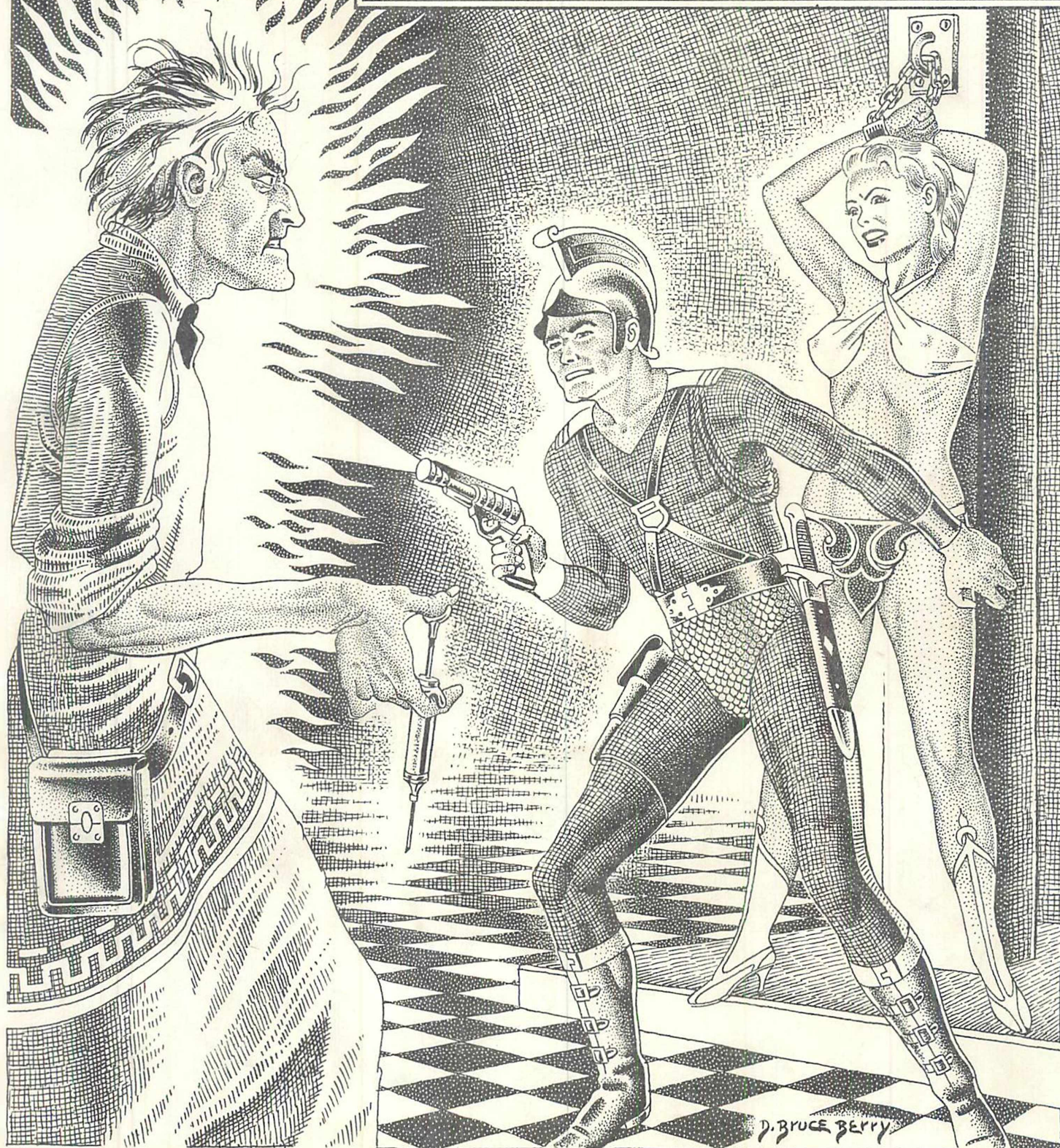


Fadaway



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Editorial

by

ROBERT
JENNINGS

SINCE THERE ARE a lot of things to be said in a short space this round, you readers will not be treated to the usual Frolicking and Carefree editorial that usually fills these pages; bubbling over with good humor and neofan-nish ramblings. In fact, you aren't even going to be treated to a New Trend editorial, wherein I interspace my Witty & Happy ramblings with Deep & Significant thoughts on The World Around us and Fandom In General. You won't even be treated to an Ordinary Editorial, such as you might find in other, inferior, fanzines. This is indeed your unlucky day, because you are going to be treated to a Business Editorial. The meeting is now in order.

LIKE, HOWZA LIKE THE NEW LOOK? At last you beloved and faithful readers can glance upon the first cover featuring the new FADEAWAY title. Actually, the title lettering which will be used on future covers can be seen by viewing the back cover & table of contents. In case some of you good readers are in doubt as to the correct pronunciation of the title (and I can hardly imagine the entire readership being in accord on pronunciation, being as this is a continental type fmz), it should be spoken in the following manner: The zine should be picked up and held firmly with two of the three hands, and the eyes should be allowed to focus on the title word. Practice this for a few moments until the operation is completely familiar to you. Got it? Fine. Then open the mouth, and form two words, "fade" and "away". Now say these two words as one word, FADEAWAY, and you have spoken the new title. See how easy it all was?

Of course a few of you out there (insurgents doubtless) may well point out that the title of the zine is not FADEAWAY, but is spelled FADAWAY, which I'm

sure you will want to pronounce as FAD AWAY. It's like this. Before The Coming Of The Title, I was a happy carefree fan, well contented with my conservative, neoish title, THE MONDAY EVENING GHOST. Why, changing my title was the farthest thing from my conservative, neoish mind. But then, one day, KEN Gentry arrived, stepped from his sleep black caddy, as he sometimes does, leaped into my room, threw himself on my bed, and proceeded to ware out one of my new records. "You've got to change the title of your zine Jennings", he sneered in my direction. #Hahahaha" I said. At this point he pulled out a piece of paper which bore a sketch of the new title lettering, inked in yet, even. It's no great secret that I'm a born sucker for three demensional lettering of any sort, and under the aggressive Gentry's high pressure sales talk, I agreed to use the new title. As for the unique spelling... Actually, when KEN did the lettering he found he was short on space, and forgot to put in that necessary letter besides. When he realized his mistake, he discovered he would not be able to squeeze in that needed letter without running off the page. So in the end we just decided to leave the title like it was, since it matched the personality and scope of the zine so perfectly. The title, just like the zine, is misspelled.

WHICH REMINDS ME Due to going to College, I have become a Marvel Intellect... So actually this fanzine contains no mistakes of any kind. But to keep you kindly readers from going into a state of shock when you saw a Peffectly Spelled Jennings Zine, I have deliberately placed a few misspellings thruout...

MY NEW ADDRESS in case you don't know it, is Box 1462, Tenn. Polytechnic Institute, Cookeville, Tennessee. (Scenic Cookeville, on the third lowest bank of hell). Due to college and the like, this zine will have to adopt a new schedule. The schedule in the future will be quarterly during the school months, and hopefully a monthly during the summer months. Maybe. Or maybe just a plain quarterly. Anyway, future issues will be fatter than previously, and I am not going to accept any subs of over sixty cents. Sixty cents will bring you four issues of this zine. Annishes, such as this one, will still cost two sub units in the future. I naturally intend to honor the subs I already hold.

YOU SAY COLLEGE IS ROUGH, DO YOU? Well, yes. On many occasions I have been caught saying that very thing. On any given that, in fact, that I'm back at Central Control (located, as are all good spy centers, at my 3819 address), you will find me, soap box in one hand, part of someone's collet in the other hand, screaming the axioms of Study, and How Rough College Is. Many times you can stop in on these days and hear my lecture (3-5 Saturdays, 7-9 Sat. evening with question period from 10-11), on the Trilas and Tribulations of the First Quarter Freshman. On Sundays I usually deliver several half-hour talks on such inspiring themes as, Why I Switched My Major; We Also Consider Suicide; My Future Like In The Army's Grades; or; You Can't Go Home Again; and Don't Knock It. And while college is Rough, needless to say, I was keen witted enough to realize in just notime at all that engineering was not the life for me. So I am now a psychology major. Yes by damn, the Traveling Couch and I will be back at college next quarter prepared to do battle with social significance, the mind of the individual, group collectivism, cultural patterns, social development and like items meant mainly to color my Viewpoint on today's society. Now, at least, I can starve to death at peace with myself. Even tho the work load next quarter is the same I've been taking this quarter, I don't anticipate it being as rough, and also the fact that I've learned, (finally), how to study, will allow me more time for farao. So, if I'm behind in my letter writing and the like, have patience.

LIKE, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REST OF THE WORLD Dept. It was the usual Tech Day, which is to say, it was gloomy, overcast, and depressing. A slight drizzle filled the air, and the grotesque shapes of the mutated trees and bushes around the grim, gothic majesty of the Tech Cafeteria & Post Office, loomed out before me, its ancient, crumbling stone carvings, and its gray stone, clinked walls sending fingers of fear up my spine. I walked thru the huge door of this huge effegy of a human built building, and walked along the dark, dust laden hallways. My footsteps echoed and re-echoed around me. U

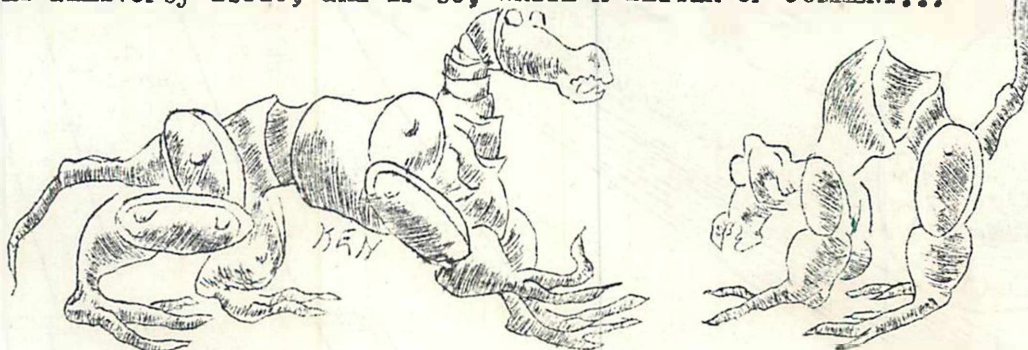
approached the stone winding stairway, and proceeded downward, down deep into the hidden recesses of the curtling den of inequity awaiting me. After many minutes of stumbling and effort, I reached the bottom, and walked into that vast, dimly lit dungeon of gloom. In one corner, a group of students, their gray hair fluttering in the musty breezes, and a wild, fanatic look in their eyes, sat discussing the recent Boshevick revolution in Russia. One looked up hesitantly with a blank stare as I carefully shuffled across the unkept, moist stone floor. The grit crunched under my feet with a dirty, uncomfortable sound. On the other side of the room were rows and rows and deep recesses with still more rows of antiquated wooden boxes, set deep into the limestone walls. Each box was guarded carefully by a single thong strip, bearing the insignia of the Royal Tech Post Office. I shuffled across the floor, and disappeared into one of the recesses, which was so dark that I could barely see the boxes around me. They were covered with dust. All but one. That one was mine. With a thrill of anticipation, I untwisted the complex knot I had cunningly devised to protect my mail box, and opened the moldy door against the protesting sounds of its rust clogged hinges. My hand darted inside, brushing aside a fresh cobweb. Nothing. Nothing!!! Not even a post card! My hand fell back to my side, my head dropped dejectedly. I relocked the box and climbed tediously back towards the outside world. A bolt of lightening struck down a theology student outside the building, casting a weird, ghostly light over the Tech campus. But I didn't notice...it was going to be another Bad Day.

Like, all kidding aside, people, do you realize how much my mail has fallen off? Do you realize that I barely get a letter a day now? How can you fans do this to me? How can you trufen, who surely realize the Deep Significance the mail has for a fan, desert your post of duty? It's as if whenever a fan goes to college, everyone else crosses him off for dead. LIKE, WRITE! Do it right after finishing this issue, as a matter of fact.

IT IS WITH DEEP REGRET that I must announce plans for the Foundation have fallen thru for the present. With something like three months in which to answer the appeal made last issue, as of this date only two persons, Dick Ambrose and Don Fitch, have responded. Needless to say their generous contributions are being returned to them. The rest of you readers, while vocalizing long and loud on the project, demonstrated your lack of interest with your non-response. So, for the present, the idea is closed.

SPEAKING OF OTHER FANDOMS my English teacher is a member of Basketball fandom. Oh yes. As I understand it, tis roughly like our own, but with much more personal contact between members. So, to the list of stamp and coin fandoms, model train fandom, boating fandom, weapons fandom, circus fandom, radio fandom, record fandom, jazz fandom, and our own beloved science fiction fandom, we can now add basketball fandom...

MORE PEOPLE RESPONDED to that little notice on the back of the flyer than I anticipated. Clay Hamlin has been located, alive & well, answers to most of the Earth Shattering questions are to be found in the letter column. The editorial this round is very short and sketchy mainly because I have so many pages of material by mineself in the zine proper. A longer editorial will return next round, hopefully, it will be a bit more chatty. I hope you enjoy this second anniversary issue, and if so, WRITE A LETTER OF COMMENT...

