of Dr Caligari," the celebrated German fantastic film. I have seen it revived on several occasions. But never had I seen an elusive successor to it, another imaginative movie made in 1924 -- WAXWORKS. "Waxworks" starred the two principals of "Caligari," Conrad Veidt & Werner Krause. Students of cinema as an art generally find references to, perhaps a still from, "Waxworks" in books on the subject of the screen's history.

RECENTLY I saw, for the first time, this nearly quarter of a century old fantastic film. Rather, I saw what's left of it. From what is reputed to be the only print extant in the USA, one entire sequence -- presumably a third of the picture -- is missing. This concerns the comings and goings of Jack-the-Ripper (in the picture referred to as Spring-Heel Jack).

"WAXWORKS" preceded by 20 years the "Flesh & Fantasy" sort of sequence film. It opened on a notice in a newspaper advertising for a writer capable of creating imaginative stories. The young man who answers finds himself in a Chamber of Horrors, whose proprietor wishes his macabre museum publicized. As the author dreams up descriptions of what each wax figure did in real life, the realistic dummies' biographies are dramatized.

IVAN THE TERRIBLE, portrayed by Conrad "Caligari" Veidt, is a Rasputinish appearing rascal with a penchant for poison. He takes a perverted delight in visiting his dungeons and mocking the men he has sentenced to death by placing a sand clock before their eyes and observing their agonies as time runs out for them. The descent into the hellpits of torture were rather on the shuddery side. In the end, Ivan believes he has become a victim of his own poison-mixer, and goes insane, turning a sand clock feverishly back and forth all the rest of his days, never allowing the grains to run completely out of the top globe. Several strange sets in this sequence.

PART TWO had Emil Jannings portraying a Caliph of old who possessed a ring of magic properties. To prove his manhood to his sweetheart, a poor young lover swore to steal into the Caliph's palace and seize the ring. When his good fortune apparently brought him upon the Caliph asleep, he hacked off his victim's hand and fled with it with the ring still on the severed member. Unknown to him, the sleeping Caliph was in actuality a dummy, and the ring an impotent duplicate. The Caliph, in the meantime, was calling on the young man's sweetheart!

AN EXCITING CHASE thru Caligarian corridors and spiraling staircases ensues, as the thief is spied by the Caliph's guards. There is a weird damn thing of him being trapped atop a curious cupola and escaping a la Douglas Fairbanks Sr by a leap to the top of a rubbery tree which bends to ground beneath his weight.

WHEN THE HERO arrives breathless at his sweetheart's door and starts pounding it down (the Caliph had locked it to prevent interruption of his anticipated love-making) the Caliph hastily hides. The lover bursts in, the guards not in pursuit, with the horrifying revelation that he has

((Continued on page 50))

THE 1948 FAN CONVENTION
by Rick Sneyd

You may think it odd to write an article about a Con in 1948 when the 1947 convention isn't over yet. But that is just why this is being written. Because at that convention -- the Philcon -- the site of the next one will be chosen, just as in the past. But where will the '48 convention be held? Well, it is the hope and belief of this writer that it will be in San Francisco. There are a number of reasons.

For one thing, though this will of course be denied, few other places of importance have a right to it. New York is near to Philadelphia, so any that want to attend a convention can come to one of these. Also, they had a local convention there last year. So they really have no right to one. Chicago fans are about as inactive a bunch as you could see -- at least, I have heard nothing of their doings. So it can hardly be expected that they could have it. Denver fans are very active, but there are only five of them -- hardly enough to put on a convention. Besides, all of these places have had the conventions in years past, and it was the original idea to have each convention at a different city as long as there were any left. San Francisco is virtually the only fan city that is left.

It hasn't had a con, and it has a good many active fans, at least in the GGFS. The names of Riggs, Goldstone, Cockroft should be familiar to all. And then there are the two editors of Vortex, George Cowle and Gordon Kull, who have shown in Vortex what they can do. In letters, both of them have indicated that they are willing to work at fandom. And from what I've seen and heard from other friends they ought to be able to run a darn good Convention.

There are thirty or more fans in the GGFS, and about the same number within a few miles. Then of course Los Angeles is only a day's drive away. The newly-formed Portland Science Fantasy Society should be able to attend a convention at San Francisco, while they would have difficulty traveling clear across the country to another city. So there would be plenty of fan there, even if few came from outside California.

Another thing -- San Francisco is one of our biggest cities, yet hasn't had a convention. There are a lot of fans that couldn't afford a long trip to another city or state -- why not give them a chance? Also, it will give those like Kogman, who go to all the conventions, a chance to see a new city and meet a new group of sponsoring fan.

Think it over, and when you who go to the Philcon come to vote for next year's convention site, remember the slogan of the Marines -- GOLDEN GATE IN '48: And you that aren't able to make it, tell your friends to vote for the Friscon.

GOLDEN GATE IN '48!!

"AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT OF INTEREST....."
by the Editor

Those of you who were unfortunate enough to read our advance publicity no doubt remember one statement made therein: "Included in the first issue will be an important announcement of interest to any real fan." Well, here is that announcement. We will leave the decision as to whether or not the thing is important enough to interest any real fan up to you.

In one of the issues of the dear late VAMPIRE, Leslie Croutch asked why we could not issue some fan books, as well as fan mags, once in a while. Many fans have talked about fan fiction, fan poetry, fan art, in the past; many have also talked about reprints. There you have our idea. Yes, we plan to issue fan "books." Yes, we plan to reprint fan fiction in those books -- and we also plan to reprint all phases of the best fan writings of yesterday -- PROVIDED we can obtain your assistance. That is where the "any real fan" comes in.

As we are not too experienced in publishing as yet, we plan to make our first effort the smallest one -- an anthology of fan poetry. The size of this anthology will depend entirely upon you. For we are not going to go around buying old fanzines hunting for poetry -- we must have some way to get our filthy paws on it otherwise. We, therefore, ask that all persons who have old fanzines -- pre-1946 -- in their possession, which contain any poems, to (1) copy the poetry together with full credit to author, magazine, editor, etc, and send to us (2) to tell us of the existence of fanzines in your possession containing poetry, description of poem, etc., after which we will tell you what to send (3) to send the fanzine itself. We guarantee to return all fanzines sent to us in the condition in which they were received. Any losses will be paid for in full amount which the fanzine would normally bring on the second-hand market.

Anyone who is willing to give any type of assistance in this venture -- contributions of material, information, or anything that you feel might be of use in compiling this poetry anthology -- is requested to send it along to us. Newsies and other zines are requested to pass along this information, since this first issue's circulation is very low. Thanks.

When the anthology is complete, it will be decorated with artwork by Howard Miller, carefully mimeoed on good paper and bound with either staple or hand-tied cord, depending on the size. The presence of litho covers is a very remote possibility.

After the poetry anthology has been completed, we plan to go on to other fields of reprinting -- fiction, humor, serious articles, and finally, or at least a long time from now when we are richer and more experienced, we plan to begin work on a history of fandom in the form of reprints -- news reported on-the-spot as it happened. Any projects of this kind will obviously depend on the amount of help and assistance that outsiders give us. So let us hear from you!

GOLDEN GATE IN 48!!

CAVE OF THE WINDS

BEING a SELECTION of CRUD
from YOU,

T H E R E A D E R S

NOTICE! No dero allowed in this Cave. --The Editor.

Unfortunately, we have received no letters worthy of publication in this column yet. That is; nothing that would be of general reader interest. However, we would very much like to remedy that unfortunate situation in Issue #2. Would you care to help us do that?

We want letters of all kinds, dealing with all fantasy subjects. First and foremost, of course, will be letters of comment. Every reader of this fanzine should send us a letter of comment. We'd like to get one from every one of you. However, we don't want to limit CAVE OF THE WINDS to purely letters of comment on our own zine. We will also welcome comments on fandom and fantasy in general, controversies and feuds, ideas,. ((We watched Speer do that and we liked the idea.)) What is fandom going to do about rap? What about the NFFF? How about the controversies over fantasy music and new-fans? And so on. Crud of that kind. We will make this department as long as SWIMMING THROUGH THE SEWERS if enough suitable material is received. We will delete all personal correspondence, slanderous or bb-scene material, and so on -- the type of stuff that would not be of general interest, and anything that might land us in a jam.

So send us in your letters. Let us make this department one of fandom's top letter columns. Nothing to put VOM out of business, of course, were it still in existence; but at least as good as any of the general zine letter sections. Write in to us!

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Have you joined the Philcon society yet? you will be
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and -oOo-

GOLDEN GATE IN '48!

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SWIMMING THROUGH THE SEWERS
by Gilbert Swenson

((Editor's note: In the last issue of his well-known fanzine review column, THE BLATANT BEAST, Mr. Art Widner mentioned that he was disappointed by the fact that the only regular prozine reviews then appearing were the ones in Henry Elmsner, Jr.'s fanzine, SCIENTIFICTIONIST. Well, since the blatant beast was written STFIST has unfortunately died; and Mr. Widner and the rest of fandom have been left without prozine reviews again.

They won't have to wait any longer. While there has been quite a lapse of time between the last issues reviewed in STFIST and the first ones here, no major periods of pro publishing have been left unreviewed. We have engaged Gilbert Swenson, who is sincere in his love for fantasy, to write these reviews for us; covered will be all the science-fiction, fantasy, and weird American prozines, the periodic anthology AVON FANTASY READER, and the semipro VORTEX. British and Canadian journals do not appear because it was impossible to obtain copies. We are looking for someone to review the British prozines for us; how about you, J. Michael Rosenblum?? At any rate, even if the column isn't as complete as it should be, fandom again has a regular, steady review of its big pro brothers. We hope you like it. --dw))

((Prozines are listed in alphabetical order, hence the fact that AS is first on the list doesn't have any referende to top quality))

AMAZING STORIES. Volume 21, #7; July 1947. 25¢.

This number of what Joe Kennedy so aptly terms "the poor Rosicrucian's home companion" is surprisingly free from Shaverism and other assorted gibberish. There are four stories -- a 62,000 word complete novel and three shorts. In addition, Palmer rants in the editorial, and DISCUSSIONS continues to recount the true experiences of assorted paranoids and manic depressives throughout the world. VIGNETTES OF FAMOUS SCIENTISTS is the other usual department which makes this issue. L. Taylor Hansen's SCIENTIFIC MYSTERIES, which has been a feature of AS for Lord knows how long, is absent from this issue for the second time in many, many years. The other time was when rap had a baby, and he was too beruddled to perform his editorial tasks with full vigor. We wonder what happened to this department; maybe lack of space, since it was more than a little related to the Shaver mystery, and was therefore unexpendable in the raply way of looking at things. Maybe the dero got Hansen. ((This dept is back in the August ish))

The lead novel is the newest contribution from the typewriter of Chester S. Geier, author of "Environment" and the popular and much ballyhooed FOREVER IS TOO LONG in a recent issue of Amazing's companion, FA. It is interplanetary in nature -- which alone would entitle it to consideration, since an interplanetary story in a magazine whose editor's religious views do not permit of interplanetary travel is something of an oddity, to say the least. Incidentally, the three shorts are interplanetary too. Palmer claims he made it an all-

Interplanetary issue unintentionally. Could be, could be. But returning to the novel -- briefly, "Hidden City" (that's its name) concerns what happened to Harvey Dall and Jules Frontenac when they attempted to carry on rocket research. Dall and Jules had begun to suspect that some organization was working to prevent mankind from ever leaving the earth; one fine day in an airport terminal Dall is accosted by two men who later turn out to be secret service agents who swear Dall in as a special operative to uncover what the mysterious organization is and just why it wants us poor humans to remain forever earthbound. Well, one day at Dall and Frontenac's rocket research camp the food is doped by persons unknown who are spies. Everyone keels over in a dead coma. However Dall is revived by a mysterious white-haired stranger and is able to thwart the evil men before they do too much damage; turns out to be one of his chief assistants who is doing the dirty work, and a cook accomplice who spoiled the broth. ((Come, now.)) The evil one unfortunately escapes and is seen sailing off of the earth in a space ship which has no apparent propulsion mechanism. So Dall and Frontenac, believed dead by the evil man, take off in their own space ship, which they have completed, in order to attempt to gain the advantage of surprise. While in transit from Terra to Luna they are rammed by meteorites and all their air goes out. They haven't enough air to return to Earth, so begin searching for the abode of whoever owns the propulsion-less space ship; on the side of the moon which is so conveniently turned away from the earth, they run across a mysterious city in a crater, which can be raised and lowered when the owners see fit, lowered for concealment and raised to allow the space ships based there to land and take off. Being as they have no air, Frontenac and Dall decide to land and give themselves up. Landing, they discover that their villainous ex-assistant is general in the hidden city's army, and that the leader of the city, and, incidentally, also of the organization which is playing hob with earth's efforts to conquer space, is the inevitable gorgeous girl. "" And from there on the narrative is developed in the usual Geier manner. The yarn has a surprising resemblance to "Forever Is Too Long," which, if we are not mistaken, will rate high in the Fantasy Review poll next annum. There are mutants here too. Scads and scads of mutants -- in fact it is a race of mutants and not an organization who are attempting to stop space travel in order to prevent their city from being detected so that their preparations to conquer Earth will go unheeded; they call themselves "neo-men." They believe they will end war and cause eternal peace and happiness if they take over-- like a good many of our own organizations whose followers, deluded by a blind dreamy idealism and the rantings of demagogues and use of pretty catch-phrases and usually false promises into believing that their organization is the only hope for Earth and that they are only doing good when they conquer and enslave everybody else. ((Here, here -- let's not start any crusades, shall we?)) Naturally, their plans are foiled -- by the mysterious white-haired stranger mentioned earlier in this review, who is a still-further-advanced mutant -- the last of his race, which is called ultra-men. And of course, our hero, Mr. Dall, wins the gorgeous maiden, and everything comes out fine for the peoples of earth, with

nobody being killed or enslaved and everybody happy. How else could it happen?

HIDDEN CITY is easily the best novel that AMAZING has printed yet this year. It is so much better than TITANS' BATTLE and ALL ABOARD FOR THE MOON that there is no comparison whatever. Geier has great writing skill, there is no doubt about it. That has already been proved to the satisfaction of fan by "Environment." The characterization in Hidden City is above reproach -- the characters sound convincing, which is the final test, needless to say. While the plot may not be the greatest ever, and a wee bit of formula creeps in here and there, the weaknesses, which are inevitable in any pulp story, are far transcended by the novel's good points. Geier does some really beautiful writing at times -- especially near the end, where he does some descriptive passages which are worthy of praise. The basic idea for the novel is an excellent one for writing an intrigue-ish and mysterious narrative, and Geier, naturally, is easily equal to the task of developing it. We would go so far as to say that Hidden City is the best first-trip-to-the-moon novel since "Empire of Jegga," David V Reed's vastly under-rated and unsung classic in AS for November 1943. Here's hoping for many more Geier sagas. After too many end of the world novels and gruesome horror drivel, they are refreshing, to say the least.

As for the shorts, the best of the three is a 6200-worder by Robert Moore Williams called "The Weapon." Earth has been at peace, with nary a war for 600 years; war was eliminated by the use of a ghastly weapon which has been then destroyed and all the plans burned. Then along come invaders from the general direction of Sirius, who intend to conquer Earth. ((For some reason that plot sounds vaguely familiar. We wonder why.)) The weapon is dug out, and proves to be an instrument for increasing phobias, hence destroying the enemy by fear. His own phobias, intensified by the machine, kill him. That idea may not be too grand, but after all it's only a 6200-word short. The thing that seems queer to us is that this weapon, all traces of which had supposedly been removed from the surface of the earth, was on display in the museum right along beside all the other weapons of history! Rather improbable, but convenient for pulp authors in distress, we suppose. This theme is very difficult to handle -- for the task of thinking up a weapon which will conform to the qualifications of being too horrible to use, and still not merely be an engine of physical destruction, is not an easy one, and many is the author who has foundered in those dangerous waters. We think Williams did remarkably well -- and the fact that it was all done for a measly short makes it all the better. We are inclined to rate this yarn a little above the lead novel. ... the other two shorts are average-quality space operas which would be pretty good for Planet. "Treasure Derelict," by Guy Archatte concerns a greedy space-captain and his young assistant who run into a derelict full of treasure, and near it the empty hulk of a two-years-missing Uranus expedition. Boarding the former, they find here and there in it the skeletons of the crew of the Uranus expedition, all

crumbling to dust at the touch as if they had been there for thousands of years. Finally turns out that the derelict is infested with the plague; it consisted of the last survivors of a plague-stricken civilization trying to escape, and unfortunately the survivors all got the plague too. The young assistant when he learns this destroys the space suits of himself and his greedy captain so they won't carry the plague to Earth. Altogether a nice filler space opera, well-written but far from sensational.....the other short is by oldtimer Alexander Blade and is about a mysterious epidemic of vanishing spacemen. Appears they fade away into thin air. The thing is cleared up in the usual space tale manner. This one is fair quality, and again is nothing sensational.

Actually, nothing in this issue is guaranteed to put Kuttner out of business, although two of the yarns should rate reasonably high. The issue is remarkable for another reason. It contains no Shaver stories. There is none of the occultism-mysticism which we have been encountering for the past couple years, that has been earning AS such a bad name. Four straight old-fashioned sf stories, all in one issue! Maybe it was just a bit of reaction after the all-Shaver issue -- which, incidentally, was the first AS we have ever deliberately missed, and the only AS we never intend to read. Palmer says the three shorts are there because they were left over from a type-setters' strike, and he could slip them in as they were, without even changing the page numbers -- so you see all that jubilation was for nothing, after all. Just an accident -- there will probably be many more Shaver stinkers, de Courcy drivel, Hauser hack, and all that sort of thing. However, at least the issue is proof that Amazing isn't completely lost to us -- occasionally, in among the Lemuria bilge and assorted mouthings of Shaver and the rest, there will be occasional sf tales which can be dug out and read with no waste of time by fen. Next issue features an atom war saga by Rog Phillips, author of other atom war sagas in times past, and originator of the frame concept, if we have guessed correctly. September issue will be graced by Edmond Hamilton! and THE STAR KINGS, which he has said contains his greatest plot, and which ought to provide some really engrossing reading. So you see there may be ample reason for fen to continue buying Rap's zine, after all. Watch and see.

Now the cover and the artwork of the issue. The cover was painted by Julian Krupa to illustrate "Hidden City," and is really gorgeous. It's an astronomical cover, showing two spacesuited men in a rocket pointing at the hidden city as it rises out of a lunar crater. We could rave on for hours about this painting, but you've no doubt seen it so any reiteration would be superfluous. The interior artwork is pretty good, being done by Malcolm Smith, Krupa, and Enoch Sharp. However, it's no Lawrence or Finlay. Neither, on the other hand, is it Marchioni.....the departments are worthless as far as fen are concerned, being all Shaveristic or "oddity" in nature. And that exhausts our wordage till the issue of August, which will be out in time to be reviewed in this column. ###

support the Philcon

AMAZING STORIES, volume 21 #8, August 1947. 25¢.

There are five stories in this issue. One of them is a 65,000 word novel. Also there are three short stories and one novelet, which really isn't a story at all.

Neither, for that matter, is the novel. It is called "So Shall Ye Reap" and is written by the Frame Concept boy, Roger Phillips Graham, under his penname of Reg Phillips. This yarn was advanced-notice as another atom war saga, and we had resigned ourselves to still another session of the End-of-the-world Blues as is so common in FFM. However, a common atom war story is one of the few things this story isn't. It begins like it might be one -- telling the tale of the inhabitants of the atom-wrecked world of the future. Then, however, it returns to 1947 and picks up the causes of the world's downfall; finally ending up where it started, back in the far future with the wrecked world. However, between the identical beginning and ending are packed a more varied assortment of styles, treatments, plots, subjects, than even van Vogt could dream up -- and, we might add, told in a far less confusing manner. In one section the thing runs for several pages in the manner of TITANS' BATTLE, economic history, in a very dry textbook form. A modified form of deroism is apparent when cavern peoples are found when humanity is digging under the surface. There is one normal story plot concerning the life of a citizen of the radioactive surface of the future. Another story thread follows the doings of a modern atom scientist and his friends. Still more parts are deeply philosophical in nature. We must hand it to Phillips-Graham for not getting the story threads all confused and muddled up a la A E vV. Even an inexperienced stf reader could, we feel, tell what is going on at all times.

Probably it is stupid to criticize SO SHALL YE REAP as we would criticize a normal stf novel. However, if Graham's only object had been entertainment he could be criticized for too many deep philosophical passages, economic conjectures, etc a la Odd John or Titans' Battle. And for including too many different things in the same novel. But we feel that these are unimportant. The real reason of Graham's writing the novel and of Rap's printing it may be found, we think, in the editorial note at the end of the story:

"By now you have undoubtedly realized the truth -- that we have deliberately misled you regarding "So Shall Ye Reap." This novel is NOT a story of what might happen if the atom war came -- it is a story of what MAY ALREADY HAVE HAPPENED. Merely grant the possibility of Mr. Phillips' premise -- that the five bombs already exploded have placed a lethal seed in our atmosphere, then the story he has told is already happening -- and NOTHING ON EARTH CAN STOP IT. Think about that, mankind! We hope this story is fiction -- but what if it isn't? WHAT IF IT ISN'T? ((Amazing, August 1947, page 155))

Yes, that is the premise -- that the five atom bombs already ex-

ploded on the earth's surface have started a radioactive chain in our atmosphere. Within three hundred years the temperature of the air will climb to above the boiling point of water, the oceans will evaporate, and the earth, like Venus, will be eternally surrounded by a cloud envelope. All life on the surface will cease. Within two thousand years, the radioactivity will subside and life will again become possible. Using that as his premise, Graham has built the story. He assumes that humanity will burrow underground, and save some of the race. He makes his story out of that.

Understand, we are not claiming this story to be true, and we definitely are not trying to cause a stir in fandom. But, as Ray says WHAT IF THE STORY ISN'T FICTION? Then it will indeed be too bad for us.

In any case we recommend that you read SO SHALL YE REAP. It provides some interesting food for thought, and is one of the most worthwhile stories we've seen in many months, in AS or anywhere else. Even if Graham did resort to quoting from one of his own (unpublished) books to explain one of his theories.

The three shorts are the only conventional story material in the issue. The first of these is by William Lawrence Hamling, and is called "The Prop." It concerns a little boy who was wanting a toy airplane to play with, but, lacking this, is directed to a prop spaceship left by a movie in the desert. He fails to find the prop, but runs into a real thing, left by some other-worldly inhabitants. It is very well-written and plotted, and we'd say it's about the best Hamling has done.

Frances Yerxa, widow of the late Leroy, contributes "Negative Problem," a space opera of the grand old slam-bang tradition. We think she must have written Leroy's stories; this is obviously no first-time effort. However, the wonder is not in the story; it's in the illustration, which, believe it or not, is by Schneeman! His technique suffered somewhat in the reproduction, due partly to Z-D's bad paper, and partly to the fact that the pic was enlarged too much, in fact enlarged enough to make the same effect as if Lawrence was blown up to ten feet wide or so. Nevertheless, it is still Schneeman. We hope this is representative of a new art trend -- the traveling of the Masters out of their own mags into others. It may be. Lawrence and Finlay have been in TWS & SS muchly lately.