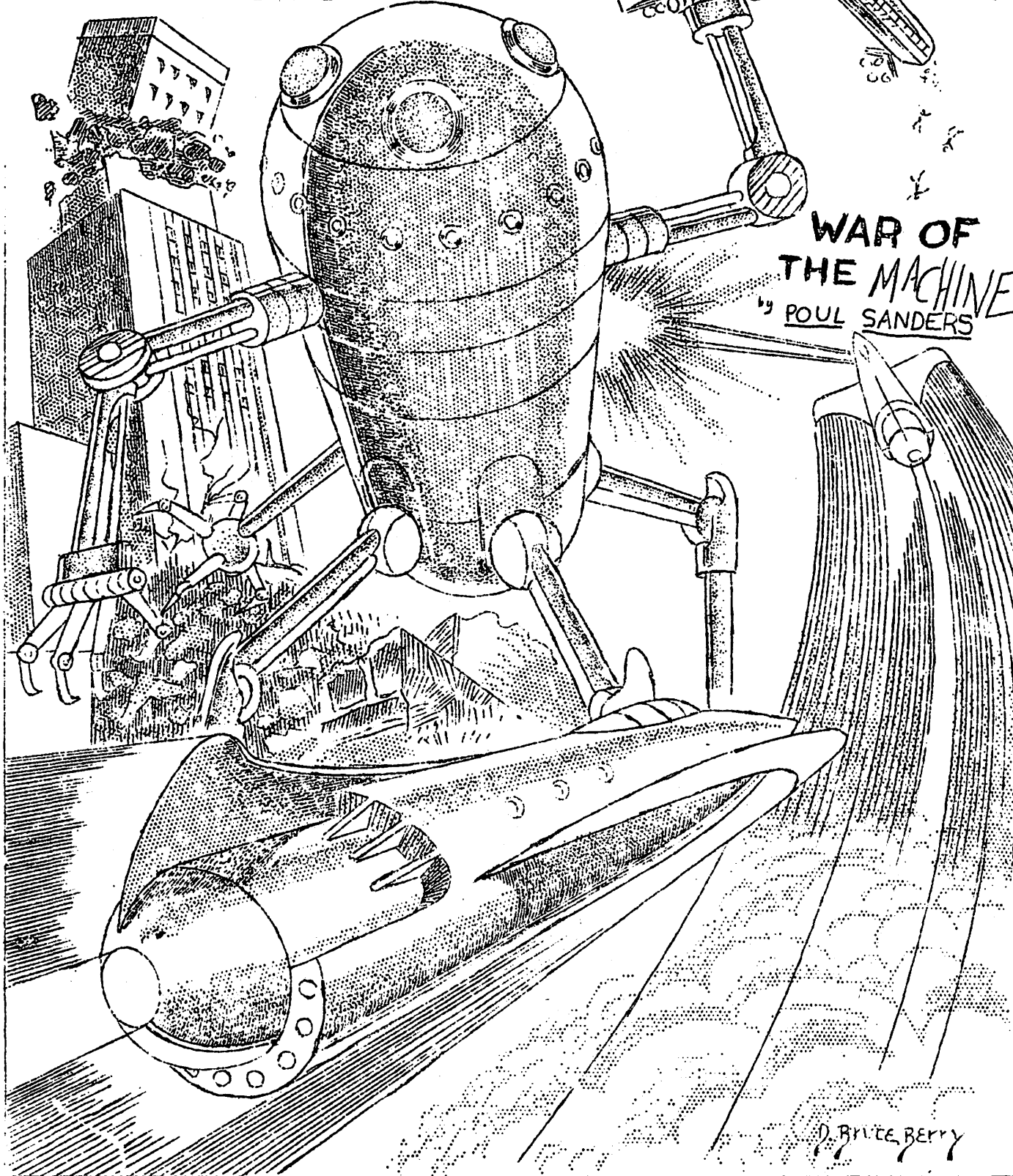


SIZZLIN'

SCIENCE STORIES

35¢

WAR OF
THE MACHINE
by POUL SANDERS



THAT LAUGHABLE OLD PHRASE *by*

ED GORMAN

The other day I visited a newstand. In itself, my attending a rack-rooting session is nothing unusual. But this day I had a special purpose.

The day before, a cousin of mine had been at our house, and had somehow managed to find his way down the dark staircase which leads to our basement, and my science fiction collection.

About a half hour later, he returned upstairs, and found me in my bedroom. As usual, I was cutting my way thru a stack of letters, and didn't pay much attention to him. But finally he walked up to my desk, and layed down a small stack of magazines. They were IMAGINATIONs and IMAGINATIVE TALES. His thirteen year old face looked excited.

"Can I borrow these?" he asked.

I looked at him almost pensively; if he'd brought a pile of GALAXYs or some such, I could have seen his point. But I stopped before answering him. What the hell, some stf is better than no stf.

"Sure," I said. "But I've got better ones."

"Huh-uh," he said, shuffling. "These are good. They look like they'd be interesting. Especially..." He then went on to apply complimentary adjectives to the works of such hacks as Dwight V Swain, Alexander Blade, and several other "Madge" regular. Thru his brief summary of first impressions, I watched his face and how elated it appeared. "Look at these drawings," he'd mumble, finger-pointing.

As the afternoon came slowly to a close, I guided him back to the basement and found some more magazines for him. I brought forth some PLANETs and OTHER WORLDS and many more, and layed them out on a large table, then let him go thru them. By the time he'd finished selecting those he wanted to take home with him, there were nearly fifty in the lot. He was embarrassed that I should favor him so heavily.

I couldn't explain about fandom, and how I'd feel great if I'd help someone into it, so I just let him continue. Then I went to another book case and pulled down a year's worth of ANALOG. "How about some of these?" I asked.

He wrinkled his nose and frowned. "No thanks, I read some of those once. They were...too deep, I guess."

"They're good reading," I said, "for when you get a little older."

He shrugged. "I sort of like books like Tarzan. And there were some library books by...Hamilton; I think his first name was Edward or something like that. And Mom lets me buy some double books once in awhile."

I nodded. "Don't you buy any magazines?"

"Huh-uh. I don't like any of them. I just like adventure stories and stuff."

Perhaps Wrath filled my face, or something---I don't know. But his expression reflected on mine forced him to flush as if he'd uttered something embarrassing.

"Well," I said, not wanting him to squirm, "I used to read that stuff too. It's called space opera. The magazines you're talking about are filled with it."

"Good", he said. He looked puzzled. "Don't they put them out anymore?" I shook my head. "No."

"I'd buy some like this," he muttered, as we started back up the stairs.

So, the next day I went to the newstand, and began looking thru the magazines. I wanted to see if there wasn't one which I could buy for my cousin. You know; induce him to become a steady buyer.

First of all, I looked thru the big three, but there wasn't too much contained in them which would entice him. A search thru the pocketbooks brought me no further. I picked up a few ACE books and bought them, but there wasn't anything else...just the usual current crop.

Oh well, I thought, he's got enough to last him a few months; and maybe by that time I'll have some more pulps I can lend him.

But back in my bedroom, surrounded as I am with books and magazines and fanzines, I started wondering about my cousin and his dilemma. It wasn't just a singular problem, I discovered, after mulling it over awhile. I imagined that there were quite a few thousand young readers interested in buying a magazine which catered to their taste.

Funny, I'd never thought of it before. After I'd grown out of the action-story stage, I'd gone on to the big three and more heavy reading, and whenever melancholy or chance brought me down to the basement for a re-look at some of my first magazines, I'd just dismissed them as bad reading. But after thinking about it, I found how lucky I was to be able to walk to a drugstore, and pick up a magazine which I could read and understand and enjoy when I was in my initial stages as a reader and a fan.

My cousin and the other thousands have been deprived of that. There are hardcover books, certainly; I think Avalon does a fine job on juvenile novels, but still, after the neo reader has read all the books he can borrow, he'll attempt to find something else. And there is nothing to be found.

After awhile, I found a magazine catalog and ordered a few magazines for Ted, and then started to observe the problem again. There were quite a few factors involved.

For one thing, the covers of today's magazines. Everyone knows that covers are all-important, what with today's distribution problems. But which magazine's covers are directed at the young reader? None. Why, it seems only yesterday that I was a thirteen year old like Ted, standing before a sprawling rack of magazines and paperbacks, my eyes startled at the covers of AMAZING and IMAGINATION. The latter, for example, depicted a tightly-garbed man battling a hord of sickening beasts on one issue. Here, in this single cover, was excitement and romance---the things I was naturally inclined toward at that time.

Covers now are often symbolical or scientific. Their color schemes are subdued, and their entire presentation thoughtful. They don't inspire the same feeling or the same emotion.

Another need which is essential to gaining new readers as steady clients is the type of story title used. Take, for instance, the case of "Bring Back My Brain!" To a naive mind that title represents a lot. In those four words are captured a breathlessness. Why, the plot possibilities suggested by it are immense. But brief, dynamic, imaginative titles are seldom seen any more.

And for a test of the title's importance, imagine yourself a youthful reader once again, thumbing thru a group of sf magazines, one of which (you hope) will help while away a free Friday night. You gaze at the titles of one magazine's stories: "Obligation", "The Man Who Dreamed", "The Jewel", "Enemy". Then you choose another magazine to look thru. A few of the titles---"Starship burners", "Slaves of the Burning Planet!", "The Galactic Hord". I know very well how melodramatic and hackish these latter titles are, but all the same, the thrilling drama

they convey is often enough to induce a sale.

And, of course, where titles are concerned, there are certain key words such as "slaves", "secret", "galactic", "gaints", "killers"---a practically endless list. Both covers and titles work together. Putting a BEMish cover and an emphatic title on the front is likely to produce quite a few sales. IMAGINATION did this issue after issue, coupling together a Rogman or Terry or Smith cover with a terse, emphatic title tucked neatly in the upper right corner.

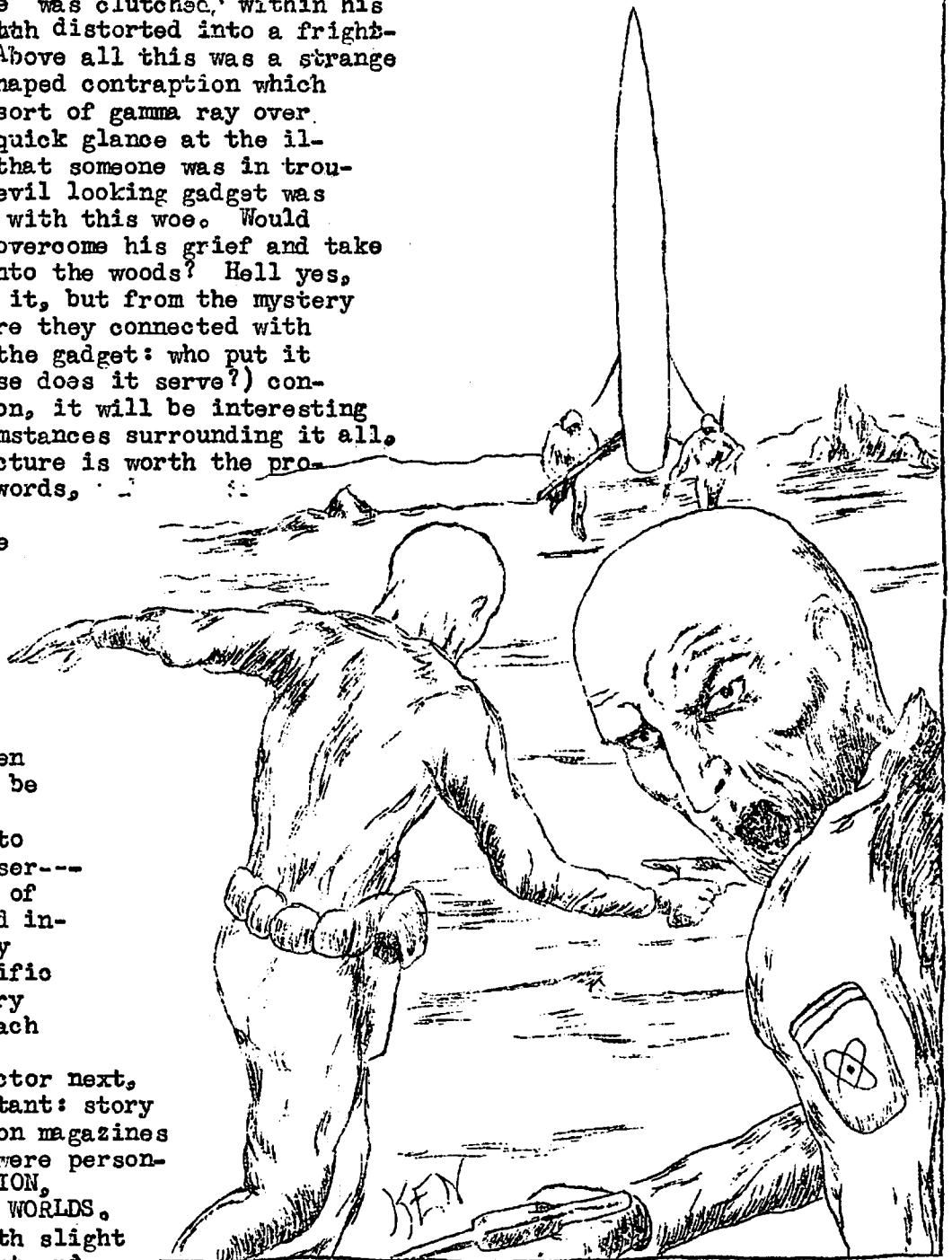
The next aspect is debatable: interior layout. There have certainly been a multitude of varying layouts; from GALAXY's warshes to FFM Finlay scratchboard designs. But, keeping the juvenile audience in mind, I think one of the most effective was PLANET's layout. They were good layouts art-wise, but they were beneficial to the magazine's sales. For instance, I recall one depiction in particular.

It envisioned several apes moving toward Our Hero, who was, naturally, tightly-clad, and about to slash the air and all opponents with his sword. And, of course, Our Heroine was clutched within his grasp, eyes and mouth distorted into a frightened expression. Above all this was a strange looking, diamond-shaped contraption which sprinkled a wispy sort of gamma ray over the apes. Now, a quick glance at the illustration showed that someone was in trouble, and that an evil looking gadget was somehow connected with this woe. Would the hero win and overcome his grief and take the maiden fair into the woods? Hell yes, and everyone knew it, but from the mystery (the apes---how are they connected with the story?---and the gadget: who put it there, what purpose does it serve?) contained in depiction, it will be interesting to find the circumstances surrounding it all.

The picture is worth the proverbial thousand words,

and magazine illustrations can be either a great boon or a great hindrance to the total sale. If a specific audience is being defined in the story content, then the drawings must be compatible. They help determine---to the newstand browser---exactly what sort of stories he'll find inside, and, if they illustrate a specific scene, lend a story introduction to each tale inside.

The factor next, is the most important: story matter. The action magazines of my generation were personified in IMAGINATION, AMAZING and OTHER WORLDS. They featured, with slight exceptions, the out-and



out action story. Grotesque irregularities could be found in their story lines; the plot form usually worked laboriously toward a trick or gimmicked ending. And within the limits of their structure could be found the tried combination of crude and fundamental sex, the man with a hero-complex, and the ogrely villain. Mixed one way or the other, whipped and beaten and pounded into solid shape, these stories still resembled each other and seldom varied, save in background and detail.

Up to this point, the attitude that I enjoyed IMAGINATION seemed to prevail. But to sooth the skeptics, it's here that I leave Hamling's favor. He had at his disposal the best form, the most elaborate design, and the most vociferous and gullible audience. Why his magazine went wrong and eventually folded is evident after a brief reading of a few of IMAGINATION's stories. Simply, they were crud. All were cut and sliced to meet certain length qualifications, and emerged as nothing better than action stories; in the pulp sense of the word.

Much can be said for the 54-58 AMAZING. The Ziff-Davis magazines did, however, present halfway feasible stories. Their action policy was as obvious as that of "Madge", but at least one-fourth of their stories succeeded to do what they set out to do: entertain.