Now we come to a short that will no doubt cause a guffaw to all those present. It is "First Rocket," and is by -- D. Richard Sharpe. Now even Ray would have had enough imagination to make up a better name than that. And in the editorial he blandly states that while McGivern, Williams, have penames, you-know-who has none! HMMMMMMMM. ...As a stor, ER is okay, though overly much strained. Forced stories are hard on the readers as well as their writers.

SEND US YOUR MATERIAL

Winding up the issue is a novelet by Richard S. Shaver. It was squeezed out of the June all-Shaver issue because of lack of space. We wish it's stayed there. It's about people -- intangible people, to us -- who live in the ether, swimming through it like fish through water. Their adventures -- chiefly the adventures of the inevitable purple-nippled green goddess -- constitute the story. The ether-people are being attacked by another race of ether people, and they win out through the heroic sacrifice of the goddess and her lover. Shaver states that he has never seen the mech through which he purported in the yarn to have watched the ether-things' doings, but that he knows it exists somewhere in the caverns. And also presumably he knows the ether beings exist. So he makes the story, which was not really so bad even if nothing to brag about. And, incidentally, in case somebody might wonder, the yarn's name is "Mer-Witch of Ether 18." So-named because the mer-witch appeared on the visiplat when the dials of the mech were turned to "18."

As for departments, they are a total loss to fen, as usual. The editorial tends to make us believe that Rap is mentally unsound. He is even more that way than usual. There is the usual line-up of "scientific" articles; one of them proves mathematically that the moon has an atmosphere which is forever confined to the moon's other side because of centrifugal force caused by the revolution of the moon around the earth. Awk. ... Interior art is okay, especially Schneeman. The cover shows a fat man pondering, with the atom structural diagram in his hand. Fine, as far as symbolism goes.

All in all, we would say that you guys should read this issue. SO SHALL YE REAP is definitely as worthwhile as AGH RTI or "TITANS' BATTLE" -- so much more worthwhile that it's pitiful.

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Astounding SCIENCE FICTION. VOLUME XXXIX #3, May 1947. 25¢.

The May aSF contains Part I of a serial, two novelets, and two shorts, one article, and three departments. First off is Kuttner - Moore O'Donnell's latest contribution, "Fury," a three-part sequel to "Clash By Night," which appeared in aSF's March 1943 issue. Fans who were readers in the bedsheet-sized days of our favorite magazine will remember that tale of the undersea keeps of Venus. The basic idea, for those who haven't read it, is this: man destroyed Earth by atomic fire, making his home planet a miniature sun. The survivors fled to Venus, and, finding the surface environment hostile, built great Keeps -- domes -- on the ocean bed, and there established a culture. In the days of "Clash by Night," there were still companies of mercenaries, known by the name of Free Companies, which were composed of men who still had enough of the old human spirit to refuse to degenerate in the Keeps along with the rest of Homo Sapiens. These mercenaries

SEND US YOUR LETTERS OF COMMENT

fought token wars in the pay of various Keeps. Their headquarters were bases on the shores of the oceans. However, FURY takes place several hundred years later. The free companies have died, and all mankind's remnant is rotting in the Keeps. It is a hedonistic culture -- there is no constructive task, and release -- usually through degeneracy -- is all that occupies the attention of the population.

APParently Kuttner read "Methuselah's Children," for there are longlived "families" here too -- not immortal, merely possessed of lengths of life much greater than those of the normal inhabitants. A member of one of these families takes a freewife (there is no ceremony of marriage) and has a son. The wife dies during the son's birth; the man blames the son entirely; disowns him, has his hair removed, disfigures him, makes sure that his identity is lost. From there on the tale proceeds to tell the adventures of Sam Reed (really Sam Harker) and of a first abortive attempt to re-establish the land colony. We hope the story gets more interesting as Part Two arrives.

For "Fury" isn't the story it could have been, with Kuttner's great storytelling ability and Moore's sheer beauty of writing. Far too much time is spent in introduction -- the only stories of recent times having more introduction -- there were two -- were TITANS' BATTLE, which was all one bit introduction with no story, and HOME OF THE GODS, a van Vogt saga in which the introduction exceeded the story in length. Perhaps the authors hadn't intended these tales to be introductions -- perhaps it is only an unconscious style-manifestation. Be that as it may, however, the style of writing in "Fury" should be avoided -- it certainly does not add to the readability or quality of the story. However, Part I isn't everything -- there's still two more parts for H. K. C. L. M. O'D. to reveal him/her/themself/selves. (((!)))

The next, and a highly readable, contribution to this issue is by Theodore Sturgeon, and is called "Tiny and the Monster." It tells of what happens when a creature from space, marooned on Earth due to broken space ship parts, uses a great Dane called Tiny to help him escape. The old guard stiffs, those of the War of the Worlds school, would be thrown into rages by this story -- the invading monster from space is not evil at all, but harbors only kind intentions. Horrors! No opportunity for Barrelchestpeabrain and his lovely sweetheart and her scientist father to save the earth! Seriously, though, "Tiny and the Monster," while no means anywhere near the best thing that Sturgeon has turned out, still makes highly engrossing reading; we hope to see many more stories which pass the time as interestingly as did this one. We have two authors down as "men who can do no wrong" -- Sturgeon and Ray Bradbury. They both continue steadily to deserve the title -- as far as we know, neither has ever written a bad story.

As you progress through the pages of the issue, the next yarn you will read is a little saga by Kuttner Padgett, called "Jesting Pilot."

SUPPORT THE PHILCON!

Pity us in our stupidity, but we utterly fail to see the relation between the title and the story...which concerns a rather peculiar city. The powers-that-be decided that civilization was in danger of annihilation due to atomic wars and such, so they established the City inside a five-mile-in-diameter impenetrable energy-barrier, to preserve the teachings, works, and brain of Man. Trouble was -- when they got the city built, as efficient a unit as possible, they discovered that it was absolutely uninhabitable! It is a known fact that nothing -- including a city -- can live in its own waste products. So they had to include all kinds of machinery to make sure that the waste was taken care of and food, air, etc was supplied to the inhabitants. The machinery for doing this gave off such a discharge of screaming sound, unbearable radiation, blinding light, etc., that no human could live in the city without something to protect him. The powers-that-be selected hypnosis as a method of protecting the common men from reality, while the Directors were made blind, deaf, dumb, and "lacking certain other senses," and were given telepathy. Well, to make a short story still shorter, Padgett proceeds to tell what happens when one of the young inhabitants of the City begins to see flashes of reality -- his hypnosis wears off in snatches. L. P. relates how the Directors had to struggle to save the poor guy from his insanity, and what their answer--though it wasn't too conclusive--was. He relates it in the usual Padgett short story manner -- and the short is an effective one. If you like Padgett shorts, you'll like this.

The other short is called "The Journey and the Goal," a rather poorly written narrative by Chan Davis. Its theme is that two young Titanians -- second generation, we believe, descendants of Terran colonizers -- want to see Earth. However, they have forgotten that their environment has made them different -- a couple of feet taller than the tallest earthmen, much weaker, susceptible to diseases to which normal earthmen are immune, and so on. They hence do not meet with much happiness on their arrival. However, they regard their "escape" as successful -- they reason that the journey was more important than the goal, and their real dream wasn't really to get to Earth at all, but merely to get off of Titan. Altogether a rather unconvincing story; we wonder why JWC accepted it. Maybe Davis has a contract.

Last, and best, in the month's lineup is one of this year's classics, sure to rank in the Top Ten if anybody publishes KoKe's Fantasy Review next year, which we firmly trust somebody will. The yarn is called "E for Effort," and is bylined as by one T.L. Sherred. Personally, we can't see how a brand-new author can do such a bangup job. It MUST be a penname. You never can tell, tho....the subject is the political and social consequences of a time-viewer when used by two very intelligent men. And with that our ability to describe ceases. We don't believe we are stepping too far when we tell you that any fan who doesn't read this yarn is nuts. We also don't think we're overly radical when we say that T. L. Sherred, whoever he is, ought to make one of coming times' tiptop writers. Wait and see.

We apologize humbly for the thinness of the paper used in this issue--

Which brings us to the end of the fictional content of this ASF. Also in the issue is an article by Willy Ley called "Pseudoscience in Naziland" which recounts some pseudo-Fortean doctrines the Nazis had--such as the Hollow Earth doctrine and a few others. The article is interesting, but not sensational by any means...another atomic editorial by JWC, in the usual vein..."In Times to Come," predicting Schneeman's welcome-home in the next issue ... and "Brass Tacks." One of the letters is about "Meihem in oe Klasrum." It still beats us how an article so obviously a gag could meet with so much apparently serious criticism as did Edwards' piece. Witness the dissection by Jack Speer, and others in a similar vein. Don't ASF's readers have a sense of humor?...pics this trip are by Cartier and Urban in fine style, and a newcomer, by the name of Tiedeman, who shows some promise. Rogers is on the cover, with a masterpiece as is befitting of him, depicting "Fury." Hubett's return is certainly welcome; while Timmins was by no means bad, he was no Rogers, and he did really punk work at times--witness the April cover.... Campbell did us dirty when he cut to 162 pages, but we suppose the improved paper sort of makes up for it. And that finishes up ASF till the June issue.

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 Astounding SCIENCE FICTION. June 1947, vol. XXXIX, #4. 25¢/

Part Two of FURY takes up so much space in this ASF that the other contents are restricted to one novelette, three shorts, and the usual science article. In addition, there are three departments -- the editor's page, In Times to Come, and the Analyticalab. "Brass Tacks" and the lab cannot both be in the magazine -- there isn't enough room. And since the lab has to be in once in a while, says JWC, BRASS TACKS has to be excluded occasionally. This is one of those times.

A. E. van Vogt does the cover-copping novelette this trip. It is called "Centaurus II." It's a little bit like UNIVERSE, in that it concerns what happens to a group of men marooned for a couple centuries in the unnatural environment of a space ship. Here, however, the resemblance ends. The handling of the two different writers is different. Entirely different. In the van Vogt yarn, the second Centaurus expedition reaches the destination in the time allotted; the alien interstellar civilizations are contacted; everything is done according to schedule. Unfortunately, however, man's nature prevents him from successfully completing the job. A revolt, just before the return voyage, kills all the scientists aboard; the fertilizer technician, or whatever he is, who takes over the captaincy, gets the screwy idea in his head that the ship is inviolable. Hence, he reasons, it should be kept as beautiful as possible. Before the advent of this character, interior sections -- walls, etc -- of the ship had been dismantled from time to time for fuel. The character takes it upon himself to prevent the ugliness caused by this dismantling, and proceeds to strip the fuel from a less obvious section. Turns out to be the inner shell

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we solemnly promise that the second issue will be on better paper!!!!



of the ship -- the radiation shield. Radiation comes in, kills all aboard, and turns the records of the expedition, on microfilm, into an active Mason pile. Knowledge of our nearest stellar neighbors, which has become vitally necessary to civilization, is still not in our possession because of the frailties of human nature. Alas, alas.

And probably true. If no fast interstellar drives are developed, the human race will probably have to remain Sol-bound. For it would seem that the conclusions of the authors who maintain that lack of contact with Earth makes humans more or less members of a separate race, and no longer human, have a darned good chance of turning out to be true.

This is one of van Vogt's better stories. He has abandoned the air of general confusion and obscurity which permeated his great stories -- THE WEAPON MAKERS, WORLD OF A, etc. And this abandonment was no drawback to quality, by any means. All in all, CENTAURUS II is one of the better stories which has run across our attention in the past few months. Let us hope that A. E. continues in this new style and vein, and turns out many more yarns which you don't have to read a dozen times to understand.

LETTER TO ELLEN, by Chan Davis, is the first of the three shorts. It's about life-synthesis research, and the possible ethics involved in creating human life artificially. Probably Chan's best story to date, this little tale has a nice punch ending. Read it and see if you don't agree.

Raymond F. Jones contributes THE MODEL SHOP. Every engineering or research outfit has to have a model shop. This outfit's model shop began turning out ultra-super models, with utterly impossible features attached, and in lightning-quick time to boot. Finally it is discovered that traders from the future, trading in time, have lost one of their shipments, and that this shipment has ended up in the model shop. It is this mysterious shipment which has caused all the monkey business. Would have made an average quality ASF short, had it not been for the slightly sob-storyish pulp ending, the heartrending wife-and-kids sort of crud. However, even as it is, the thing provides some interesting reading.

Best of the shorts, we think, is ERRAND BOY, by newcomer William Tenn, who may be Kuttner for all we know. He probably is. Anyway, the yarn concerns a plant foreman who hired an errand boy, and, as a practical joke, told him to, for his first errand, procure a can of green paint with orange polka dots. The guy comes back -- and brings back a can of green paint with only red polka dots -- he couldn't find any orange -- "hoping it will do, sir." The narrator -- high muckity-muck of the paint company in which the doings take place -- proceeds to investigate, and finds out that he has a boy from the future on his hands. From there on, the developments are more amusing than significant -- a fact which will no doubt lead many fans to dislike the

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If you don't like these prozine reviews, hasten to tell us why! ...



yarn. However, if the story won't be remembered for its new concepts or sociological ponderings, it was good for a little entertainment.

FURY fills the back half of the issue. The exploits of Sam Har-ker, alias Reed, are carried on in fine style. As the conclusion has not yet been reached, it is difficult to pass judgment yet on anything but the writing style and other such merely physical aspects. These have improved considerably since Part I -- apparently the vastly too-long introduction is at last finished, and the body of the yarn has been reached. One of the things in FURY's favor is that it reads very well. Many yarns have us glancing to the end to see how many more pages there are to cover. This one didn't. It carries the reader right along, to coin a phrase. The characterization, as is usual with Kuttner, is believable and convincing. Apparently there are no grounds for criticism of the style now that the introduction is finished. We shall see how really great FURY is as a whole when Part III is at hand. ((It is -- and it is good. --ed))

Now to the non-fictional content. Campbell's editorial and the article (NEWS FROM OUR SUN by J. J. Coupling) are as usual, interesting to the scientists and technicians in the audience. "In Times to Come" forecasts Jack Williamson for July; together with newcomer Poul Anderson of "Tomorrow's Children."

Biggest cause for praise in the June ASF is the artwork. SCHNEE-MAN IS BACK! And fandom will give out with fervent hallelujahs which were only equalled by those issued upon the return of Virgil Finlay to FFM. Schneeman does the cover, and he does a darned fine job. It's a space scene -- from the bridge of the CENTAURUS II, looking out at a bright star and its pale binary. Charles is on the interiors for that story too, turning out a few masterpieces in the same style which won him so much praise in the prewar ASTOUNDING. With the return of Orban and Schneeman, Cartier, and Rogers, ASF's art ought to take a definite upward swing. Nothing to put FFM out of business, of course, but still far above the crud which was used as fill-in during the war.

And that takes care of the top prozine until next issue.

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AVON FANTASY READER. #2, undated. ((Would probably be called the Apr issue, since the first aFR was on sale in early March and dated Feb; this was on sale in early May --ed)) 35¢.

This number of prodrom's newest addition contains seven stories, which are not divided into classifications. There is also a two-page editoria, making a total of 130 pages on good quality paper; the bad paper used in #1 has disappeared, much to the improvement of the magazine. Wollheim continues the custom of giving a note about each story at the beginning of it, the space occupied in more conventional pro magazines by a picture and a blurb.

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GOLDEN GATE IN '48!!



First a note about the stories, then after that we shall discuss the new magazine as a whole. The cover is copped by "The City of the Living Dead," by Fletcher Pratt and Lawrence Manning. This ancient reprint from a Gernsback Wonder appeared a few years ago -- we believe in 1941 -- as a hall of fame classic in STARGLING. Now, as then, the thing is anything but sensational. It is not difficult to see why. Like all stories written in the long-gone and antique era of the late twenties and early thirties, it lacks something. Probably it is just the point of view, nothing more, and if a Gernsback reader had been given one of the modern tales to read he would have said "It lacks something." Be that as it may, TCOTLD is far from a classic. ## The first story you read on your way through the book is "Stenographer's Hands" by Dr. David H. Keller. This one concerns the efforts of a company called Universal Utilities to increase its business by increasing stenographic efficiency. Seems that there had been a business falloff due to large amounts of errors made by the stenographical staff. Well, the big chief decided to remedy this situation; the plan he finally hit upon was selectively breeding the stenos like cattle, thereby eliminating bad strains and giving an eventual race of fine, blooded stenos. It will add nothing to the quality of this review to recount the methods used -- suffice it to say that the plan broke down, in the usual heartrending manner, when the stock of typists began to get epileptic fits due to inbreeding. So their race was allowed to die out due to the efforts of beautiful Mirabella Smith, umpteenth granddaughter of the Great Man who founded the breeding process in the first place, and a handsome doctor who in the end turns out to be an atavistic typist, a throwback to the days when typists were human. Altogether it makes a nice pulphack story in the best formula tradition; we were not impressed by anything but wonderment, wonderment that any author could have supposed that anything like selective breeding of employees could ever take root in the nation's business. And also a slight amount of disgust.....a reprint from the Munsey Argosy is next, "The Strange Case of Lemuel Jenkins" by Philip M. Jenkins Jr. Lemuel Jenkins was a very impressionable man. He took everything he heard in all seriousness. As gospel. So once his friends decided to rib him; they pretended they couldn't see him. Alas but the poor soul believed them, and really became incapable of being seen. They returned him to normalcy by reversing the process, pretending they could see him; presto, he appears. Another tale in the endless mind-over-matter saga, told, however, in an interesting manner -- and does not have the highly forced and at times laughable tone of Dr. Keller's yarn. ... Guy Endore, of "Werewolf of Paris" fame, is in with "Day of the Dragon," in which he sets up the theory that dragons -- the fire-breathing monsters of legend -- were really alligators, minus heart trouble. It seems that all reptiles have imperfect hearts -- when the blood returns to the heart from Reptilian veins, instead of all being cleansed by the lungs, part of the old, used blood is allowed to go back into the arteries and circulate again, due to a weak wall between the two bloodstreams in the heart. Hence an endless case of autointoxication; hence the sluggishness of the larger reptiles. So a scientist with an inferiority complex, hunting for egoboo, repairs



the weak wall by surgery in two alligators. Lo and behold, the sluggishness vanishes. Pretty soon, the things begin to show surprising changes -- eventually emerging as the dragons of legend. They begin to reproduce, and populate the world with giant dragons; the narrator is supposedly writing the yarn in the last refuge of mankind in the New York subways, the last few survivors of mankind. Although we thought that acquired characteristics weren't transmitted, ((Endore mentions this but passes over it lightly)) still the thing is reasonably convincing; we hope that amateur fan surgeons don't try experimenting on the Blatant Beast. Maybe, since he isn't a reptile ((no?)) it won't work. .... Robert E. Howard's MIRRORS OF TUZUN THUNE is the next inclusion, and, since most of you have probably read SKULL FACE AND OTHERS, in which the story appears, there is no point in reviewing it here; it isn't real Howard anyway, with philosophy and mysticism rather than bloody battles forming the background of the tale ... the same goes for THE KING IN YELLOWS's perennially-excerpted yarn, THE YELLOW SIGN. We assume that nearly all fan have read and dissected it before, and there is no point in rehash .... the final inclusion is S. Fowler Wright's "Automata," a fancifully written tale of the age when the machine supersedes man as ruler of the earth. Fowler divided the thing into three parts. In Part One a professor is lecturing about the possibilities of machines eventually taking precedence over man. In Part Two, some ladies of the early Machine Culture, representatives of humanity at that time, are portrayed and pictured, together with the culture of the time; finally the last survivor of mankind is written about, no more than a tiny facet of the Machine Civilization. We frankly do not know what to make of this one. We don't know whether it was jest or earnest, as Odd John says on his title page. At any rate, it should serve to dissuade the advocates of overmachineryizing mankind; some of the pictures Fowler paints are positively nauseating. We shall not criticize the unusualness of presentation; its departure from the usual adds interest. Let interested peoples find out for themselves.

Now for the promised dissection of the new semiprozine as promised earlier in this review. ((Something wrong with that sentence..)) It is obvious to see that it is impossible to criticize this thing on a common basis with the prozines. It isn't a magazine at all, really; Wollheim dubs it a "periodic anthology." Be that as it may, the series of books all have the same title, and therefore at least in name they are magazines. There is no artwork, advertising, or any of the usual features of a pro. The cover is of the usual pro variety, however, and #2's is quite well done, color scheme being outstanding. We wonder who painted it. There are trimmed edges, naturally, and the covers are stiff. If this thing ever became popular it ought to be good -- for collectors it must really be wonderful, after struggling with ASF and its nearly annual changes of size, the pulps and their ragged edges, and so on. But, unfortunately, collectors are not the all of newsstand readers. And this may cause the downfall of aFR, much as it will be regretted. For one thing, the price is slightly fantastic; newsstand readers just aren't used to paying 35¢ for their



fare. I am not saying that the publication isn't worth 35¢; I am merely saying that pulp readers will think twice about paying that much. For another thing, Wollheim is again guilty of the evil he committed in the Portable Novels -- the evil of knuckling too much to the Polite Established Literature set. The guy is no doubt trying to favorably impress the critics. However, we think the era when "pulp" spelled "bad" is ending; articles on stf in slick after slick, Heinlein in the Post, the two anthologies of last year, all have proved that. We don't think DAW has to put on so much of a show. For after all, he was the editor of two pulp detectives, of the pulpiest pulp tradition, before he went to work for Avon; he could at least be consistent. ## Maybe we are wrong, however; we sure hope so. DAW may be able to make it a go if he gets a select following, like UNKNOWN did -- this seems entirely likely, considering what that mag did in its lamented existence. At any rate, the jinx is broken at last; now maybe the flood of postwar proz will begin. Maybe we shall see some revivals, even. And at least the year 1947 and Avon shall have contributed something unique to the fantasy field, and something that we think fandom will remember for quite a while.

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FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES. Vol. 8 #5, June 1947. 25¢.

The newest issue of the Reprint Collector's home companion leads off with a novel called "The People of the Ruins," by Edward Shanks. Also in the issue is E. F. Benson's short, "Caterpillars," from THE ROOM IN THE TOWER, which was reprinted in GREAT TALES OF TERROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL, the Random House anthology edited by Wise and Fraser and "The Reader's Viewpoint." ((Bad sentence, hey?))

THE PEOPLE OF THE RUINS IS, as its title suggests, another contribution to the apparently endless end-of-civilization saga which FFM has subjected us to in the past few months. We are beginning to wonder just how long this "Beginning and the End" business can go on. It has to stop sometime -- the editors have just got to quit deluging us with end of the world novels, prehistoric novels, and Tales of Spectral Terror. The supply of such items has to run out some time, unless they begin translations from other languages, including the Scandinavian. Anyway, the means by which world breakdown is accomplished in THE PEOPLE OF THE RUINS is different than the usual. Before, we have seen used wars, the breakdown of metals, plague, the reverting of man's kind to apes, anarchy, the spiraling of the earth into the sun, the reverting of man's mind to babyhood, and Great Daugherty knows how many others. In this novel we are treated to a version in which labor unrest is the cause of the whole thing. It seems that one Jeremy Tuft, young London physics professor and veteran of World War I, wakes up one morning to find his maid, the lorrie drivers, the newspaper, and all of Britain out on strike. He then travels over to Whitechapel to consult with an inventor friend of his; while there he is shown a

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rejuvenation-ray which this inventor has perfected, and which has kept a dead rat from decay for a considerable length of time, while not actually restoring the breathing and heartbeat of the animal. During this demonstration the Bolsheviks, or Debs followers, or whoever the agitators happen to be come along and murder the inventor in cold blood, then tossing a bomb into the basement where the rejuvenation apparatus is located, caving in the ancient house on poor Jeremy. When Jeremy wakes he is well along in the 21st century, and Whitechapel is a few low mounds of ruins.