Palmer went into the traditional action story. While Hamling and Browne-Fairman evidently used the straight adventure story for their guidepost, Palmer looked further back, eyeing Haggard, Burroughs, and Merritt. It would be false to state that Palmer made even a halfway success of the later issues of OW. But on the whole, issues of that magazine were much better reading than those of his competitors. This was, no doubt, due to the over abundance of "personality" which Palmer drove home via the editorial and letter section. Still, OW maintained better standards, I feel, in its fiction content also.

All these magazines failed in what they hoped to achieve; but action magazines as a breed, rather than individually, need not fail. And Larry Shaw's SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES proves this point. SFA was the best of the mid-50's action publications. The art, both interior and exterior, was flashy and BEM-ridden, but was usually set to canvas by decent artists. Whereas Palmer had presented--- with the exception of Bok and Finlay---some of the worst artists ever introduced into the stf field, and Hamling had an irritating habit of using Terry almost exclusively, and Ziff-Davis was eternally loyal in their use of Valigursky, Llewlyn and Novick; Shaw used Emsh quite often, and no matter how hackish Emsh seems, he is the most valuable and dependable stf artist around. Shaw couldn't boast much else, however, as far as format went. It was neat and compact, and that was about the only compliment one could pay it.

Story-wise, tho, Shaw had the good sense to find and employ a hybrid--- a cross breed of madly-paced adventure, and believable motivation and detail. This isn't to say that SFA lived up to INFINITY---but it was never supposed to, and with the exception of Korbluth's "The Slave", SFA never surpassed its companion magazine. But Shaw was catering to the younger fans, and realized this fully. As far as a description of SFA's life goes, I'd say it went something like--- "a thinking-rugged type of stf, with not too much emphasis on the 'thought'". Perhaps my criticism of SFA has been myopic---but I do have good memories of it.

An aspect common to nearly all of the action magazine of the fifties, was their features. "The Space Club", "The Revolving Fan", editorial, letter sections, and trading columns. Of course, this was in compliance with their audiences' needs. One derived a sense of "belonging" when immersed in the dredges of hyper-applauding letter sections. And also these features were an insurance of sorts---for the type of fan who was interested in investigating active-fandom, and was sickening of the fiction presented in the action magazines, they could very easily become the sole reason that he went on purchasing the magazine.

Palmer was the best in this department. One felt so completely in sympathy with him that no matter what charge was flung his way, Palmer continued to convince the innocent juvenile that RAP was being "picked on"---for example, by the Edgar Rice Burroughs Associates.

"Identification" in winning a juvenile audience is one of the prime requirements. Whether it be a "Shaver Mystery", or an open argument with a famous individual, or just bawling in the beer, personality has in the past, and can in

the future, sell quite a few magazines.

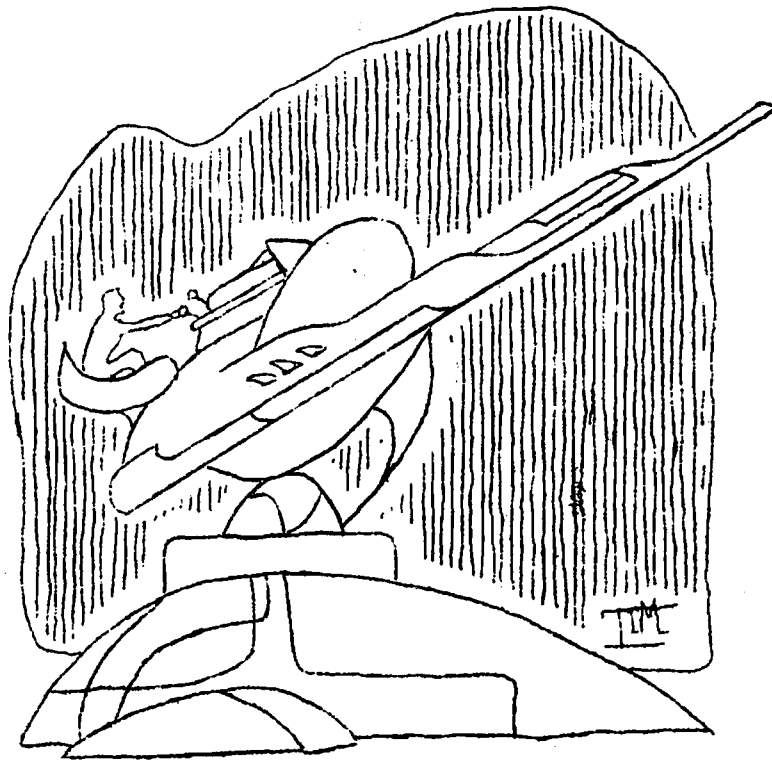
So, I've outlined what I think an "action" magazine should consist of. But why should there be such a magazine? Well, the young readers, and as a means of recruiting new blood to science fiction and to fandom. Then too, action magazines will eventually help out the Big Three or whomever holds down the top slots when the youth has matured a little and begins to discriminate in his taste.

By this time, I mean that after a few years of reading "pulp", the reader will become aware that there are other areas of literature more valuable. And, most likely, if he was thrilled emotionally and romantically in his youth by stf, he will continue to look to stf for stimulating, intellectually exciting reading matter. And the step up, to one of the Big Three, will be almost inevitable.

I was reading a letter the other day, in which a friend of mine bemoaned the loss of "action" magazines. If I'd read it a week earlier, I'd have croaked. But I went to the typewriter and wrote out...

What we need is a good 35¢ action magazine.

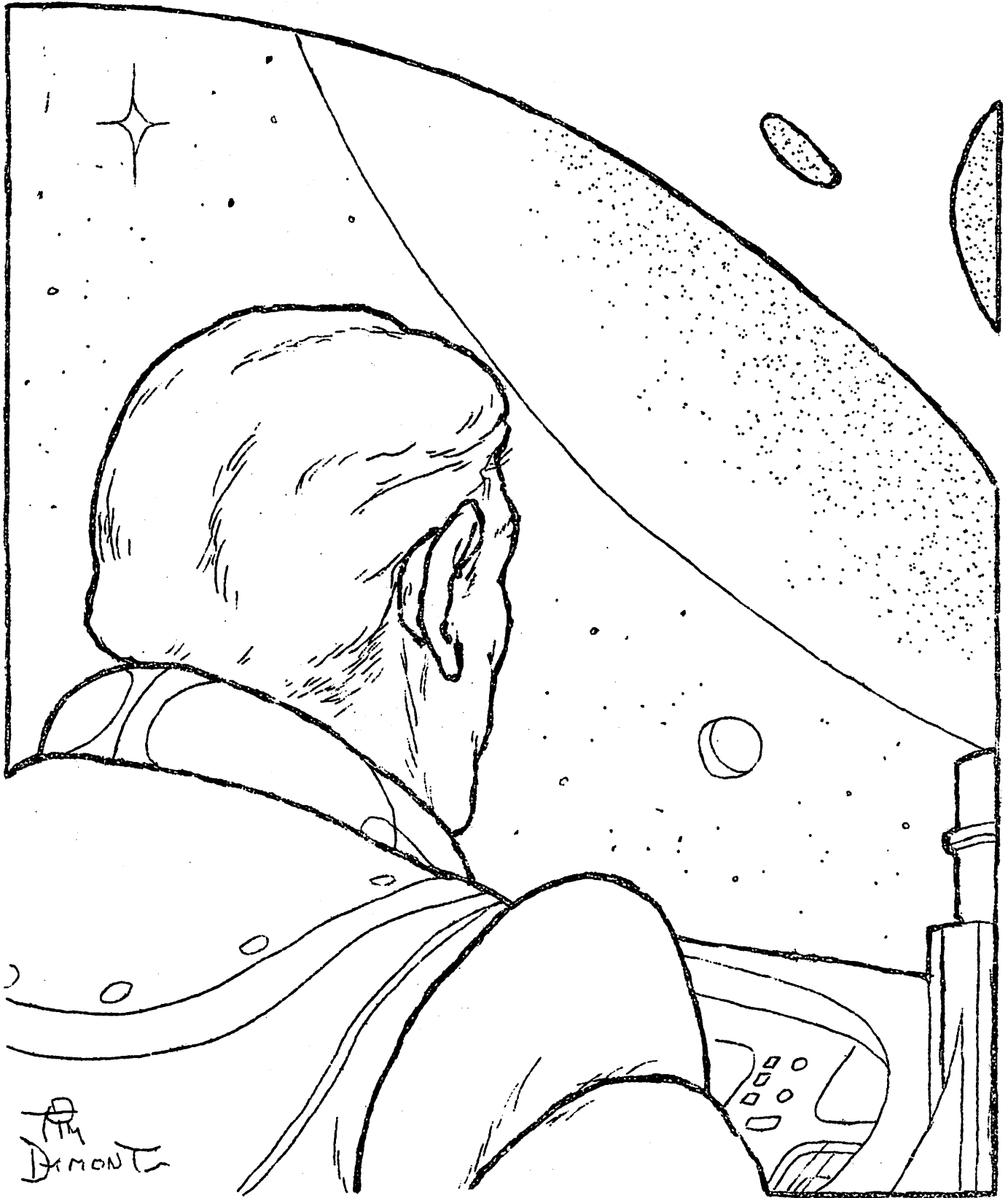
That laughable old phrase.



"It was a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Just for that once, the Great Man forgot his public image and related to us with a broad, good-humored grin, the story of how he used to sneak over at night to the rest-home across from his house and loosen the wheels on the tenants's chairs---"

---Memoirs, p 263

FIT FOR



SALVAGE

BY MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY TIM DUMONT

The radio switch sparkled green fire.

"Captain Caldwell aboard the CFC ship WASHINGTON, calling Lunapost Business Field. Coming in with cargo, four hundred mile orbit, landing directions requested. Over to Lunapost."

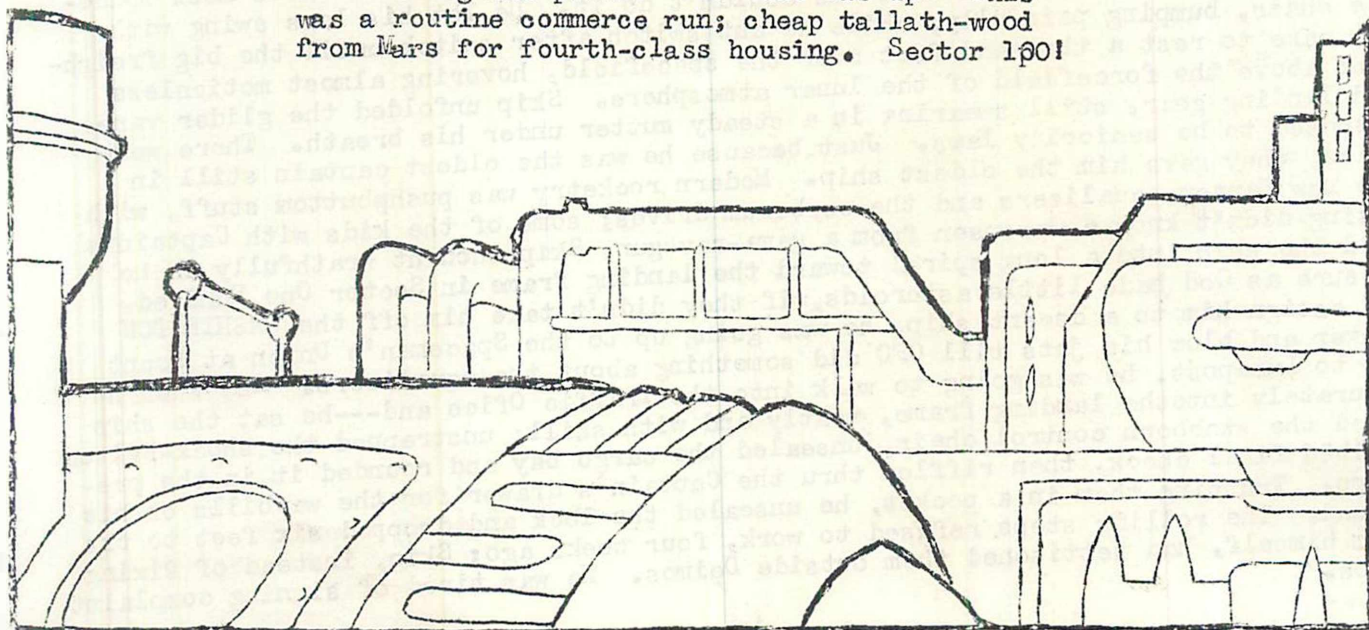
"Lunapost Tower to WASHINGTON, landing directions. Come in now on C beam. Field clear; one ship at two hundred mile orbit. Land in Sector One Hundred, O-N-E, zero, zero. Repeat, Captain Caldwell."

Sector 139!

Skip Caldwell's eyes bugged out. Only years of habit make him flip, automatically, the sendswitch for the required repeat.

"Captain Caldwell, WASHINGTON, to Lunapost, repeat landing," he said mechanically. "Come in on C-Callisto beam, field clear, one ship at two hundred, two, zero, zero. Land in Post Sector One zero, zero." He said it, and expected to be stopped, checked, and corrected. Cargo ships---at least old, beat-up freight-jetties like the WASHINGTON---hardly rated Sector 14. Sector 100 was square in the middle of Lunapost Business Field; doubly guarded, with both Spaceforce men and the new barrier fence. They used the place for super-valuable cargo, for visiting dignitaries, for the private ships of company presidents. Regulations or no regulations, Skip decided to pick up the phone and ask for still another repeat. If it was a mistake, and he put this old hulk down in Sector one hundred---

But the voice from the Tower confirmed without being asked. "Sector one zero, zero, come in Captain Caldwell aboard the WASHINGTON." Tower clicked off with a sound of finality, and the grey-haired man in the control chair of the WASHINGTON whistled as he slung the phone. Now what was up? This was a routine commerce run; cheap tallath-wood from Mars for fourth-class housing. Sector 100!



As he strapped the tight Garsen belts across his midsection, he grumbled his usual and audible comments on the cheap chisellers in Colony Freight Commission who were keeping an obsolete jetter like the WASHINGTON running. The new cererum-drive ships had built-in decelerators with pressure equipment, making the painful and cumbersome Garsen apparatus unnecessary; but the CFC had enough pull with the Mount Denver officials to sneak under the new laws about working conditions. So all six of the rhodionite-ships CFC owned were still hauling freight in the old Ley orbits and flattening out the spacemen who hauled them. There was a new bill coming up before the union, but CFC, Skip knew, would get around it somehow. And he'd go on monkeying around with Garsens till he took the Run West.

He slipped the outer layer of notches tighter, fastened the recoil screws, checked a couple of dials, and reached overhead to manipulate the complicated controls that cut in the manually-operated atmosphere drive. A lever stuck; he wrenched it, swearing. This old jetter was coming apart at the seams; it had been fit for the salvage asteroid two years ago.