The breakdown is not as complete here as in many such novels. The breakdown is more in the ambition of man than in the actual destruction of machines and such; man has become like a bunch of cattle. Railroads still run intermittently, as do electric lights in various high-class portions of the English countryside. There are boats from England to France. It seems that the only thing which has vanished is the desire in the minds of men to repair apparatus and machinery and buildings when they have run down and decayed, and to build new ones. When the roof of a building caves in, the occupants move to another building; it never enters their head to put up a new roof. Such is the will of men when Jeremy Tuft happens on the scene. He feels alone in the world, the only true man left and the only one who has not become mentally like a cow.

He soon discovers that this assumption is incorrect, however. The ruler of the country, a figure called the Speaker, still retains all the intelligence and fire of a person of the old days, even though he is a trifle off the beam. The Speaker has a lovely daughter who has inherited her father's mind. So there are three real human beings left in a world of cattle -- Jeremy Tuft, preserved for over a hundred years by the action of some crackpot's rejuvenation machine; the Speaker, a slightly half baked reform politician; and the lovely, sane daughter of that dignitary.

Eventually war develops between the Scotch and the English, and it is revealed that the Speaker has been manufacturing guns secretly. Jeremy, who served in artillery in the Great War, is put in charge of two small cannon and wins the battle for the Southern English by blowing up the enemy's ammunition stores with a chance shot. He is the hero of the day and ends up engaged to the lovely daughter, as might be expected. Here a pulp hack novel might end. But not so Edward Shanks. He creates another battle, this time with the Welshmen from the west. In this battle part of the British force sells out to the enemy and the battle is lost, as is the sanity of the Speaker; his mind reverts to childish idiocy under the strain. From there on -- in fact, from a little before that incident -- the story begins to strike up a note of futility. It ends in a manner which Raymond of the Inner Sanctum would indeed love -- everyone dies. The lovely gal and poor Jeremy each commit suicide after the poor old Speaker dies from exposure and fits. There is a prophetic note that civilization will



continue on its downward path, eventually going to depths; this note pervades the entire latter half of the story. We think that Edward Shanks and Mary Gnaedinger are each possessed of philosophies something like Donald Wandrei's. This tale and others in FFM seem to indicate that.

We spoke above of a futile note. That, in our estimation, was what the whole story was, from start to finish -- futile. We see absolutely no point in continuing the adventures of characters on thru 115 of FFM's 880-word pages and then having them all die. We see even less point in the inclusion of the story in FFM, although it is skillfully written, and is a good deal less longwinded than the average British novel of 1920 vintage -- for that is the date of the thing's original publication. We are beginning to wonder if FFM itself might not be on the road to futility -- for next issue's novel, MINIMUM MAN by Andrew Marvel, contains in its blurb reference to the "little men of Harwich who had promised to destroy the world." Note the underlined reference -- another world destruction theme. As we said before this HAS to stop somewhere. But where?

"The People of the Ruins," while by no means a great story, still has a great many redeeming features -- not the least being the lack of longwindedness mentioned above, even though we did get somewhat impatient long before page 115 was reached. The thing was too long, but the writing was well-done and continuity was good. Characterization, too, was up to par. However, continuity and characterization do not make a story, especially after the reader has been deluged with so MANY end of the world novels! Phooey. We believe if it had been the first breakdown yarn we'd read, we'd have praised it. But...

FFM has, we feel, reached the crisis. The end-of-the-world story has got to go, or FFM will itself break down. Enough is enough, and the "enough" mark was reached with UNTHINKABLE, if not 25TH HOUR. Also, the prehistoric story had better go pretty soon. And FFM had better quit using such long stories -- 115 pages is too much for a pulp. The average pulp reader doesn't like such long, heavy stories as he has been subjected to in FFM's pages. Eighty pages or less is plenty.

We hope that Miss Gnaedinger takes a hint from the readers of THE STAR ROVER -- every letter published praised that story. Which is proof that other types of writing than long drawn out endofcivilization and prehistoric tales are superseded in the judgment of the readers by fantasy. ((Hm...)) Enough of this. We're bogged down too.

The other inclusion, Benson's short and this issue's Tale of Spectral Terror (we wish the editors would either select a better cover blurb or alter that one), is probably well-known to fans already so we won't comment other than saying that it is effective in its shortness, and creates a nice weird effect. It is one of EFB's better yarns.



FFM still continues worthy of its place as the best-illustrated fantastic prozine. Finlay does the cover, which, though not equal to his masterpiece for THE STAR ROVER, is still truly great. Finlay's modern covers are considerably better than those of the old days. This one must be seen to be appreciated. Lawrence has all the interiors, and is up to par -- he is resurrecting his art now, after a brief slump. Is it imagination, or do we detect a trace of an attempt from Ls to copy Finlay's style? Heaven forbid such a thing to happen. To begin with, it is bad for anyone to copy anyone else's style, no matter who they are. Secondly, Finlay is inimitable. Thirdly, Lawrence is so darned good already that any alteration of style would be foolhardy. Do we make ourselves clear? ((Yes.))

That is all of interest in this FFM. Now we will breathe easier for a while -- we won't have to read another 115-page end of the world novel for another two months. For which Ghu and the paper shortage be thanked.

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FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. Vol. 9 #4; July 1947. 25c.

There are six stories in this issue of Amazing's shadow -- a short novel, three fairly long novelets, and a couple of shorts. Several depts too -- mainly, of course, THE EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK where Rap blathers about the high quality of the stories, and the Reader's Page, which would be one of the better readers' columns if it was just a little bit longer. He takes the department's title seriously, and makes it only one page in length. Maybe this situation will be relieved soon, however.

The lead short novel is called "Goddess of the Golden Flame," and is by William P. McGivern, an oldtime writing companion of the late O'Brien, who had more names than Kuttner, and third member of the Rap DWO'B/WPMcG triumvirate. This character has been absent for quite a long while; he served in the Army, we believe, and was fortunate enough not to get killed in action, as was O'Brien. Anyway, the yarn is not of the type that can be dissected. It is a straight slam-bang narrative of the best (or oldest) fantasy tradition, and served only to pass away some time in a pleasant manner. 'Twas okay.

Charles F. Meyers, the Thorne Smith of the 1940 decade and one of the top finds of recent times, comes through with "Toffee Takes a Trip." Obviously, he borrowed more from the late great than subject matter, for this yarn. TTaT isn't the best ribald adventure we have read, but it is still pretty fair. We would say that if these Toffee stories were expanded to novel length and made a bit less conventionalized and more ribald, and distributed by some means other than in a magazine which goes through the mail under the second-class laws, they would go down in history along with Topper. Read 'em and see if you don't agree. And if you don't envy Marc Pillsworth....

Next is a boxing tale called "Peter Backs a Punch," which concerns

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a man who -- Saints above! -- was named Peter. He comes down and helps out a young boxer in distress. Aside from some slightly ridiculous aspects, such as the use of "Joel Lewis" and "Jock Dumpsey" as characters, the thing is not bad. Worthy of a high rating among FA's fair quality yarns.

"Largo," by Theodore Sturgeon, who, like Bradbury, can do no wrong, is the best yarn in the issue. It's about a mad musician and the wonders of what sound can do. Plot isn't the best Sturgeon has ever turned out, but his usual writing quality, and we do mean quality, is there in full force. Read this yarn. It's definitely on the worthwhile list for fen.

There are two other stories, "Secret of the Yomar," Elroy Arno's latest creation, which is a 17,000 worder, and "Carrion Crypt," a 3500 word short by Richard Casey. Re the title of the latter, we were uncertain for a moment whether Casey meant his story or the inside of Rap's head. Anyway, if you buy the mag only for Sturgeon's short, read "Carrion Crypt" too. It is a neatly-done little thing about a guy who ran away to Tibet and joined the lamas. And as for "Secret of the Yomar," it is a pretty wellwritten straight action slambang adventure a la Edgar Rice Burroughs. It suffers from one bad point -- a plot against which budding authors are warned: a brother and sister feel more than purely brother-sister love for each other, and are deeply ashamed, incidentally. Then they discover the inevitable fact that they really aren't related, and all is happy.....leave that hog swill out and the yarn would have been pretty good.

Artwork for this issue was up to FA's usual standard, which at times is darned good. Cover was by McCauley, featuring the Mac girl. She is the same girl who was on "The Sword and the Pool" last year sometime -- same pose and everything, only the surroundings are different. The thing is well-done, in the best Mac tradition. Interior art is only fair, except for a full double-spread for Goddess of the GF which, had Lawrence done it, would have been one of the greatest of all time. Done by Malcolm Smith, however, 'twas only above average, no more. So to that.

Now for two gripes which are about purely physical aspects of the mag. Throughout "Toffee Takes a Trip," our finer sensibilities were constantly being jarred by a consistently recurring grammatical error which most fourth-graders are educated enough not to be guilty of. The editor, proofreader, author, or somebody, forgot that "it's" means "it is," and used it as the possessive "its" throughout the yarn. Distinctly annoying, and easily avoidable. We wonder who is guilty of this idiotic blunder. Probably Rap.....Our other gripe is this: After an hour or so of reading any Z-D prozine, especially if your hands are sweaty or the air is humid, you will begin to discover that your fingers are turning red, blue, green, or whatever happens to be the color on the cover. We wonder why this is so. Other companies print their mags well enough to keep the pigment from coming off on

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the poor customers' fingers. I just finished reading FA, as this review is written. A couple of the fingers of my right hand are smudged with blue. It is a new shade which I shall call "Ziff-Davis Blue."

Aside from this, FA manages to remain consistently entertaining, if not too superlative along the deep thought line; it remains consistently a relief after too much technical jargon, end-of-civilization blues, and ghastly horror, if three other editors get what I mean...

PLANET STORIES. Vol. III, #8; Fall issue, June-August 1947. 20¢.

This number has "two mighty novels of worlds at aby" featured, and in addition "eight thrilling short stories." And two features, the Vizigraph and the Feature Flash, as always.

First of the two novels is by Emmett McDowell, and is called -- believe it or not -- BLACK SILENCE. This is the man who wrote RED WITCH OF MERCURY, THE BLUE VENUS, BEYOND THE YELLOW FOG, THE GREAT GREEN BLIGHT.....this has gone on too long to be coincidental. It must be intentional. At any rate, it can't go on forever -- there are only a certain number of colors in the spectrum. We wonder what the next one will be -- somebody has suggested "Purple Prince of Pluto." There's always THE MAROON MARTIAN, or THE BEING BEM.....in BLACK SILENCE, a Mars expedition returns to good ole Terra and finds civilization wiped out. A plague, which was borne to Earth on the light rays of a nova in Centaurus, took root and doomed all mankind. For some reason, the animals apparently weren't affected at first. A few women are found wandering around in nomadic herds; there are two men in the 300-woman crowd which the spacemen stumble upon. Women were less susceptible to the plague. Well, it turns out that the plague germs were life spores of silicon life. They rapidly evolve in the way in which the first carbon life spores did when they first landed on Earth -- we wonder what type of life the first carbon spores caused to die of what kind of plague -- and soon begin to force carbon life out of existence. Whereupon mankind's struggle to save himself, his plants, etc from extinction is told of; a citadel is constructed out of some Army fort ("New Fort Knox," I believe it was called) and plans are made for a super-city to sometime be erected, built of an aluminum compound. Outside, the last of carbon life kicks off.

Frankly we were surprised by the quality of this yarn. It was better than "Veiled Island," which McDowell sold to ASF some time back. If VI was good enough for JWC, this should have been too. Aside from a few rather formulized and hackneyed passages, the yarn is written in a quite realistic manner. One does not usually expect realism in a newsstand pulp magazine like PS, so when it's found it is a pleasant surprise. Writing and characterization are up to snuff, especially characterization. And wait till you read the ending. All in all, we'd say that BLACK SILENCE is one of the best yarns PS has run.

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LET'S MAKE THIS MAG TAKE UP WHERE STIFIST LEFT OFF! Send serious stuff!

The other "novel" is by Erik Fennel, who wrote "Atavism" a few issues back, and is dubbed "Beneath the Red World's Crust." Regardless of what the title might lead you to expect, this is not a dero story. It's a thud-and-blunder space opera of Mars, and it reminded us somewhat of "Shadow Over Mars," Leigh Brackett's novel in a long-time-ago SS which you will no doubt remember. Fennel's piece is a tale about a young man and a group of undergrounders, together with the last of the Martian civilization, fighting the earth's Exploitation company. It's well written, good as space operas go. Typical Planet material.

The shorts look something like this: CRASH BEAM, by John Barrett is about how a control tower man outwitted some crook who was causing ships to crash by raying them; neatly done, but it'll not be remembered long ... ZERO HOUR, by Ray Bradbury, which deserves a longer note. The editor's blurb says: "PLANET STORIES proudly presents one of the best science fiction stories we have ever seen. Perhaps you will think it THE best!" Well, that is overly extravagant, even for an editor. ZERO HOUR is almost exactly a duplicate of CALL HIM DEMON, Kuttner's TWS tale which won #5 place among last year's yarns. The kids this time are instruments of a Martian invasion. However, if it had not been a rehash, ZH would have been a topnotcher; it's written with the usual Bradbury skill, and even as it is it's worthy of your perusal, we think ... ASTEROID JUSTICE is by V. E. Theissen, and is a not-too-well-written space opera about asteroid miners and their peculiar brand of justice ... AGAINST TETRARCH is a very poor man's VASSALS OF THE MASTER WORLD. The tetrarch enslaved Earth, and the humans on the planet Tetrarch are trying to break their bondage. Naturally they succeed. Another very unsensational story ... ASSIGNMENT IN THE DAWN, by Bryce Walton, is an off trail and somewhat dizzying little thing about a couple of mutants' efforts to destroy the culture of humanity. It ends on a note of futility. Too many stories of that type will warp the readers' brains. All in all, AITD is one of the most unusual and maddening items we've seen in quite a while. Frankly we don't know how to rate it; you'll have to decide for yourself ... TEST FOR THE PEARL is another of those things about how the primitive Venusian natives outwit the greedy Earthman. It's by Vaseleos Garson ... fan Bill Oberfield crashes PS with "Escape from Pluto." A crooked earthman named Marcius Kemble is exiled to Pluto. The Plutonians set him free in a space ship which actually turns out to be super-cooled mercury, and returns to its liquid state upon reaching warmer regions closer to the sun than Pluto. Whereupon Kemble falls into the sun. Aside from the fact that we have always been told that any body dropped toward the sun from space will take up an orbit around that luminary and not fall right in, the yarn is okay. And Kemble would have fizzled in any case ... J. Harvey Haggard, oldtimer, returns with GIRL OF THE SILVER SPHERE, which is something like THE DIAMOND LENS except that Earth is under the lens and it's a galactic superbeing who falls for his beautiful Animula. It was okay, we suppose.

WANTED material. Articles, fiction, poems, artwork. Reviews, humor,.

THE VIZIGRAPH's length has suffered since Mr. Payne-in-the-Neck (credit Michael Wigodsky) assumed editorship. We wish that he would leave out maybe one of the shorts and put in a longer Viz, especially since ads have encroached on the Holy Space. And we also wish Payne would answer the letters like Merwin and Rap. Often in VIZ and in FFM's THE READER'S VIEWPOINT things are brought up which could do with some editorial discussion, and they never get it. At least, however, Planet's Lamebrained Potbelly answers direct questions, and Mary Gnaedinger doesn't even do that much. ... THE FEATURE FLASH concerns Erik Fennel, and is humorously written.

Artwork: Cover is by the new Anderson, we suppose. It is better done than a lot of PS's covers. However, no Rogers or Jones or Schneeman. Interiors are better than of yore; Napoli seems to be a pretty good art man. Sort of a crude Schneeman. We hope to see more of the guy in the future.

All in all, Planet is gradually improving in quality all the way around. We are glad that this is so. The mag has a lot of possibilities which can easily be realized -- look at what Merwin did with the supposedly hopelessly pulp TWS and SS. There is no reason why PS can't improve just as much. We hope to see the day when it does. And even if it doesn't, it is still good for some relaxation, if nothing more. So closes the doors of Planet till the Winter issue.

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STARTLING STORIES. Vol. 15, #3; July 1947. 15¢.

The issue is graced by the inclusion of six stories -- the novel, four shorts, and the hall of fame "classic," which, as usual, is the poorest story in the issue. Also, as usual, there is the letter column, the fanzine review, and -- for some reason the "Meet the Author" department is vanished. Wotsabigidea? Is George O. Smith ashamed of his life story, or was it lack of space? Well, whatever the reason was, we missed a usually interesting column. Perhaps it's morbid interest, or a horrible fascination, but we like to read about the lives and creations of the pro hax. ... There is a special article in addition to the usual balderdash; something like the type ASF uses. All in all, a very well-rounded issue; more so, perhaps, than most of SS's recent ones.

The reason for the abounding number of shorts, and the presence of an extra article, is the shortness of George O. Smith's lead novel, THE KINGDOM OF THE BLIND. This thing ends on page 56; the usual SS novel runs far past that modest figure. We have no gripes, however -- it is, alas, all too easy for authors to become boring in overly long stories; witness FFM's novels of the past few months, or should we say years? There is no reason to strive for length for length's sake alone; if the saga goes on and on, like THE NIGHT LAND, then it is okay, naturally, but if the plot is short, extra wordage detracts. Thus we are not critical of the shortness of the novel. ((Might make some

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comment about the length of these prozine reviews, too)) With that out of the way, we shall get down to brass novels. ((Ackerman could have done better.)) THE KINGDOM OF THE BLIND concerns a physicist named James Forrest Carroll; his case is somewhat similar to that of Richard S. Shaver. Do not let that prejudice you against the story, however -- there is no Shaverism in here. The similarity lies in the fact that Carroll is the only man on Earth who knows of the existence of aliens who plan to conquer, and nobody will believe him. It seems that Carroll, along with all the other great physicists of the time, had been studying a queer phenomenon called the Lawson Radiation. Carroll -- and all the other physicists -- broke down the minute they began to approach a solution -- when they made important discoveries about the nature of the radiation, or its cause, something immediately caused their IQ's to slump from 180 down to the seventy level. ((No, they didn't enter fandom.)) Accompanying this drop in IQ is amnesia, which blocks out everything the scientists knew concerning the radiations, and a psychosis which will not allow them to think any about their work. Well, Carroll has a much more powerful brain than most of the others, which throws off the mental blanket; he recovers the memories which he lost, and he remembers that he had discovered that the Lawson radiations were caused by the waste from interstellar ships, located in the direction of Arcturus, in Bootes. And Carroll's revelation of this truth brings about his immediate confinement to a bug hatch.

From there on Carroll struggles, in a titanic one-man effort, to either convince his fellow humans of the truth of his accusations or to accomplish single-handed the defeat of the aliens (the ones which had been doing the interstellar traveling), who are trying to conquer or annihilate the earth. In the progress of his search he is aided by one of the alien women. Seems that the aliens had sent out their brain-patterns and put them in human bodies, attached to the original human brains -- that is, personality transference, with no surgery. In the end of this yarn -- how else could it be in a Thrilling Group magazine? -- he falls in love with, and marries, this girl -- seems that a continued life in a human body, coupled with a continued exposure to human biological urges, had sort of undermined her alien thought-patterns and substituted those of a normal human female, if you get what we mean. Anyway, be that as it may, you may rest assured that love interest does not occupy a very important place in this yarn which doubtless was intended for ASF and had a slight love interest revised into it when Smith decided to send it to SS instead.

For the entire approach and tone of the yarn is that of an ASF tale rather than of the usual type of yarn published in SS -- at least until Merwin began to really take hold and get his present improvement campaign under way. We personally wonder how such a yarn as this got by under the watchful eye of Margulies. For, if we are not mistaken, the general readership of STARTLING STORIES does not consist of the same group of people who are habitual fans of Astounding SCIENCE FICTION. This yarn is definitely for the latter group. There are

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psychological terms, technical sections, and so on, which would be absolutely incomprehensible to the reader who is accustomed to sagas in which the barrelchestpeabraind hero rescues the gorgeous damsel from the drooling, mad Blatant Beast by means of popping rayguns and the like. Their exposure to a yarn like THE KINGDOM OF THE BLIND we do not believe will raise the circulation of STARTLING STORIES any, unfortunate as that fact may be. But, after all, this department is not for the benefit of the average reader. We can safely state that any fan reading TKOTB will find it worthy of a place high in his estimation; just as high as the current output of ASF, if not higher. Congratulations to Merwin for having the guts to print it! Frankly, we were astonished out of our wits. We still are. Read it and see if you aren't, too.

Now to the shorts. The first is entitled THE RING BONANZA and is authored by none other than good old Otto Binder -- writing under his own name now, having dropped the brotherly association of Eando. Apparently he has decided to take a holiday from the comic books, or at least let his old fans know that he isn't dead. We wish the comic books for which he draws were all dead. Then this creator of such things as AFTER AN AGE and VASSALS OF THE MASTER WORLD would return to the fold. However, at least this is something -- we sincerely hope that it is the beginning of the Binder renaissance ... and re the story itself, it is a neatly-done, if not overly sensational, little tale of how an honest ring prospector was victorious over his crooked opponent. They were prospecting in the rings of Saturn, incidentally. The honest guy found a hunk of gold, which the crook promptly stole from him. They could get away with it, out there, because there were no witnesses and hence a complaint from the person from whom the goods were stolen had no value. Tale tells how good luck gave the eventual victory to the honest man, as is always the case.....and the hall of fame story continues to testify that the axiom mentioned above, the hall of fame story is always the worst in the issue, is true. This one is "The Life Detour," by Dr. David H. Keller. The yarn is quite a bit like "Stenographer's Hands," in Avon Fantasy Reader, reviewed up above, although not quite so silly. Not quite. This one is about a city of the future which is divided into two sections, one for the ruling class and the other for the common crud. When a person in the lower section proves himself to be outstanding, he is invited to cross the Bridge and join the Elite. Our brave hero is summoned across; the achievement which makes him worthy is the fact that he has discovered a way to make heavy water cheaply. The idea the rulers have is to introduce heavy water into the lower humans' water supply, hence killing them all off. They assume that the young scientist will not have enough imagination to see through their evil scheme. Matter of face, he doesn't -- but his sweetheart does. Together they proceed to conquer the elite's dirty plot. The young man switches the pipes so that the heavy water goes to the elite rather than to the herd; everybody is happy. Except, of course, the elite....this story demonstrates once again that the stf of the olden days wasn't half so good as our superior modern day product. Some of the old stories, like this one, are VOTE FOR THE FRISCON WHEN YOU GO TO THE PHILCON! GOLDEN.GATE IN '48!!!

downright laughable. Here's hoping that Merwin either begins picking better stories or tosses this department to the dogs. I don't think it would be missed ... DREAM'S END, by Henry Kuttner, is the next contribution, a short story which, like the lead novel, missed the boat when it didn't go into NSF. Concerns the efforts of a psychiatrist to cure one of his manic depressives; we got enmeshed in the psychological jargon and failed to find out how he accomplished it, except that it concerned giving up some of his own life energies. He cured the depressive, but gave himself a psychosis; he continued, every so often, to lapse into dreams with no apparent transfer from reality. Reality for him would merge right into a nightmare, with no gap in between. Obviously the continued doubt of whether or not he is awake is far from pleasant for the poor guy. This is a Lewis Padgett yarn under the author's real name. It's just one more proof that either Margulies has decided to subordinate the commercial interests for a while, or that Merwin is good at sneaking things in under the boss's nose. We sincerely hope that Merwin keeps up his sneaking. It is paying dividends in the quality of his mags. DREAM'S END is one of the best shorts we've seen in a long time. Also included is "Proxy Planeteers" by Edmond Hamilton, which is a space opera with a neat twist, and "Super Whost," carrying on the adventures of Jick and Oona, married couple of the far future, of "Soma Racks" fame. Like Merwin, we enjoy the StClair stories. We really feel sorry for those who take themselves and stf so seriously that they can't enjoy this type of yarn. "Super Whost" is absolutely pointless, and in that lies its greatness. Margaret St. Clair is a find, if our word means anything; we look forward to more stories in the same vein by this author.