The lever gave, and the low vibration of deceleration began to hum softly in the ship. The Garsen apparatus he wore seemed to tighten, to pull at his body, then he felt it cutting his chin cruelly, and the hum rose and rose into an audible whining roar. Caldwell set his teeth against the nausea and the noise, and waited. Automatically, his trained body braced and relaxed against the stresses, but his mind went ruminatively back to his curious orders.

Sector One Hundred. Somebody in Lunapost was plain crazy. Or---had they discovered another Martian virus and decided to quarantine all ships and all spacemen? Skip hoped not. He'd had, at one time or another, a series of injections against every prevalent germ, virus and fungus on four of the planets and ten satellites, and one more would be the spare jet that broke the ship down.

He cocked an ear to the declining hum of the decelerators. Nearly safe by now. The dial, out of order for months, was still hovering in the area of "Dangerous Acceleration", but the hum, the surest test for an old spaceman, had reached the curiously resonate drone that meant safety. With a momentary smugness, for Skip was forty, and there weren't six men his age who could stand deceleration in a Rhodionite ship, he stripped away the clumsy Garsen, and with a contemptuous glance at the still-red dial, swung his chair right-angled to the manuals. Routine dial-check told him he was about thirty miles straight over the sector, and as the red dial edged warily over toward the green field marked "Safety", Skip grinned, for the WASHINGTON was crawling along at hardly a hundred miles an hour. It was---damn! The seat-anchor had stuck again, and the control-chair swung free half-way between the autocontrols and the manuals. Swearing wrathfully, Skip tried to fix the anchor with one hand, while the other jockeyed complicated controls most spacemen had never learned to handle. He couldn't do it. He let his legs swing with the chair, bumping painfully, while he cut switch after switch until the big freighter came to rest a thousand feet over the spacefield, hovering almost motionless just above the forcefield of the lunar atmosphere. Skip unfolded the glider vanes and landing gear, still swearing in a steady mutter under his breath. There were supposed to be seniority laws. Just because he was the oldest captain still in space, they gave him the oldest ship. Modern rocketry was pushbutton stuff, with the new Hansen equalizers and the cerberum drives; some of the kids with Captain's rating didn't know a Garsen from a gamma-raygun, Skip thought wrathfully as he slid the ship into a long spiral toward the landing frame in Sector One Hundred. As sure as God made little asteroids, if they didn't take him off the WASHINGTON and assign him to a decent ship, he was going up to the Spaceman's Union at Mount Denver and blow his jets till CFC did something about the equalizers. And when he got to Lunapost, he was going to walk into the Traffic Office and---he sat the ship accurately into the landing frame, neatly and with skill; unstrapped the shock-belts, fixed the stubborn control chair, unsealed the cargo bay and rounded it in the prescribed final check, then riffled thru the Captain's drawer for the waybills on his cargo. Trusting them in a pocket, he unsealed the lock and dropped six feet to the ground. The rolling steps refused to work, four weeks ago; Skip, instead of fixing them himself, had jettisoned them outside Deimos. He was tired of signing complaint slips.

The guard of Spaceforce men at the Sector was at least tripled. This was going to mean quarantine all right. He felt a premonitory sting in his mumpunctured arms. But after the officers had saluted Skip, the one in charge only handed him a folded pink slip.

Unfolding it, Skip saw it was the regulation call-slip with "Stacy" written across the bottom. The Spaceforce officer met his curious look. "Make regular disposition of your cargo first, Captain Caldwell," he told him, "and---er, you are to be discreet about the call."

Skip nodded and confirmed, but his heart sank. Big Jim Stacy was the traffic commander of Lunapost Business field, and the head of Spaceforce. A call to his office could, and usually did, supersede any and all orders from the company you were working for. Skip couldn't think of any reason for a call from Stacy. His record-book, his license and his conscience were all clear. He'd been working for CFC for nine years---since Spaceforce had released him as being too old for test-pilot duty---and this was his first brush with the Traffic office.

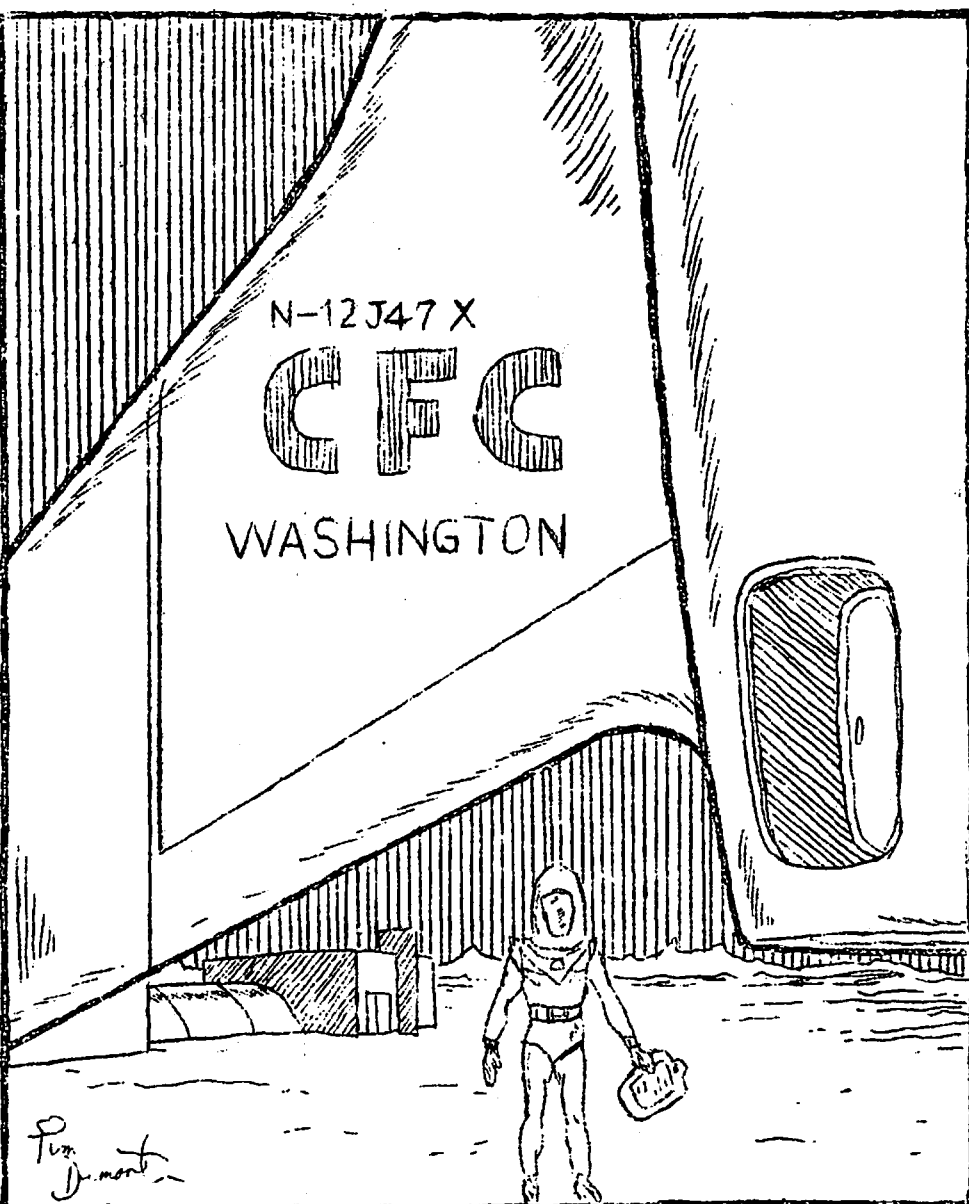
Shaking his head, he strolled off to the CFC offices, sandwiched between Interplanetary Transit and the field branch of the Mars Space Express. He handed over the way bills, pocketed his receipts, initialed three charts, then stopped a bare minute to light his first cigarette since Mars, and exchange a few words with the girl in the office.

She looked cross and sounded spappish, but she grinned a tight smile at Caldwell. "Don't mind

me, Skip. We've had a hectic day. One of the big bugs from the main office Earthside came in this morning. Company auditor---one of CFC's executives---name of Channing." She made an expressive face. "Big fat slob---throwing his weight around all over the place. Plenty to throw too! Bet he weighs a hundred pounds right here on Luna."

Company Inspectors too! Skip Caldwell snorted. "Maybe now they'll ground that old Jetter I'm handling," he grumbled, and went out into the fierce glare of the lunar sunlight, filtered chrome-yellow by the forcefield that kept the lunar atmosphere in. It was hot on his neck, and Skip pulled off his helmet and mopped his forehead. He hoped he didn't have to stay on Luna long; he sunburned too easily.

Out on Sector One Hundred, loading crews were already



busy; trundling bales of Tallath away from the WASHINGTON with a portable crane and the little cargo dollies. Far out in Sector Eighty-one, another ship was settling into its frame. Skip recognized the sleek lines of the TRANSTERRA, the newest ship on the CFC runs, cerberum-jetted and with all the trimmings. "Now if I was running a ship like that--" he thought, and while he walked towards the white stucco Traffic Building, he pondered without bitterness, on the spaceman's ethics that gave a ship like the TRANSTERRA to Thorna Stacy. The coveted cerberum ships were supposed to be assigned on seniority, but that was another regulation followed only in the rule books. Big Jim's influence had been strong enough to get the ship for Thorna. And a fine pilot the girl wasn't, Skip thought with a twist of his mouth. If he set a ship down like that, his license wouldn't be worth the plastic it was scribed on. The Stacys had been spacemen since the Barrett-Stacy Saturn run, but even so, there were limits. Thorna Stacy was, or ought to be, the limit. He flung his cigarette into the sand on the port, smuggling.

"Hey, Skip!" a throaty voice hailed, and Thorna herself, looking cool in trim gabardines that modelled closely after a spaceman's leathers, which was to say they fit her rather better than her skin; dropped off one of the buzzing cargo dollies and hurried after him. "Hullo there, old-timer."

"Hullo," Skip grunted. Thorna was about twenty years his junior, but it galled him to be called "old-timer" by a kid who set a cerberum ship down as if it was carrying a cargo of live whales.

The snub didn't register on Thorna, or if it did, she ignored it. "The Tower kep me hanging over the port at two hundred miles for three hours!" she told him disgustedly. "Going up to Traffic? So am I. We'll go together."

Skip Caldwell, in spite of a bringing-up on Charin, still held the atavistic notion that women didn't belong in Space. The last thing he wanted was to walk into Traffic with this dumb kid who called herself a space Captain. But he also had an atavistic remnant of old-style courtesy, so he slowed his stride to match Thorna's. She pulled off her helmet, rumpling close-chopped brown hair. She was cute, and the gabardines looked good on her, and Skip admitted to himself that he really had nothing against the kid. She couldn't help being Stacy's daughter. She'd be all right anywhere except space, but there was no place except space for a Stacy.

Still, he was glad he had to stop downstairs to dispose of his receipts. Thorna went on upstairs, and Skip hung around in the filing apartment, killing time, for a few minutes, before he climbed to Big Jim's office.

The girl in the outer office knew his name without asking. "Captain Caldwell? The Commander is busy just now. Please sit down." Skip sank onto a divan, sucked nervously at a cigarette, listening uneasily to the voices that filtered thru the transon. Big Jim's voice, raised to a bellow. A thinner voice that Caldwell recognized as Thorna's came thru occasionally. The kid was probably getting the bawling-out she deserved for that landing. Skip smiled in grim amusement. He'd like to take down a few of these push-button kids straight from the academies. But it was tough on Thorna.

The door bounced open and Big Jim Stacy exploded into the office. "Caldwell!" he bellowed, "Get the hades in here! Why do you think I sent for you--to sit on your tail out there?" The man's bulk filled the door; his voice and presence filled both offices. Skip jackknifed hastily out of the chair, dumped his cigarette and followed Big Jim thru the door marked NO ADMITTANCE. Big Jim slammed it behind him.

There were two others in the inside office. Thorna, standing uneasily in the middle of the room, and another man he flowed, immensely fat, over the edge of his big chair. Skip had never seen the man before, but he had no trouble figuring out who he was. He was Jeffrey Channing, company auditor for the CFC Earthside. Channing had a reputation; behind his back, CFC men called him the Hog, and he looked and acted the part. Beside him even the vast Big Jim looked well-made and handsome. Big Jim muttered the names, eased his bulk into a swivel chair, and rapped out, "Well sidown."

Thorna found a chair in silence. Big Jim scowled at Skip, "take it easy, Caldwell. You're not in trouble with the office."

"Oh," Caldwell sat down, letting his breath out in a long sigh.

The Hog leaned forward. "Let me explain."

"I can manage," Big Jim said snappishly. "It isn't you we're worried about, Caldwell. We want the WASHINGTON, that's all. You see---" he leaned back in the swivel chair, sucking air between wide-spaced teeth. "A dargo of rhelhan furs from the Cahuengas were consigned to New Denver, Captain Stacy---" he did not look at Thorna, "handled them on the TRANSTERRA, which your CFC crew uses for hauling valuable freight. Only---" he glowered at the girl, "this sub-Martian idiot of a daughter of mine got her signals crossed and brought them here to Lunapost!"

Skip Caldwell gulped, struggling to keep his face straight. It was funny. But it would ruin Thorna Stacy if it got out. Big Jim would never live it down. But at Channing's viriolic glance, he held back his laughter. It didn't make CFC look very efficient; and somehow, Skip didn't think Hog Channing would be a man to take laughter nicely. The Hog said in a stiff monotone, "The situation has its humorous aspects, no doubt, Captain, but it is the duty of CFC employees to rectify such disasters and---ah---to be discreet about them. Have you thought what might happen to our franchise if, for instance, MSE got hold of the story?"

Skip Caldwell admitted that Mars Space Express could use the story to their detriment. But what did this have to do with the WASHINGTON? Big Jim tapped his desk impatiently. "To cut a long story short, Caldwell, it isn't you we really want. It's your ship. There have been a few too many thefts from these fancy ships lately. Just between us in this office, CFC has lost three consignments of Sharig, and InterTran had three bales of rhulan furs lifted right out of the Post. So we're going to re-route valuable cargo from Lunapost. The WASHINGTON is an old and decrepit ship. Everybody knows CFC uses her for cheap cargo. No one would suspect her of hauling rhulan furs..."

Caldwell grinned. Were they telling him?

"So we're transferring that cargo to the WASHINGTON, and Captain Stacy---" again the baleful glance at Thorna, "will take them on to New Denver. You'll run the TRANSTERRA in a booby-trap orbit thru the asteriods, and see who tries to follow the ship. We'll have a couple of Spaceforce ships tailing you and pick the pirates up---we hope."

Skip whistled. Space pirates of all things---the TRANSTERRA---transferred cargo---it sounded like that COMET BUSPERS magazine his sister's kids were so moony about. But it was happening, and giving him a chance at the TRANSTERRA!

After a minute, he shook his head. "Miss Stacy couldn't pilot the WASHINGTON," he said regretfully.

Big Jim scowled, tapping the desk again. "That's right, you were one of our test pilots, weren't you?" He considered briefly. "Thorna---"

"I can handle it," she said, tight-lipped. Her glare at Skip could have frozen oxygen on Mercury.

"After that landing exhibition just now, I doubt if you could handle a copter," Big Jim spoke roughly. "Channing?"

The Hog shrugged. "I'm no spaceman."

Big Jim growled and thought some more, and Skip Caldwell decided to put in his two minims worth. Thorna's dirty look had hurt. He said, "I didn't mean Miss Stacy couldn't handle the ship, Jim. I was talking about the regulation---the one requiring a test-pilpt license for ships built before '97."

As soon as he said it, he knew it was the wrong thing. "Union business, eh?" Channing growled. "Well, Mount Denver isn't in on this deal." And at Skip's stubborn look, he added, "They won't be either, if one CFC man wants to keep his job..." Skip shrugged. CFC had too much influence to make a protest worth his time.

"Okay by me," he said. "Don't think I like running that old hulk."

"Okay, then." Big Jim nodded to Thorna, "go check jets. I'll clear you. You going now, Channing?"

The fat man eased his huge bulk out of the chair. "I thought I'd travel back on the WASHINGTON."

"It's none of my business," Big Jim told him, "it's a Colony Freight ship, and you're a CFC man. But if it was me, I'd wait and go on the mail rocket. The WASHINGTON is no passenger liner. I've ridden her, and it's no fun. Or you can wait and go with Caldwell on the TRANSTERRA, and be there as CFC's official representative when they pick up---"

Channing smiled; an pily, offensive smibe.

"Look here, Commander, you aren't serious about sending the TRANSTERRA

out! I thought you were joking!" His voice grew suddenly ugly. "Spaceforce will keep its nose out of CFC business. I'm in charge of CFC, and you aren't going to send out a CFC ship and risk getting it shot up in a row with Spaceforce. Oh all the crack-brained---"

"Why--you---" Stacy shot out of his chair like a charging bull elephant. "Get out of this office!" he shouted. "You may be in charge of CFC, but I'm in charge of the traffic at Lunapost Business field, and I'm responsible for seeing that the cargo going thru here gets safely where it's going! No son-of-a-sharl is coming in here and telling me how to do it either. If you want to risk company cargo by grounding the TRANSTERRA, okay, go settle it with the CFC office---but you can sign a statement clearing me of all responsibility, and I doubt if CFC Earthside would authorize you to do that. And I'm in charge of Spaceforce---or was the last time I heard from Denver." His pen stabbed viciously at a piece of paper. "Now if you want to travel on the WASHINGTON, I'll write you a clearance, and I hope you bust a gut!" He shoved the pink slip at Channing. "Here's your clearance. Go on, get out. Have a good trip."

The Hog looked furious, but he said nothing; only pocketed the scrap of paper and lumbered toward the door. He turned back, as if to say something, but evidently thought better of it; bigger men than Channing were afraid of Big Jim when he blew his jets. The door slammed behind him.

Caldwell rose to leave also, but Stacy motioned him back. "No hurry, Skip. Sit down again. How's everything? About usual?" He lit a cigarette and thrust the pack toward Skip. "Here. That fat son-of-a---. Thinks he can come in here and push us around in the Traffic division..." He puffed on his cigarette, blew smoke like an angry whale. "Huh! Just a minute, Skip." He swivelled his chair around, flipped a mouthpiece and spoke into it, "Sector One Hundred? Clear Thorna Stacy for the WASHINGTON, one passenger. CFC credentials. Check loading as ordered." He listened a minute, closed the switch, then opened it again. "Sector Eighty-one! Clear Howard Caldwell for the TRANSTERRA, CFC twenty minutes. Noncargo." He grinned, slammed the switch home, and laughed at Skip's stare. "Did you think Hog Channing was going to tell me how to run Traffic? He may be CFC's representative, but I'll be in the sack if those thieves get away. We've got to see who follows the TRANSTERRA, if anybody. You know Spaceforce. The thieves probably sabotages the signals somewhere so Thorna brought them here---but we're fobbing them." He tapped the desk again. "Don't worry, because Spaceforce will be on your tail all the way out. If any ship comes within a thousand miles, they'll board. Suit you?"

"Suits me fine." Caldwell ground out his cigarette.

Big Jim stuck out his hand. "Well, go check jets. You'll take the TRANSTERRA up as soon as the WASHINGTON clears atmosphere. Have a good run. Oh, by the way---Channing said Mount Denver had condemned the WASHINGTON. That will be her last run. You'll probably have the job of towing her out to the salvage asteroid, then you'll get a new ship."

"That suits me too." Skip pulled his helmet from his pocket. "Well, so long, Jim. I'll---oh, hey! All my stuff's in the WASHINGTON, and I'll need a pass for that Sector."

Big Jim glanced quickly at his watch. "Okay," he said, "Here." He scribbled briefly at a printed form. "Hurry tho, I'm sending them up in twelve minutes."

"That ought to be enough." Caldwell picked up the pass. "Thanks. So long." He hurried out of the office and down the steps, and hitched a ride on a cargo dolly across the field to the guarded Sector One Hundred. The loading crews were all gone; the refueling trucks were rumbling away, and the force barrier was shimmering dimly around the ship. The Spaceforce man on duty glanced at Skip's pass and touched the button to lower it briefly. "Go ahead, Captain."

A solitary platform had been left near the door; Skip clambered up and pushed the unsealed lock inward. The cabin was deserted; Thorna couldn't be on board yet, Skip thought, as he rummaged thru the Captain's drawer for his personal odds and ends.

"Who's that?" came a sharp query from the door, and Skip, straightening in astonishment, saw that Thorna had a blaster levelled in her hands. "Hey, put that up!" he protested. "It's only me." He held out his pass, "Stacy cleared me. I came to get my junk."

"Okay." Thorna reached for the pass, and Skip, turning back to the

drawer, began to collect his things.

A tingling shock--- the shock of a paralyzer---rattled thru his skull. With a half-sensed spasm of convulsive muscular protest, Skip Caldwell crumpled inert on the deck of the cabin.

Pink and purple comets were spinning inside Skip Caldwell's brain. He jerked up out of a dark nightmare to hear a sound that made his blood ice.

The atmosphere-jets were running! The WASHINGTON was in space!

He moved, or tried to move. He discovered that his arms were strained cruelly back at the shoulders and lashed with shipping wire, and his legs were bound together at the knee and angle. With a more cautious wiggle, he discovered he had been rolled clear under the first cargo bay. Thorna! Pain and disillusion hit his splitting head as he heard voices from the cabin.

"You've made a nice mess of things!" Thorna's voice sounded high and shaky, "couldn't you have just waited till he got off the ship? You idiot, they must have known he was on board. And taking off four minutes early---

---before they cleared us---the guard at the Sector must have been killed."

"What's one guard more or less?" Channing's heavier voice muttered, "Or one pilot?"

"Oh, no you don't---" Thorna shouted, and Channing laughed softly, "Maybe you're right, my dear. Isn't he the ideal---

The voices faded away. Or maybe Skip simply didn't hear them. For under his head he began to hear another sound---the low, dee-down growl that meant the atmosphere-jets were weakening and the growl meant acceleration---

Skip shouted. He shouted and screamed shamelessly. He yelled and raised a racket that drowned out the weakening roar of the atmosphere-jets, and he kept on yelling till Channing thrust in the nozzle of a blaster. "Shut that noise, Caldwell."

"Garensens!" Skip gulped, "you---damned space-bug! Serve you right---if I let---

Thorna thrust her terrified face over Channing's shoulder. Her mouth, squared with horror, made her face a silent scream of panic. She grabbed the Hog's blaster arm. "Channing, no! He's right---acceleration---it'll be like the other---when Garry was killed---" She was babbling with her terror, and Channing's face began to turn grey under the red jowls. But the Hog was no coward. He turned slightly, "there must be Garensens aboard this old hulk. Thorna, that's your job; you're the pilot."

"I---don't know---" Thorna sobbed, "let him---let him---

Channing kicked Caldwell in the ribs, hard. "Where are the Garensens?"



Skip braced himself, setting his teeth against the killing vibration. "Let me up and I'll tell you."

The Hog thrust the blaster forward, but with a quick gesture, Thorna whipped a knife from her pocket and cut the wires binding Skip. "You can keep him covered, if you want to Channing. Skip---" Her voice sounded trapped. The---the belts---

"And don't try any funny stuff," Channing growled. Skip burst into almost hysterical laughter. He would have bet any money Channing would say just that. "You're a comic-book louse," he snarled at Channing, dragging the Garensens out of the locked bay, "here, dammit."

Time was running short. The throb was already a high screaming, and Skip had barely enough time to toss the spare Garensens to Channing and Thorna. The three strapped themselves in hastily, Thorna in the control chair. Channing tossed his blaster into the Captain's drawer. "I guess you won't move for awhile anyhow, Caldwell," he said nastily. Thorna's fingers fumbled with her straps, and her face was sick-white as she met Skip's contemptuous stare.

The atmosphere jets cut out with a clang! and the scream of the rhodonite drive hit with a slamming sound that glattened Caldwell out beneath his poorly fastened Garensen. Gaggling, Thorna dragged her clawed hand to the control board, trying to ease the too-rapid force. Skip fought nausea, watching. What a rotten pilot the kid was! A sickening cramp hit him with agony. "Air--control---" he choked. "Helium--out--nitrogen--cut out nitrogen--or we'll--all be--killed---"

Strangling, Thorna fumbled with the helium lever. Of course, Caldwell thought; she was used to fully-automatic air-controlled cabins. He turned his eyes to Channing. The fat man was gasping and struggling for breath, but Skip admitted, reluctantly, that Channing could take it. He'd seen stronger men than Channing collapse under the terrific beating of rhodonite drive.

Thorna could take it too, it seemed, once she had straightened out the air control. She was lying in her chair with half-closed eyes, but Skip noticed that her glance was steady on the right dials. When she wasn't rattled, she might make a fair pilot.

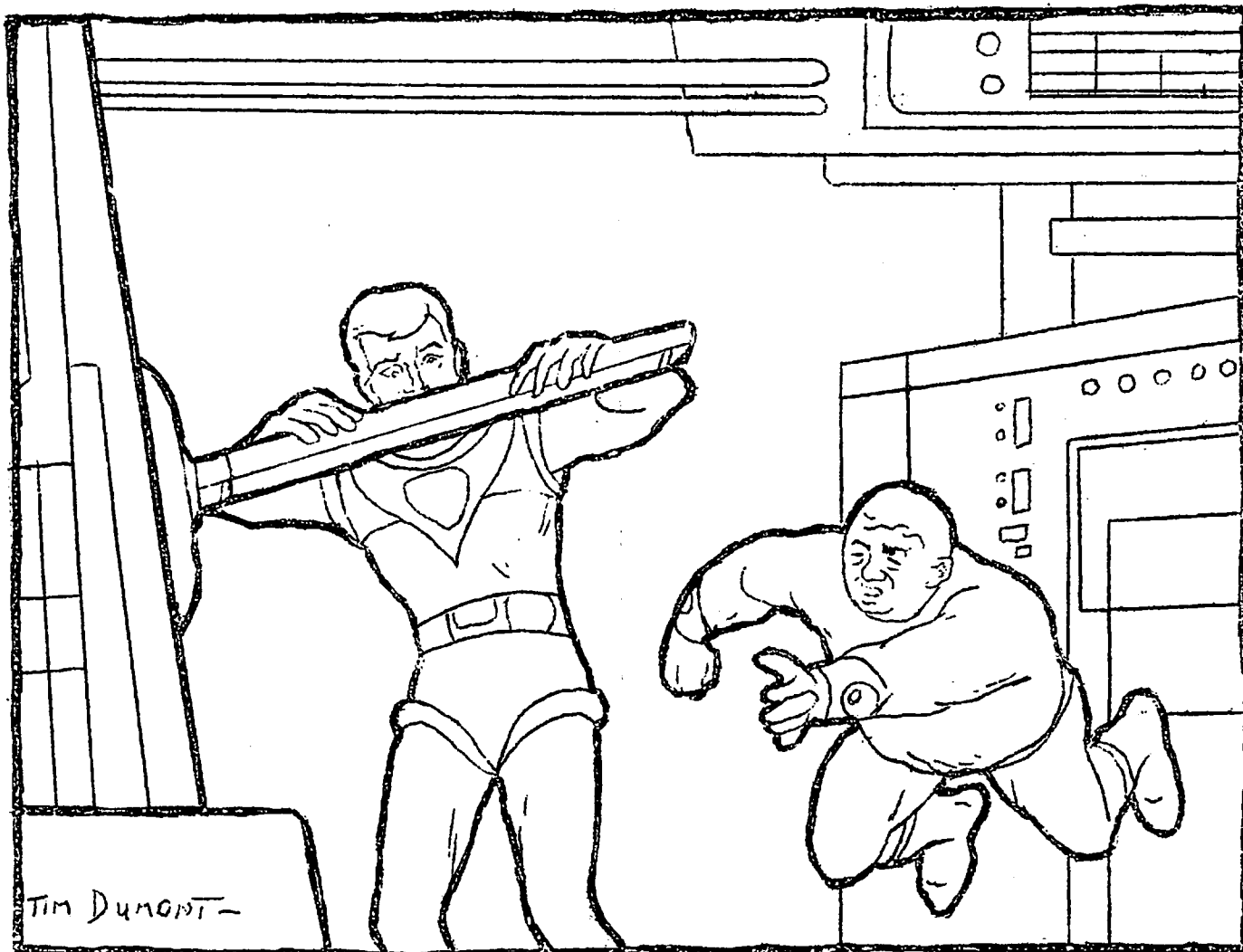
From habit he glanced at the dials himself. The bright red dial, straight over her head, flamed with the letters; DANGEROUS ACCELERATION. And a wild hope stirred in Skip. He might still be able to get the best of the Hog--and the WASHINGTON herself would help.