Now to that sore spot of stf, the artwork. Bergey is back on the cover, after an absence of no issues. As usual, a nearly naked maiden is the subject. She is coming through a teleport machine in this painting, which is guaranteed not to increase the good reputation of stf in literary circles. Merwin has cleaned up the interior artwork; he has cleaned up the quality and age-level of the stories; he has fixed up the letter columns. We wonder if it would not be a darned good idea to fix up the covers while this reform campaign is in progress ... the special article mentioned early in this review is about submarine warfare, and might be interesting -- we didn't read it ... interior artwork is cleaned up, as we say. Lawrence/Stevens is on the lead novel; need we say more? H. W. Kiemle has been imported from PLANET for some of the shorts. He shows a tendency to copy the style of Marchioni; hope he wises up before he becomes bad, like that gentleman whom all stfans will willingly forget ... the pic for "The Ring Bonanza" is very well done, but for some reason it lacks a signature. Wish we knew whom to praise for this one. It is definitely good. Marchioni is retained for some of the shorts, but as there are no girls in the pictures they are reasonably fair. All in all, a pretty well illustrated issue. Merwin plugs the Philcon in the first of THE ETHER VIBRATES, and the letters published in that worthy department are up to their usual standard, although we are not altogether in favor of Merwin's new letter policy of deleting the longer comments so

so he can print more names and hence give more egoboo; the long letters are usually the most interesting, we mean the type that Oliver and JoKe used to write before their unfortunate mutual disappearances. At any rate, TEV and TRS may yet become suitable successors to the old DISCUSSIONS, which was the most interesting letter column in stf, we feel, before the advent of the Shaver mystery and the deluge of crackpot letters. May Merwin have luck in big gobs. He has proved his worth; in the brief time since the beginning of 1945 that he has been editor of TWS and SS, they have shown as much as, or more improvement than, any mag you can name has improved in so short a time. May he continue to be the guiding hand of Better Publications' stf pulps till their demises. Long live Merwin! ((Any more of this and we will be accused of trying to flatter the guy into a favorable review of this fanzine.)) and that finishes one of the best issues SS has put out.

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THRILLING WONDER STORIES. Vol. XXX, #5. August 1947. 15¢.

There are eight stories -- the lead novelet, two other novelets, and five shorts. Also included are the inevitable THE READER SPEAKS and Merwin's new department, SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEW.

The lead novelet, "The Deadly Dust" by William Fitzgerald, is another Bud Gregory tale. You remember, Bud Gregory, hillbilly genius and hero of two other yarns. This time Geiger counters all over the country begin to go into too-high gear, due to some enemy which is broadcasting radioactive dust over the USA from the Pacific. Murfee searches for Gregory and finally finds him in the Puget Sound region, whereupon he saves the country as before. All in all, the thing is just like the other Gregory novelets. We really don't look forward to too many more of these. So far, they have all been alike, with only a different problem in each case for the Hick Mastermind to solve. And, like the other series of this nature -- most of which were done by Nelson S. Bond -- they can get boring after awhile. However, Fitzgerald is a good writer; if he would get another set of characters, we feel he could go places.

As for the other two novelets, by Kuttner and George O. Smith, only one is likely to rate as an all-time classic. It is "Atomic!", by Henry Kuttner, a shuddersome tale about mutants caused by atomic wars. In this case a lake is turned into an evil intelligence by the mutation of some organism inside it. The plot isn't classical, but the writing ---! It is easy enough to see why Henry ranked first on last year's poll. Altogether, this is one of the most beautifully written yarns we've had the pleasure to read in a good while. And the illustrations are by Finlay! Of course, they have little resemblance to the story; actually, Lawrence could have illustrated it better. But considering the two pics as art and not as illustrations, they are as good as anything Virgil has ever done. Especially the head full-pager.

"In the Cards" is the title of George O. Smith's contribution to

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THE ISSUE. It concerns the theft by various peoples of a block of a new element called zonium. And the reasons for said thefts. There is a punch ending. We think George C. has found his metier at last. He seems to do better on yarns of this kind than he did on purely technical yarns like THE LOST ART and RECOIL. QRM--INTERPLANETARY was another yarn in this humorous vein, and a good one. We hope to see much more of Smith in TWS. And ITC is one of the neatest yarns we've read in quite a while, even if not classical like Kuttner's masterpiece.

That brings us to the first of the shorts, "Noon" by Hudson Hastings. Most of you have read a yarn called "Twilight," by John W. Campbell, Jr., under the pen name of Don A. Stuart. "Noon" is in the same vein. There we have to stop. Only to say that "Noon" ranks easily among our all-time top five list of shorts ... leave us predict that this little superclassic will rate mighty darned high on the Fsy Review poll next year. It's easily TWS's best yarn yet in 1947. It may be the best of the last five years. We wish we had words to describe it. And may we ask who is Hudson Hastings? He must be the pen name of some top author. Maybe C. L. Moore. We wouldn't be one bit surprised.

There are two other shorts among the five that are worthy of more than passing consideration. They are "The Stroller," by Margaret St. Clair, and "Dark Dawn," by Kuttner Hammond. The former is notable mainly for one of the neatest punch endings we've seen. And DD is another beautifully written story about a man who was stricken blind by an atomic blast, but whose brain was altered somehow so that he could take possession of the eyes of animals and look through them. Doing this, he made contact with an ocean floor civilization. Altogether a very well-written story.

The other two shorts are average. "The Jet Jockeys" is about the lives and loves of stunt rocket pilots of the future. "Donkeys to Bald Fate," by Samuel Mines, is a very, very inconsequential thing in which a scientist raises donkeys to human intelligence. You can skip both of these without missing too much.

Departments -- The Reader Speaks has improved. It's long, and the letters seem not to have been cut too much. And as for the other department, SCIENCE FICTION BOOK REVIEW -- this is good. We wish Merwin wouldn't pan Doc Smith so much, however. He seems to forget how long ago the EEpics were written. After all, most any mediocre novel of today, had it been printed in the Gernsback era, would be acclaimed as the greatest classic of all time, now. What if, say, HIDDEN CITY had been issued in AS in 1927 instead of 47? Or even ALL ABOARD FOR THE MOON. And maybe STF BOOK REVIEW could be made longer.

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WEIRD TALES. VOL. 39 #11, July 1947. 15¢. ((Then))

This number of the oldest mag contains nine stories, two of them dubbed "long novelets" and the rest short stories -- one of them isn't

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even long enough to be called a story; it amounts to about a page, all told. In addition to this mass is one poem and a couple of departments, 96 pages in all -- the smallest fantasy mag now appearing.

The lead "long novelette" -- although it doesn't cop the cover -- is another Lovecraft imitation by the guy who writes under the name of C. Hall Thompson. You may remember "Spawn of the Green Abyss," in the November 1946 issue; this particular one is called "The Will of Claude Ashur." Miskatonic U. and Arkham of good old H. P. L. fame are mentioned, but they don't attain the prominence they did in the old master's writings. The evil village in this tale is called Inneswich -- that one gave us a laugh. If he was going to mention Miskatonic and Arkham anyway, why didn't he at least be consistent, and go ahead and call it Innesmouth or Dunwich, or else invent a new name? Maybe he couldn't think of an original one, and objected to using the HPL inventions because Inneswich didn't resemble in evil properties, location, etc., the two Lovecraft villages from which its name was compounded. The will mentioned in the title isn't a last will and testament, as might be supposed. It is the other kind of will -- will power. Claude Ashur is the brother of the narrator; since birth he has exercised a strange compelling control over others, hence the "will." He is also a dark and mysterious person -- his studies of witchcraft and demonology are so deep and horrible that he is expelled from Miskatonic! And that is getting pretty bad. There is no point in recounting the rest of the plot here, except that the evil guy eventually makes his "will" so strong that through the aid of incantations he is able to take over his brother's body, leaving his brother with his puny will in his ((Claude's)) leprosy-ridden body in the insane asylum. Altogether an admirable guy to have for a brother, eh?

The yarn isn't notable. We wonder who C. Hall Thompson is -- maybe Derleth. Anyway, whoever he is, he's no HPL -- not in any sense. Not even in subject matter -- a love interest is introduced into this saga, which as any Lovecraftian knows would have been the last thing the master would ever have done. However, in one point Thompson excels Lovecraft -- the ability to describe utterly loathsome objects in minute detail. We wonder if he didn't have a leper there before him as he wrote the last two pages -- they describe a leper in the last stages of decay, after 20 years of steady rotting, and they came about as close to turning this reviewer's stomach as has any weird tale read in the last few years -- and we have read plenty, we assure you. Actually, we can't see the point in introducing this sort of thing -- it adds nothing to the effect or quality, for plenty of writers have achieved effect without resort to gruesome descriptions by detail. Wouldn't be surprised if the more weak-stomached of Weird's readers leave the fold after this one. Ugh! .... and aside from that criticism, the careful buildup that characterized HPL's writing is absent here almost entirely. He relies upon the "leprosy" revelation to make a climax, which is bad. After all said and done, we're forced to the conclusion that there'll never be another Lovecraft, and that is all there is to that. We wish that the imitators



would follow the type of THE WATCHER FROM THE SKY by August W. Derleth and lean away from minute and faithful descriptions of gruesome lepers. Amen and R. I. P.

The other long novelette, which most mags would call a short, is "The Damp Man," latest contribution from the well-known Allison V. Harding. It is up to the usual Harding quality, but is not sensational. J. Sheridan le Fanu is resurrected for the first of the short stories, with "The Churchyard Yew," a tale of ghostly vengeance which, except for a slightly antiquated style, is no different from any of ten thousand hacked out by contemporary pros... August Derleth Grendon is represented by his latest tale, Farrington's Pool. This thing reminded us somewhat of Lord Dunsany. It is different, worthy of at least passing attention... The one-pager mentioned earlier is by Ray Bradbury and is called "Interim." Remember, back up in ASF, where we said that Sturgeon and Brad could do no wrong literarily? Well, this little almost-story tends to back up that rash claim. The subject matter is unorthodox, to say very little. But Brad makes it sound convincing when anybody else would have flunked miserably.... Roger S. Vreeland gives with THE ROBE OF FORGETFULNESS, which is primarily a mood if we aren't mistaken. It is neatly done.... Stanton A. Coblenz comes back with THE DOG THAT CAME BACK, and we were not thrilled by Coblenz's, or the dog's, return... "The Breeze and I," by Mary Elizabeth Counselman, is okay... Carl Jacobi does a filler, THE DIGGING AT PISTOL KEY. Altogether the fiction in Weird continues its old-established tradition of being steadily good but never sensational. Gone forever are the days, it seems, when WT printed masterpieces of fantasy.