Caldwell lay back in his chair, bracing himself against the cruel strings of the Garensen apparatus. His mind worked quickly. That broken dial was a lucky break for him. Of course, neither Channing nor Thorna would ever suspect it wasn't in perfect working order; they were used to new, smoothly-operating ships. Channing's eyes were glued to the dial; he would be watching for the earliest possible moment to free himself. But Skip, listening to the hum, would know the moment of safety. He could loosen the Garensen carefully; then, while Channing was still tangled in the straps, he could make a dive for the blaster in the drawer. Then---

He cocked an ear to the hum of the drives. Thorna's eyes were closed; Channing's were glued to the dial. Carefully, Skip began to loosen the side buckles. He could afford to run the danger, where Channing couldn't. He was used to space; he was tough and wiry, and besides, he wore under his leathers, the spaceman's belt-and-suspenders---and extra-safety belt of heavy fiber plastic. Test pilots got in the habit. He was perfectly sure that neither Channing or Thorna had any such protection. And Channing's size was against him. If Channing should try to free himself a second too soon---well---Skip would rather not picture it. He'd seen men die under rhodonite acceleration, their bellies swollen in multiple rupture. Channing would know about that.

The hum was lessening; Skip's fingers worked rapidly. But luck was against him. Channing jerked his head around, suddenly. "Hey, is that dial right? I can move my hands. What the devil are you doing there, Caldwell?" Jerking out a knife, Channing cut the Garensen straps one after another. Skip tore at his, the two men plunged at one another at the same instant. And at that moment the WASHINGTON went into free-fall!

Channing would have had the advantage of weight and size at any other



time. His fat wasn't all flabby. But the WASHINGTON, diving into free-fall, had thrown all of them weightless, and the struffling men floated up, down from the deck to the ceiling of the cabin. "Thorna!" shouted Skip, hoping she would obey without thinking, "Throw that switch---centrifugal---gravity--"

Channing's balled fist struck Skip's jaw like a blow from a towel---and the recoil from the blow flung Channing to the ceiling. Skip, thrown edgewise, lunged against Thorna, colliding weightlessly with her, and they both went floating against the heavy lever. Thorna pulled at it; the energy of her own pull sending her diving to the deck. Channing, struggling down from the ceiling, caught the edge of the Captain's drawer and grabbed at the blaster, but it floated lightly away from his hand, and, as Skip bounced upward the currents of air in the cabin sent the blaster drifting thru the open door into the cargo bays.

Thorna's got her paralyzer, thought Skip detachedly, but that's all, as he spun upward again.

He reached the gravity lever---and pulled it steadily---the ship spun dizzily around him. The rotating hum of the cabin screamed softly, then was quiet again as the cabin swung, free and motionless, while the WASHINGTON hurled thru a centrifugal spin, creating some weight within the cabin. Skip slammed against the deck. Channing, weighing three hundred pounds again, came down with a stunning smack, and Skip thought unreally that should have bounced. They all lay still for a breathless moment, gasping, and Skip saw the dial of the radar screen, and under it, the positioner dial. He drew a long breath. The WASHINGTON wasn't headed for Earth at all. Instead, it was pointing out in a long orbit thru the asteroid belt.

There was only one thing to do. Skip plunged upward for the largest lever on the control board---the one that would cut the rhodionite drives. If they lived thru deceleration, there was a chance--- Channing saw him, and in a frenzy he

leaped at Caldwell. He knew enough about the ship to realize what that lever would send them into rapid deceleration which would immobilize them all again. The two men swayed back and forth, fighting the lever, battling, clawing at it. The lever stuck; the control-chair, freed, swung thru a ninety-degree angle back and forth, up and down, bumping and banging against their kicking legs. The lever jerked, twisting in their hands.

The lever began to give slowly toward Skip. Thorna screamed, throwing herself at the men.

The lever snapped off short beneath her weight. The rhodionite drives out--and a rocking, slamming holocaust ran wild in the cabin. The three, entangled, slammed down in a writhing heap under the monster hand of deceleration. The Hog choked, strangled, and Skip's knee in his stomach finished the job. The Hog lay like a dead man in the rocking, bucking floor of the cabin. Skip Caldwell braced himself, his body automatically fighting the stresses. With a moan, Thorna slid to the floor, doubled up in tearing agony. Skip alone was halfway conscious; knowing with her nerves and muscles that he had just barely time to get himself into Garenson before the deceleration flattened him, too, like a squashed bug. Thorna, writhing, screamed silently with a twisted, dying sound, lay half under his body. Without knowing what he was doing, Skip began to drag at her twisted form. In his hand the gabardine tore away, but Skip fought and pulled and struggled and somehow, he never knew exactly how he finally managed it, got her body into a Garenson, while the hum of the jets screamed thru the sub-sonics and into a cacophony of tearing sound and up into a supersonic, deadly whine. With dragging, drained hands, Skip fumbled for the other Garenson, but the atmosphere-jets screeched and the automatics took over and the slam of full-force deceleration hit--and that slam was the last sound Skip Caldwell heard before blood burst from his eyes and nose and the universe blew up in a million shining pieces.

Caldwell opened his eyes.

He was strapped, full-length, on one of the recoilchairs, and beside him, there was blood on the rubber pillow. Thorna was in the Captain's chair, her back to him. The jets were silent; in the cabin there was only the soft whistly of the air conditioner.

Skip discovered his hands were free. With a glance at the dial, he saw that the WASHINGTON was in a free-fall orbit around Mars, just inside Deimos. He couldn't see the Hog anywhere. The radioswitch was green. Caldwell shut his eyes and lay still. Big Jim's girl---full of bitter disillusion, Skip wondered what would happen to him now.

He heard the squeak of the radio, and Thorna came to life.

"WASHINGTON, Captain Stacy to Spaceforce ship HALLAM. Co-ordinates---" she reeled off a long string of figures. "Our ship is disabled. We have the thief aboard. Over to Spaceforce HALLAM."

Skip Caldwell winced. It wasn't bad enough to know his old friend's daughter was a common thief, but Big Jim would think that he, Caldwell, had engineered the thefts. What could he think? Hell, how could Caldwell ever prove anything else? But Thorna's voice went on, thin and scared, "Jeffrey Channing is dead. Captain Howard Caldwell managed to throw the deceleration switch and saved our lives. Channing was heading for the asteroid 1345 where his other loot is concealed. Howard Caldwell deserves all credit for this capture, but he was caught by acceleration too. I think he is dying---"

"Dying, hell," Skip said, and struggled to sit up against the straps. His fingers unbuckled them hastily. His head was splitting, and he spat blood before he could talk, but he'd lived thru worse deceleration than that as a test pilot, and he would again. Thorna turned with a gasp. "Skip!" she cried, rocketing out of her chair, "are you all right?"

"Yeah," Skip said bitterly, "and now you'll probably get off with your neck, even if your little friend---" His eyes turned away from the horrible swollen thump under the blanket.

"Friend!" Thorna's voice held all the bitterness in the world. "Oh, Skip, please believe me! I never knew it was anything but a joke on Dad until I was in too deep to quit. Channing rigged the whole thing, so I had to help---he was one of the instructors at the space academy. I had my final test with one other

graduate---my best friend---in this kind of ship. They told me I would have a cerberum ship---Channing switched the orders at the last minute and we never knew. So we didn't have belts---or safety equipment---I just barely lived thru it, and the boy with me died like---like---" her eyes slid away from Channing. "He rigged it so it looked like ---murder---it hadn't been my fault, and I knew it would kill Dad. But Channing said he'd fix it if I'd work---with him---"

"Yeah, I know, sure." Skip looked grimly at the body of the Hog. "So he rigged the job. It's a good story, Thorna. It sounds fine. Only I don't believe a word of it."

"No?" Thorna asked softly, "Well, then, why didn't I use this?" From her pocket she pulled the blaster and tossed it, butt-first, to Skip. Something in the gesture suddenly convinced him that her story might be true. Nothing would have been easier than to murder Skip, claim self-defense, and convince Spaceforce and her father that she and Channing had been defending the cargo.

Skip sat silent on the bunk, turning the blaster in his hands. He shrugged, then handed it back to her. There was nothing to do, in any case, except wait for Spaceforce to board them. At least, he thought with satisfaction, the WASHINGTON was really out of commission now.

A week later, Thorna, Skip, and Big Jim Stacy stepped out of the TRANS-TERRA on the Salvage asteroid, and looked up thru the thin atmosphere of this interplanetary junkyard at the tow ships that were hauling the WASHINGTON down to the surface.

"Well, you're off that one for good," Big Jim said with a grin. "I understand CFC is turning the TRANSTERRA over to you for the rest of your hitch. Or are you going to retire now? Your share of the reward for catching Channing will let you retire to Charin for the rest of your life."

"Like hell I am," Skip snorted. "Me, retire? I'm good for ten years yet! I should give up that extra pension." He caught Thorna's eye, and winked. "By that time I'll have a family to support. You know what I'm going to do with that reward money? I'm going to buy that old hunk of scrap iron and try to make a spaceman out of this girl of yours!"

"A space man, Skip?" Thorna teased, slipping her gauntleted hand thru his.

"Buy the WASHINGTON?" Big Jim bellowed with laughter. "That hulk isn't even worth stealing."

"That's what I like about her," Skipp grinned, "nobody wlese will try torun her."

Big Jim grumbled laughter. "I never knew you cared about salvage work Skip."

"Oh yes, Thorna put in quickly before Skip could speak. "He's---real good at salvage work."

"Let's get out of here," Skip added. Women just didn't belong in space. You couldn't kiss one thru a spac suit..

— END —



THE STFILM SCENE

by
RON HAYDOCK

Ray Harryhausen, when still a young boy, so fell in love with KING KONG that he decided then and there to someday be a special effects wizard in Hollywood. Ray returns to the screen once more with his Super-Dynamation film process which first thrilled the monster movie goers in THE 8th VOYAGE OF SINBAD and THE 3 WORLDS OF GULLIVER. Ray's secret screen development can best

be described as a combination of live action with animated figures. Also, it is a combination of practically every known effect in motion pictures. Included in this costly and time-consuming process is split-screen, split-beam camera, travelling matte process, inlay photography, and the synchronization of one or more strips of film, with another. And now, Harryhausen uses this unique and revolutionary film development to enhance the film version of Jules Verne's classic novel, THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND.

The book, written by Verne, is a sequel to his world-famous 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA, which was turned into a highly successful motion picture a few years ago. This is the third time THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND will hit the theaters; it was originally filmed as a silent version in the late 1920's, it was later remade by Columbia Pictures in 1951, and now, ten years later, Columbia is again re-filming Verne's tale.

As with all books which are turned into films there are some changes from THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND as Verne saw it, and THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND as Hollywood sees it.

The film tells the story of eight marooned people on a far away and uncharted island, and how Captain Nemo and his faithful submarine, Nautilus, come to their rescue.

Captain Cyrus Harding and two of his friends, Herbert Brown and Neb, both Union soldiers, plan a daring break from a Confederate prison by forcing a Northern newspaperman, Gideon Spilatt, to accompany them. They manage to elude their pursuers and make their way to a Confederate Army balloon where they discover a rebel soldier, Sergeant Pencroft, asleep in the bottom of the balloon's basket. The quartet force Pencroft to aid them in their escape with the balloon and they cast off, guided by the southern soldier and the high winds.

The balloon is lost in a terrific storm and when the weather clears, they find themselves over the Pacific Ocean. Their food rations are almost gone, and their balloon is about to burst at the seams when Neb sights an island below them. The balloon descends and the five men swim to shore, four of them arriving safely on the sandy slopes of the tropical island. Captain Harding is lost.

The others believe him dead, but when they notice smoke in the distance, they race down to beach to discover Harding lying unconscious beside a blazing fire. After he regains consciousness, he is at a complete loss to explain how he got ashore or who set the fire. He vaguely recalls that someone carried him onto a beach, but that's all.

The party sets out to locate food, build shelters and attempt to find some means of escape from the apparently deserted island. Then they discover that they are not alone.

A giant land crab grabs Neb and lifts him from the ground. The other four men finally rescue the frightened Union soldier and successfully shove the crab into a bubbling hot spring.

Other dangers soon face the men. Herbert is captured by a long, sticky vine, which emits pink-colored fumes and renders him unconscious. His terrifying screams attract the attention of the others, and they attempt to free him, but they are driven back by the deadly fumes. Herbert is about to be swallowed by the monster, when a peculiar creature, a green-skinned man who is heavily bearded, cuts Herbert loose and pulls him out of danger.

The rescuer is Tom Ayrton, who was marooned on the island by cut-throat pirates many years before. He is unable to speak because his tongue was cut out, but he does understand English. Tom introduces the men to a giant mushroom which he uses to combat the monster plant's poisonous fumes. However, Pencroft discovers that the mushroom is not at all edible when he turns a colorful green after eating its delicious food.

Another party arrives at the mysterious island: Maria Labrino of Seville and her niece, Elena. They had been shipwrecked on their way home from Valparaiso and have been without food or water for many days.

The women join in the community and share a part of Ayrton's cave home. Food is in abundance, but they are unable to build a boat because of crude tools.

Now another mystery unveils itself to the eight people: a chest containing tools, medicine and other essential provisions floats ashore. Spillet comes across a sextant with the initial "N" engraved on it, and arrives at the conclusion that the chest might have come from the legendary Nautilus which was supposed to have sunk with all hands eight years previous.

With this chest full of necessary tools, the men now busily engage themselves in the massive task of constructing a ship which will take them away from the island. While the men are working on the boat one day, Elena is attacked by a gigantic bee. Herbert comes to her aid, and they manage to escape from the bee's huge hive. They take refuge in a cave and there they discover a long corridor opening out into a grotto.

They see a submarine nestled in the cove.

There is no one about, and when they search the craft, they find it full of peculiar machinery and even an organ.

Elena and Herbert are attracted by the sound of gunshots coming from the direction of the beach where their friends are working on the boat. They leave the submarine, and when they arrive on the beach they are surprised to see a pirate ship firing at them. Things look grim for the marooned party, when all of a sudden, the pirate ship explodes and sinks, taking all her crew down with her to the depths.

A strange and mysterious figure emerges from the ocean. It is wearing a weird rubber suit and breathing apparatus, fashioned from huge sea-shells.

It is none other than the famed commander of the Nautilus, Captain Nemo.

He tells the party that it was he who destroyed the pirate ship and also rescued Harding from the sea. Nemo also confirms Spillet's suspicions about the origin of the chest. He relates that he and his submarine have been hiding out in the grotto for eight years.

Nemo's experiments with animal, bird and plant-life to save the world's food supply are the reasons why the party has encountered such monstrous creatures on the island. He then informs them that the island's volcano (Every island has one, you know) will erupt in a very short while; a few days at most.

The islanders now attempt to refloat the pirate ship and are on the verge of success when a giant octopus attacks them and kills Pencroft. Just as the volcano begins to erupt a flow of molten lava, the ship rights itself in the water, and the party sets sail for home.

But Captain Nemo is not aboard.