The artwork is crude symbolism as usual. We don't like it... Coye is on the cover, and does better there than on interiors. The cover is copied by a department rather than a story, an oddity in fantasy publishing to say the least. It illustrates WEIRDISM, a new department which replaces SUPERSTITIONS AND TABOOS. This new dept will tell about various legendary monsters and evil entities; #1 in the series is vampires. We eagerly await the Fan Critic; that ought to be a really horrible weirdism. ... the poem is RESURRECTION by Clark Ashton Smith, and is good as befits his poetry. Also of interest in this issue are the ads. Several of them announce books, dealers, and so on which may conceivably interest fen. All in all, this was one of the more interesting WTs. And so closes the review.

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And that finishes the prozine reviews, which, praise Chu, will NOT be so long next issue. And that is a promise. If you had to do the dummies, you'd promise too.

We want your comments about SWIMMING THROUGH THE SEWERS. And say more than just that it should be shortened. We know that without being told. What kind of review do you like? Swenson will write them the way you say. And do you think the title is appropriate?

Leave us hear from youse, as JoKe says. And remember the Friscon.

--ed



a satire

by Joe Kennedy

BURIED deep within the mouldy files of fanzines that lie silently on the shelves of a squat, brown music cabinet on the ground floor of the Kennedy mansion, concealed and dimmed by the dust of ages unaccountable, nameless secrets sleep. Yea, on the surface fantasy fandom seems to be a normal, ordinary sort of hobby -- a little queer at times, perhaps -- but were the gruesome truth to be known, no fan alive today would ever again snooze peacefully during the midnight hours.

For strange and eerie are the mysteries which rest, dark and dormant, in fandom's past. With your indulgence, dear reader, let us rend aside the curtain of silence and probe into these shadowy realms.

As I write these words, I clutch in one hand a copy of the thirty-first issue of FANEWSCARD WEEKLY, edited by Ed Connor and Frank Robinson. It is dated "2/12/44." This cardzine was composed of assorted news items, but -- four black sjudges adorn the postal! Some of the words were crossed out, probably by the use of that demoniac instrument, the fountain pen. Thus the news items read as follows: "Al Ashley rejected. XXXXXXXXXXXX a broken XXXXXX heel! (I have insert - ed X's in the space where the words were crossed out.) Further down the card is this intriguing item: "XXX SO SOLLY! Seems other fen got ack-Morojo cards. XXXXXXXX." Unquote. I don't recall what the news items refer to -- probably some obscure event in fan history of scant import today. However, I have conferred with other fans who received that issue of FANEWSCARD. On every copy, the publishers apparently scratched off certain offending words! Now, naturally I'd well-nigh give my left arm to know what in heck they crossed off. In fact, when illustrious Brooklyn fans Ronald Christensen and Robert J. Gaulin visited me some time ago, I showed them the card as a curiosity. Gaulin, who is interested in chemistry and electronics and all them-thar high brow education things, thought he could remove the ink from the card by using typewriter cleaning fluid, and thus we'd be able to read the forbidden words concealed underneath. So I gave him a bottle of type-cleaner, and he scrubbed and scrubbed at the card, but no luck. The ink just refused to come off. And to this day, yours truly and a hundred-odd other fans are still pondering this unsolved mystery: what WAS crossed off of Fanewscard #31?

That's just one of fandom's forgotten mysteries. The rest are beyond number. For instance, I'm still puzzling the identity of the party who sent me an unsigned Christmas card from California in December of 1945. Could it have been a visitor from an alien planet who happened to pick up a copy of a pro magazine, saw my name therein, and for some strange reason known only to his alien mentality, decided to wish me greetings of the yuletide? This is just one of the possibilities that present themselves. Indeed it sounds incredible, but, as Palmer says, use your brain for doubting. You can't prove God in a test-tube, therefore there isn't one, but you should believe in one anyway. So why can't you believe in this?



Another thing. Five hundred copies of the Weinbaum memorial volume, Dawn of Flame, are known to have been printed. Yet only about 250 of them were ever bound and sold. The mystery is -- what happened to the other quarter of a thousand copies of this fabulous tome? Yours truly and several hundred other collectors would very much like to know.

Or take the case of the chap who sent me a dime for a copy of my late fan publication, Vampire. His letter was written in a large, exaggerated scrawl, and the return address was somewhere in Texas. I'd suspect he was a cowhand or maybe an Injun. A couple weeks thereafter I dispatched him a copy of Vamp -- but finally, much later, the magazine came back stamped "NO SUCH PERSON AT THIS ADDRESS." Now, the obvious, scientific conclusion is that the subscriber must have moved in the interval between his subscribing to the fanzine and my mailing him the copy. And yet (and I say this with a shudder) it is equally logical that some nameless alien entity came down and snatched him right off the face of this earth, obliterated every trace of his existence -- SIMPLY BECAUSE HE HAD THE FOOLHARDY NERVE TO SUBSCRIBE TO SUCH AN ACCURSED PUBLICATION AS VAMPIRE!

And where are the top fans of yesteryear? Where is Wilson Shepard? Where is Allan Glasser? Where, oh where, is Olon F. Wiggins? Gone. Gone without a trace. Vanished -- as if they fell into a space warp, or got swallowed up by some nameless entity traveling lazily through time. I could reel off the names of half a dozen correspondents who've disappeared in like fashion. One day they lived and laughed and loved, and ate and breathed and slept -- and -- well, never mind. But the next . . . they vanished without a trace, and my letters were never acknowledged nor answered.

You doubt? You scoff? You snarlingly deny this truth?? And how about the case of Hall and Flint, who authored that classic of another decade, THE BLIND SPOT! When one fantasy publisher attempted to obtain permission to print the Spot in book form, he was not only unable to find a single clue to trace them, but it was just as if every living relative and heir had likewise disappeared, leaving no clues behind!

Maybe, of course, the files and records were incomplete. Maybe the research involved was inadequate.

Or maybe some Plutonian grulzak, or beetle-bodied deity dwelling on the sunward side of Vulcan, was becoming a little uneasy because these mere mortals dared to probe too far into the domain of the unknown-----

Jeez, maybe I oughta send this to AMAZING STORIES.

Of course, those fans I mentioned may still be lurking in some obscure corner of this terrestrial sphere. And yours truly will look like a damfool if, two weeks from now, Wiggins, Shepard, and Glasser return to fan activity.

((Continued on page 50))



AT PALMER'S DESK:

or, THE WISH FULFILLMENT DREAM OF A FAN  
by H. Elliott Miller

The long corridors of the Ziff-Davis editorial offices are empty. The scrubwoman, her tasks completed, has left long ago. Only the black expanse of darkened and deserted offices meets the eyes as a far-away clock slowly chimes three times. It is three o'clock in the morning.

As the muted chimes die away, there is a fumbling at the main door. A figure enters, unlocks the door, and walks into the largest of the offices. It sits down in a desk chair and snaps on the lights. It's a.....a.....no, despite the face, it's not a dero obsessed with the idea of seducing the linotypers away from their allegiance to Amazing. It's only Palmer.

But what can Palmer want at this time of night? We see his fingers travel over the side of the editorial desk, find what they are looking for, and press it. A framed cover painting suddenly moves to one side, exposing a wall safe. With feverish fingers Palmer opens it and stacks the bags it contains on the desk. With bated breath he sits down and slowly, oh how slowly and carefully, starts to open one. The bag is emptied on the desk and placed aside as with mounting haste Palmer opens bag after bag, till their contents make a huge pile in front of him. It is money, heap upon heap of it, and behind this colossal mound of Mammon Palmer sits. His eyes gleam with miserly joy as he runs his fingers again and again through the heap of bills, stroking them with a tenderness most men reserve for the more beautiful members of the feminine sex. Misplaced or not, however, Palmer's main affection in life is clearly shown on his face.

Palmer's gleeful cackles break the silence as he starts to divide the money into piles of different denominations. "What a racket! What a racket! Crackpot appeal is really the thing. Look at the money, loads of it and more pouring in. Haw!Haw! How even crackpots can believe the Shaver mystery is beyond me. Ah, there's nothing like running a magazine -- that is, if you know how and have the brains like I got." With this Palmer sticks his thumbs under his lapels and leans back, choleric chinless face set in an expression of supreme self-satisfaction.

Glancing at the money, Palmer grows apprehensive, but with a look at the gun in an opened desk drawer his last caution vanishes. He gives himself up completely to a joyous revel of feeling and snapping his money. Thenext hour sees him counting and counting till he is fairly cuddling the money.

Perhaps if Palmer had not been so preoccupied over the counting of his hundred dollar bills he would have heard the slight sounds that bring him shock upright in his chair, staring with bulging eyes at what he sees before him. "No! No! You don't exist! You're not true



You're only a figment of Shaver's disordered imagination, a story character, not something real. There is no hero," he stammers, as he grabs for the gun.....

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MORNING is here. Palmer's secretary comes into the office and exclaims in disgust when she notices the messy heap of vile-smelling publish-gray ashes on the desk. Then she grows wide-eyed as she sees the money the ashes cover. With quick movements of her neatly manicured hands, she sweeps the ashes into a bag and gathers the money. The secretary hurries out of the office and a month later a Police Bulletin says simply "Last seen on a ship en route to Patagonia. Wanted for questioning in the disappearance of Raymond A. Palmer." As for Palmer, let us examine the often-explored contents of a spittoon in the lobby of the South American Steamship Lines Co. Protruding slightly above the ash-covered surface is a battered signet ring with the initials: "R. A. P."

-- R I P --

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DREAM COME TRUE, by Forrest J Ackerman ((continued from page 14))

assassinated the Caliph. His girl, however, works a canny miracle by wishing on the magic ring that the Caliph would appear, alive and whole, in the stove--and lo and behold, Jannings emerges like Al Jolson in black face prepared to sing "Caliphornia, Here I Come".....

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I AGREE with all critics! I have carried it too far this time! Such an anachronistic pun should be punished by denying me the privilege of seeing the rest of the picture. And, since I was so denied, justice is satisfied and, hoping you are the same with the review, I remain.....Forrest J Ackerman.

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UNFATHOMED MYSTERIES OF FANTASY FANDOM, by Joe Kennedy, continued...

But someday, dear reader, Y O U may discover where those famous fans and professionals went. Some gloomy night you may be walking down a little-trapped street or by-way. You may see an amorphous shape, with green fungoid-stained batlike wings, crouching in an alleyway and peering at you with sparkling, evil eyes. And you may feel sharp claws wrench into your shoulders, while an icy wind roars in your face, as those bat-wings churn the stratosphere, carrying you off to some unknown galaxy beyond the rim of space and time. Someday, dear reader, you may find out for yourself-----

And yet it's not too late to take up stamp collecting or model airplane building, or some other safe, sane mundane hobby --- if you get what I mean . . .

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THE EVOKATION PRIMAL:

Pale Ivory Flesh....I bid thee form

Within the glow

Where strange incense burns

In the urn below;

As perfume rises

From pale gold leaf

That burns, sans flame...

Sans earthly heat...

Save for Name

That falls from lips

Invoking flame

Not of this earth....

Invoking Queen

Who, ere Eve's birth

Set Adam's heart afire....

Come forth...Lilith...

...Daughter of...Desire...

---Marijane Nuttall



THE EVOLUTION PRIMER:

Pale Ivory Flesh....I did thee form

Within the glow

Whose strange incense burns

In the urn below;

As perfume rises

From pale cold leaf

That burns, as flame...

Save earth's best...

Save for Name

That falls from lips

Invoking flame

Not of this earth...

Invoking Queen

Who, ere Eve's birth

Set Adam's heart alive....

Come forth...lily...

...Daughter of...Desire...