He has returned to his grotto and has been trapped by tons of rock

and lava.

As the mysterious island slowly disappears over the horizon, the crew of survivors turn to themselves and ask, "Who was that wicked man?" recall the bravery of Nemo and are, of course, disheartened that he had to succumb to such a violent death. Nevertheless, they look forward to returning home once again to their loved ones and families, being none the worse for their adventures on THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND.

Harryhausen, a man of seemingly unlimited talents, also designed the submarine, Nautilus, in addition to creating the monsters in the film. Because this is one of the most famous ships in the history of the fictional world (and perhaps the actual world as well) special care had to be exercised when Ray designed it. The interiors of the submarine contain compartments filled with complicated machinery, flashing lights, dials, all of which actually work. Nemo's cabin is fashioned in the true Verne tradition; silk drapes, gold and red furnishings, oil paintings on the bulkheads, deep armchairs, bookcases and the pipeorgan. The cabin literally glows!

Besides this, there were the interiors of the cave homes on the island and the full-scale balloon which was built so it would actually take off. The secret of how the balloon floats and can be bombarded by a studio almost-hurricane it encounters is closely guarded by Harryhausen, I'm afraid.

The scene: Father's Day, June, 1961, at the home of a "fairly well known writer".

A telephone jangles nervously on its cradle, waiting impatiently to be answered.

A hand reaches for the instrument, lifts it up, and a voice says,

"Hello."

"Hello, Ray?"

"Yes, this is he."

"This is I. M. Lost, over at the studio. Got a few minutes to talk?"

"Sure. What's on your mind?"

one you've been adapting for us from your book."

"Uh-huh. What about it?"

"The Big Man has decided that he doesn't want to film it."

A pause. Then: "Would you mind repeating that?"

That's what the Big Conference was about. So, he thought you'd like to know. That's why I'm calling."

"Do you mean to say that after all the hard work I've put in on that script that---"

"Don't kick Ray, you'll get paid for it, you know."

"That isn't the point!"

"150 grand is nothing to sneeze at,"

"I'm not worried about the money!"

Devotion of the Big Man's, but that's the way it goes."

Click!

"Hell, Ray?" Pause. "You still there, Ray ole pal? Ray? Ray?..."

(In other words, gang, as it stands now you won't be seeing THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES on the screen for many, many years to come---if at all. Some persons over at MGM must enjoy spending money on scripts, then cancelling them because of upset stomach, or like well founded, carefully considered reasons,

The motion picture business must be the only business in the world where money is nothing to the Big Men. How many times this week did you read where some Hollywood big shot growled, again, about the way motion pictures are losing money. You'd think that when some joker plopped down \$150,000.00 for a screenplay, he would know he wanted to film it. Apparently this is not the case.

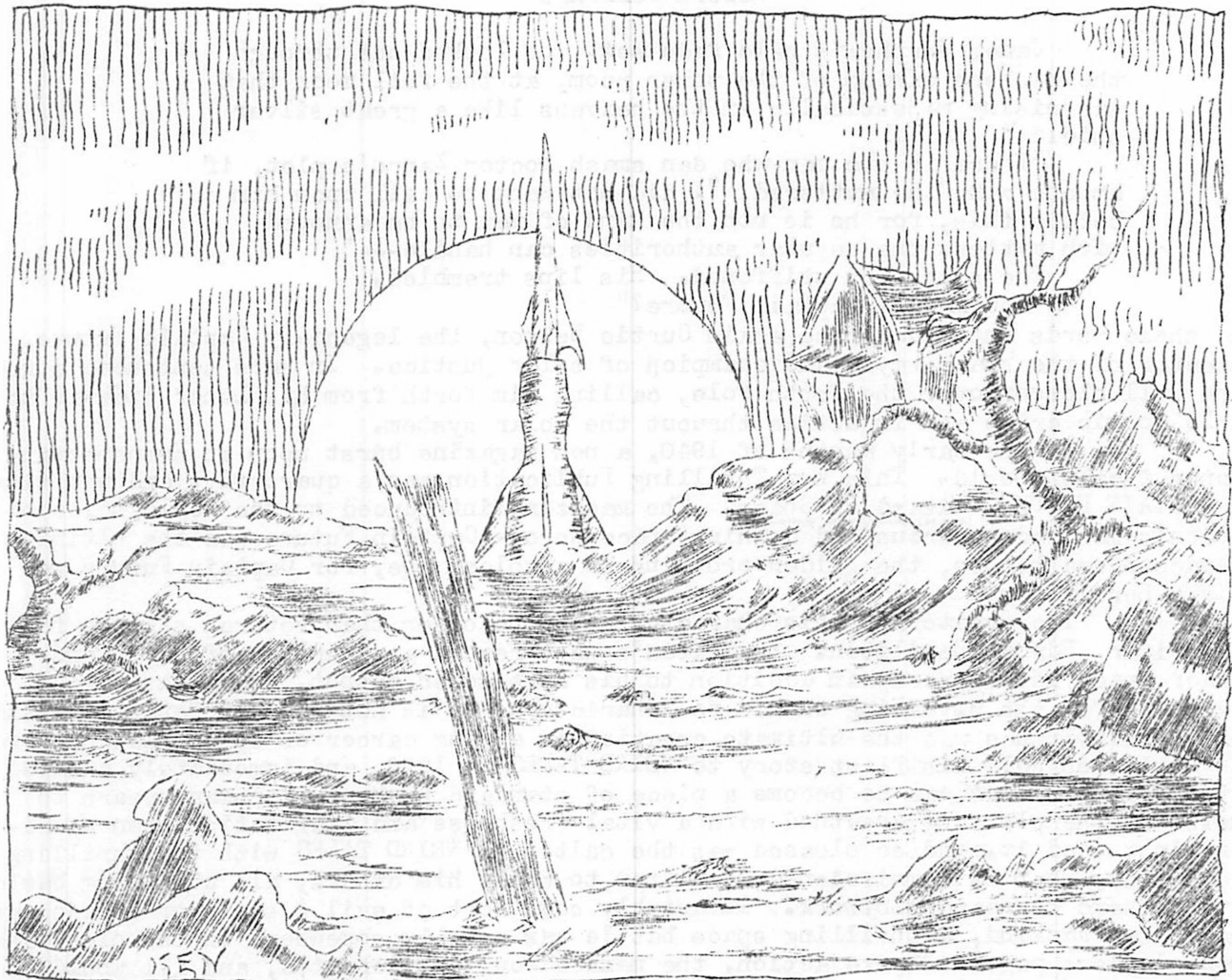
The above example is not an isolated case, it happens frequently in movieland. Once I thought I'd doubt the cancelled Sci-fantasy films over a one year period, that had cash already invested in them...it grew tedious. Think now

that stf-fantasy-weird-horror films are still in a definite minority, and try totalling the cancellation, plus the wasted money with each cancellation, for regular legitimate film-plays...

In 1958, Jim Warren, Publisher Unknown, came out with the world'd first all-monster magazine, FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND. Other competitor magazines soon popped up, but Jim and FM have outlasted them all.

Some six months after the sucess of FM, Jim hit the standz with an all western publication, WILDEST WESTERNS. Later, from his offices, and from the able mind of Harvey Kurtzman, came HELP!, a satire magazine. In April of 1961, Jim published the first all stfilm mag, SPACEMEN, the second publication of his which was written and edited by FM's Famous Monster, Forry Ackerman.

Today, when Jim can in some ways be compared to EC's William Gaines, Mister Warren has a new magazine planned for release soon (if not already by the time you read this). Altho title and format of the publication still remain in the Secret cage, I think I can guarantee that it will be a delight to fantastical-minded film fans...



THE WRITINGS OF A CONFIRMED CYNIC

PRESENTS —

CAPTAIN FUTURE

MAN OF TOMORROW

by
Robert Jennings

James Carthew's pale face set. He looked out through the eastern window of the tower room, at the full moon that was rising majestically in the heavens like a great silver shield.

"There is one man who can smash Doctor Zarro's plot, if anyone can," he muttered, "I did not want to call upon him before this, for he is not the kind of man to be annoyed with matters the regular authorities can handle---"

The secretary stiffened. His lips trembled.

"You mean---Captain Future?"

And these words introduce once again Curtis Newton, the legendary Captain Future, protector of the space-ways, and champion of solar justice. In mere sentences a red flare will blossom over the North Pole, calling him forth from his lunar hideaway to battle cosmic crime and injustice thruout the solar system.

In the early months of 1940, a new magazine burst upon an unsuspecting science fiction world. This new Thrilling Publication was a quarterly, and was titled CAPTAIN FUTURE, Wizard of Space. The magazine introduced to the world science fiction's most adventurous and dashing space hero. Captain Future was the ultimate in space-opera heroes, the golden crowning of a golden age, for Captain Future was truly a hero's hero.

The creator of this character was none other than veteran science fiction writer, Edmond Hamilton. Hamilton's past record as a writer of blood and thunder space adventurers, in addition to his more sober output, served as a good background for the unveiling of his new character. It is not too far fetched to state that Captain Future was the ultimate creation in a long career of space-blazing heroes. Hamilton sold his first story to WEIRD TALES in 1926, and immediately created a story pattern that was to become a piece of standard hackwork for many years to come. But the plotting creathed with a vital freshness and imagination when Hamilton first used it, and so pleased was the editor of WEIRD TALES with the thrilling space sagas, that he commissioned Hamilton to write him others, all utilizing basically the same standard plotwork. Invariably some sort of evil & sinister menace was threatening mankind, a thrilling space battle was usually somewhere in the plot, and after glorious pages of pure action, the menace would be defeated, and all would be safe once more. While it was considered permissible to alter the various types of menaces, from space invaders, to time invaders, to other-dimension invaders and so on, and the action should be shifted and rearranged a bit, the tried and true basic

framework seldom altered noticeably. Story after story using the same all-purpose theme rolled forth from the typewriter, and Hamilton may have wondered at times how long the reading public would be able to take the seemingly endless stream of action tales. The capacity for such material seemed endless, and Hamilton was soon able to broaden his original basic framework to encompass newer and more daring action types. One of his favorite tricks, new and unusual at the time it was first presented, was to allow the hero to single-handedly defeat the alien hords with one of their own fighting machines. Few people today realize how much in basic ground work, both in action-adventure and in more relaxed stories, science fiction owes to Hamilton's keen imagination.

Captain Future was Hamilton's brain child, perhaps one he had been holding back in ready reserve for years before that first issue of CAPTAIN FUTURE was seen on the stands. And once the first issue was published, there was no stopping the string of action packed cliff hangers featuring the cosmic hero. Every three months, like clock-work, a Dire & Evil menace ranged over the worlds of the system, and President James Carthew felt the necessity of calling on Captain Future, foe of evil and tyranny, to protect the nine worlds once more from some civilization shaking disaster.

Captain Future was by no means a lone wolf hero. He had a crew of three hearty Futuremen who accompanied him everywhere on his innumerable adventures.

Otho the andriod, was his most constant companion. Hamilton usually planned Captain Future's adventures so that two members of the Futuremen group remained on board the space ship, or were sent out tracing other clues, while one Futureman personally accompanied Captain Future on whatever vital errand he had to complete. The group and the members of the groups alternated, reunited, shifted, and changed consistently, so that every Futureman got his chance to hunt out clues or adventure with Captain Future several times in each story, but Otho seemed to be the Futureman most consistently picked as a traveling companion.

Otho was created by Captain Future's father, Roger Newton, and the Brain, the third Futureman. Otho's physical makeup was slightly unusual; his skin was a pale, almost pure white color, and had a rubbery texture about it. He had slightly slanted green eyes, and was bald all over. Otho also had a streamlined interior workings of his body to allow him to perform more efficiently than normal human beings do. As a direct result, Otho could breath atmospheres that would kill an ordinary being, and he much preferred to eat a wattery high-nutrent synthetic mixture, rather than solid, human-like food.

Otho possessed many abilities and talents that proved quite useful to Captain Future in his many adventures. One of the most startling and valuable of these was his power of disguise. Since his skin was synthetic, by applying a nameless liquid to his face and body, Otho could remold his entire body into almost any shape he desired. With the additional help of wigs, dyes, shadow brushes and other assets to disguise, he was acclaimed as the system's foremost authority in disguise. (Quite naturally, Captain Future was the second foremost authority on disguise.) Otho was also recognized as the fastest and most agile creature in creation, and it was Otho who was credited with teaching Captain Future speed and agility in his younger days, before he took up his space-adventuring career. Otho is also reported to have taught Captain Future his super ju-jitsu tricks, which came in handy in almost every story. I'll pause here to



OTHO

point out that there is quite a bit of difference between judo and ju-jitsu. Whereas judo is a means simply to use the opponent's strength against him and perhaps deliver a few bruising falls and like minor painful discouragement to any would-be attacker, ju-jitsu's aim is to seriously disable or permanently cripple the attacker, and if worse comes to worse, to kill him outright. The use of such a system of defense fits Otho's personality pattern nicely. He was never known to be particularly merciful in his fighting; his proton gun was set permanently to killing radiation, and in hand to hand combat, he much preferred to eliminate his opponent completely, rather than just stun him.

Otho's mental makeup was lagging behind his physical abilities. He was the restless, unstable member of the Futureman group. He loved action, constant action, and could scarcely endure the time spent waiting between assignments on the moon hideaway. He was easily bored with routine, and preferred to avoid it whenever possible. While he was never completely the dare-devil type, he succeeded in convincing the reader that he was as close an approximation to that class as was possible, without stepping over the thin dividing line. Otho always reminded me of a sort of adapted and watered down Sir Kay. He was brash and boastful, and his enthusiasm knew few boundaries. He was also high tempered, and was inclined to flare up at a moment's notice. Otho sometimes seemed to be a bit simpler than he actually was. These were the times when Hamilton preferred to make him the straight man for Captain Future's brilliant logical reasoning powers. Like all the Futuremen, Otho was courageous, and extremely devoted to Captain Future. His mental makeup was a bit strange and disturbing at times. To quote from the Futuremen department of the magazine, Otho's "ironic, twisted mental outlook occasionally leads to strange results." An understatement.

If Otho was Captain Future's constant traveling companion, Grag, the seven foot metal robot was his strong right arm. Grag, like Otho, was created by Roger Newton and the Brain. His body was made of an impervious alloy, and his steel muscles had unimagined strength. Grag's towering metal body was powered by an atomic motor which he fed occasionally with bits of copper. He had a thinking, sponge metal brain, and his eyes were photo electric cells. He even had a sense of smell, the reference to the ability was only made twice in all the Captain Future stories.

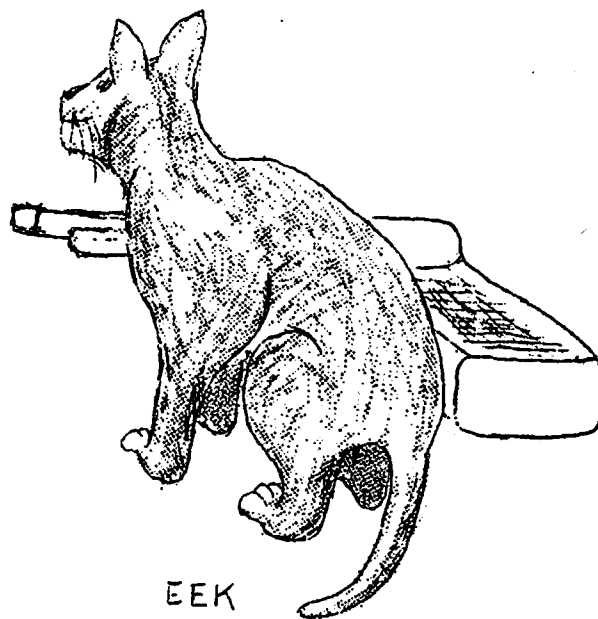


GRAG

Grag's massive strength could have made him one of the most important characters in the stories, but Hamilton preferred to treat the robot as a second-rate creation. For a time, Grag was probably the most neglected member of the Futuremen, and Hamilton often ignored him for pages at a time. I was also irritated at the changibility of the robot's strength and adaptability. Had Captain Future and Hamilton been more agreeable and allowed the good Captain to use Grag as a more personal partner, Captain Future could have saved untold pages of troubles. Invariably, when a situation arose that needed Grag's talents, he would be miles away, in the space ship usually, helping the Brain perform some experiment. I've also wondered why it was that even though Grag was the mightiest being in the system, at various times in the first few Captain Future stories, his strength was sometimes no more than that of an ordinary human. The misuse of the robot began to change with the fifth issue, but Grag never managed to earn a truly outstanding position in the series.

Hamilton chose to give Grag a dependable, stereotyped, emotional makeup. The whole Futureman crew, including Captain Future himself, were little more than cleverly adapted stereotypes, and Grag

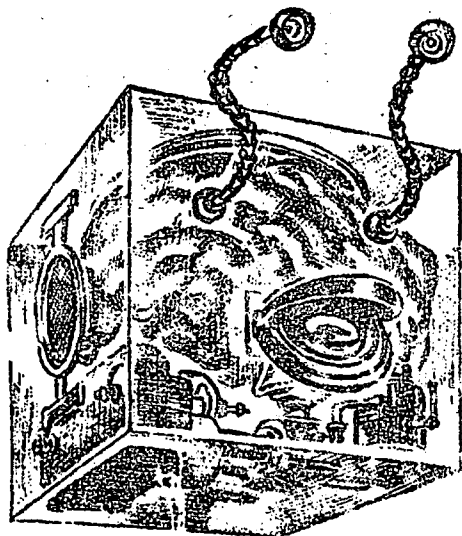
was the super-strong, somewhat gentle and naive robot. Grag had an inferiority complex, and wanted more than anything else to be thought human. Otho, cruel & heartless android, who also had the same inferiority complex, noticed this, and often teased the robot, claiming he was nothing more than a pile of nuts and bolts with a motor attached. Numerous quarrels erupted in every story between the two, as to which one was actually the more human. The quarrelling and insulting was actually in a "friendly" vein; when immediate danger threatened either of the Futuremen, all minor differences were dropped. Actually, the brickering and quarrelling was completely in keeping with the times, since numerous personal feuds and petty arguments and fights were raging thruout the realm of fandom, and the world at the same time CAPTAIN FUTURE was being published.



E EK

Grag also had a secret envy of Otho, who certainly appeared to be more human than the metal man. In order to make himself appear more human in the eyes of his companions, Grag adopted a pet, which he named Eek. Eek was the first real addition to the Futureman group. Since volume one, number one of CAPTAIN FUTURE, a controversy had raged among the readers as to whether or not additional Futuremen should be introduced into the stories. The editor encouraged such discussions up until the fifth and sixth issue, and may have been trying to gauge the popular reaction to the series as a whole by sparking such comment. In any event, Hamilton gave Grag a pet. Eek was a tiny moon creature Grag had discovered and tamed. He was a silicon animal, and as Hamilton tells us, all siliceous animals eat metal. Eek survived on a steady diet of copper, which he devoured greedily. Grag occasionally fed him ships of silver or gold, or some other precious metal. Eek enjoyed these richer metals immensely, but unfortunately, it took only a little of such metals to make him rip-roaring drunk. Eek's metal eating habits were a constant annoyance to Otho. Eek was constantly eating parts of his weapons, or eating away parts of the space ship when no one was watching him. Eek could never have eaten Grag, even if he had wanted to. The robot's super-strong metal alloy body defied even the moon creature's savage teeth. Eek didn't breathe, and in addition, was a horrible coward. He was telepathic; since there had been no chance to develop vocal speech or vocal instinct on the airless wastes of the moon, where his kind lived. Eek's telepathic abilities and his cowardness came in handy at various times. He could sometimes sense danger moments before it occurred, and his behavior was usually a warning to the Futuremen that some Dire & Gastly menace was probably awaiting them around the next turn. Eek is even given credit for rescuing the entire Futureman team and practically saving the solar system from the evil intentions of Doctor Zarro in the very issue he made his first appearance. Apparently, this moment of fame went to his head, and Eek went into a sort of active retirement after that, never to attempt such heroics again. Eek served a useful purpose as far as Grag was concerned. While Grag might seem to be, and feel, inferior to the other members of the Futureman team, to Eek he was the penicillin of creation. The furry little silicon beast supplied the ego boost Grag sometimes needed so desperately.

It was the fifth issue before Otho yielded to public pressure, and obtained a pet himself, tho the pet was announced in the fourth issue, via the letter column. Otho's pet was a little meteor mimic he had found on an astrid inhabited by the Hermit of Space. The creature had the ability to imitate creatures and objects of roughly his same size. Otho's sole purpose in obtaining the creature was to give Eek some trouble, and both Otho and Grag looked forward to a few active



The Brain

brawls between the two pets. Unfortunately, for both of the Futuremen, the two pets became fast friends on sight. Otho named his pet Oog, which doesn't impress me as the ideal name for a pet with Ogg's abilities. Eek, for the cowardly moon creature is somewhat significant, but Oog? Oognnever played much of a part in the stories; it seemed as tho Otho and Hamilton introduced the creature merely to pacify public reaction, and to counter Grag's pet. Otho didn't exactly have the ideal personality for a pet owner either, and Oog was lucky if his name was mentioned five times in one story.

Simon Wright, the Living Brain, was the third Futureman in the stories. The Brain had once been an aging Earth scientist; the greatest biologist in the system. However, his ceaseless experimentation into biological fields has caused him to carelessly fall prey to a fatal disease. He met young Roger Newton, and together they worked on a number of scientific projects. But when evil conspirators threatened Newton, he and his young wife fled to the moon, taking Simon Wright with them. In order to save Simon's life, his

living brain was removed and placed in a steril serum case made of a transparent metal. The Brain's case was equiped with all the items needed to prolong his life indefinitely. Vital serum was circulated and purified by a compact atomic perfusion pump. A speaker had been installed on the side of the case, and was attached to various motor nerves in the living brain, so that Simon might talk, and hear what was happening around him. Two eye stalks gave him sight. A handle was attached to the case so that the Brain might be carried to various different places, since he didn't have the power of mobility in the early stories. The Brain did not eat and required only short rest periods. His only refreshment was provided by various pulsating vibrations which stimulated and relaxed him.

The Brain was second in command of the Futureman group. It was the Brain, with Roger Newton, who had created Grag and Otho, and both of these artificial creatures had tremendous respect for him. The Brain is also given credit for training young Curtis Newton in science and educating him to expansive knowledge of every sort, and Captain Future had proven to be such an adapt student, that he had gone on to surpass his teacher in every respect. Hamilton kindly injected that even tho Captain Future was the greatest scientist in the system, the Brain was the second most brilliant. Apparently the cells that composed the Brain were capable of holding an infinite amount of knowledge; the Brain seemed to be an expert on almost every field of science, and seldom needed to check in the expansive scientific library the Futuremen carried aboard the space ship. Apparently also, the Brain and Captain Future never felt the need for specialization, they knew almost everything about anything, and proved in in every story.

The editors of CAPTAIN FUTURE were not too respectful of the Brain it would seem. The third and tenth issues made history by printing the illustration of the Brain upside down. The lettering for the illo was rightside up...

The Brain, claimed Hamilton, was cold and austere, and was completely devoid of any emotion except love and devotion for Captain Future. In the stories, however, the Brain was a somewhat different character. He was capable of a limited variety of emotions, ranging from hope to near hate. He never had much of a sense of humor, but it was faintly apparent that a sense of humor was there, somewhere. The Brain, naturally, never showed fear of any sort, and probably didn't know the emotional meaning of the word. The Brain was sharp and decisive with his razor-like comments, and relied heavily on sarcasm and irony and keen practical, irreputable logic. The Brain was definitely one of those no-nonsense characters, and was the

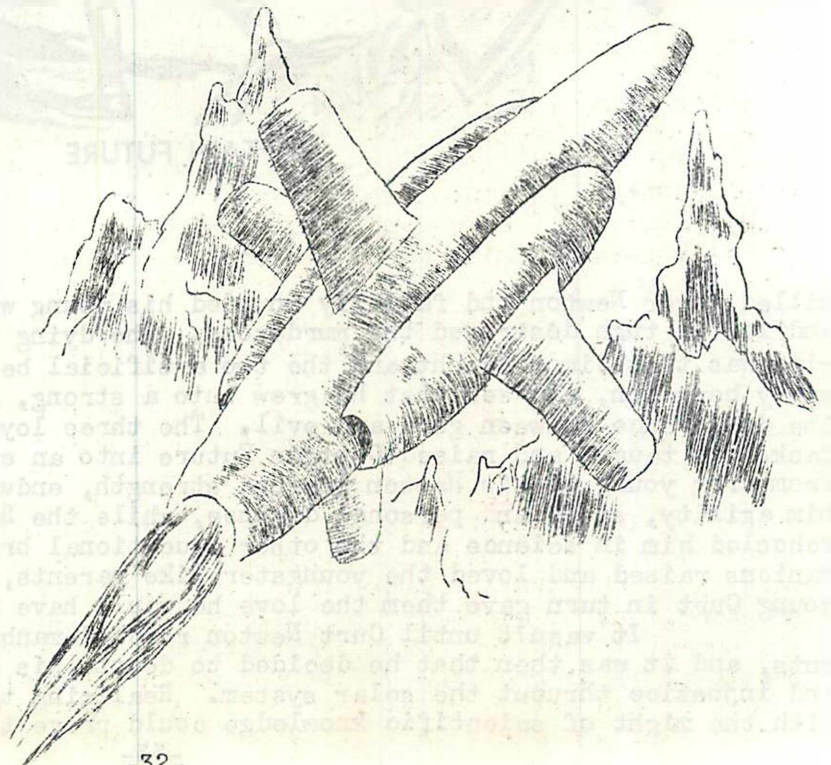
practical, somewhat fatherly member of the group. During the early stories, the Brain never spoke in the normal range of emotions; whenever the Brain spoke, he "rasped" out his words. His dialect resembled a 8-grade pulp sea story character's, and it was liberally sprinkled with homey expressions. The words "aye" and "lad" were the most consistent repetition, and he always referred to Captain Future as "Curtis". (The other Futuremen referred to him as "Chief" mostly.) Fortunately, the rasping gradually disappeared, and the homey sea expressions were eliminated after the first few stories.

Since volume one, number one, another persistent point of reader comment had been whether or not the Brain should acquire a body, so that he would be able to give more active assistance to Captain Future on his quarterly adventures. However, as the editor and other readers pointed out, if the Brain were to obtain any sort of body, it would probably be mechanical, and then the Brain would conflict with the character of Grag, the metal robot. A synthetic body would cause conflict with Otho. Most of the readers seemed to prefer a well rounded group of characters, each one with his own special traits. However, many more readers argued that something ought to be done with the Brain, and few bothered to deny that he was the weakest link in the chain of action and adventure that ran thru the stories. The immobile Brain in his steril serum case was certainly not much use when the Futuremen were blazing away at the approaching alien hords, with hot ray guns clutched in firm fists.

William Norvock in the fifth issue made one of the most practical suggestions. He felt that the Brain should be given an oval metal body which would enclose his present serum case. The metal body would be given small rockets so it could move about, and tentacles would be provided so that the Brain could handle scientific instruments and perhaps hold a ray gun now and again. The tentacles, however, would not be especially strong, and thus there would be no conflict with Grag, the super-strong robot. In the very same issue the letter was printed, Hamilton had apparently relented slightly to either reader or editorial pressure, and the Brain had been disguised as a fake mechanical computer type machine, which had a rough sort of mobility about it. Hamilton had starved off the critics in previous issues by stating that the Brain did not want a body, because he felt it would interfere with his thought processes with its needless demands and imperfections.

With the sixth issue, Hamilton presented a useful and effective system for the Brain. Captain Future invented and placed a small projector in the Brain's serum case. This projector could emit magnetic force rays in any direction, giving Simon the power of mobility. He could travel equally well in space or in air, and could hover motionless. He could also use the blue magnetic rays to form "hands" which he handled scientific instruments. The Brain put his new powers right to work, and was pleasantly surprised to discover that they did not "interfere" with his thought processes. The new adaptations answered most of the readers objections to the Brain's former situation, while retaining the Brain's unique qualities.

The hero of the stories was, of course, Captain Future himself. Captain Future, to quote from the stories "made a striking, picturesque figure". He was exactly six feet four inches tall, had grey eyes, and a stock of "unduly" flaming red hair. He wore close fit-



ting zipper suits of synthesilk that "could not conceal the long, lithe muscles of a rangy, perfectly co-ordinated body."

Captain Future's base was situated on the floor of the moon, in the Tycho Crator, where he and the Futuremen lived in rooms carved out from the solid moon rock. Apparently, since Captain Future was expected to appear in his own magazine for some while to come, Hamilton created a romantic origin for him and the other Futuremen. Every issue featured a slightly different version of the story. Roughly tho, the tale is thusly: Roger Newton, friend and scientific partner of Simon Wright, had been forced to flee with his young wife and friend, to the moon, when conspiritors who coveted his scientific advancements sought to kill him and steal his inventions. Learning that Simon Wright had acquired a disease which was slowly killing him, he removed the living brain, and placed it in the steril serum case. (It was never made particularly clear whether this operation took place before or after the trio reached the moon.) Together with the Brain, Roger Newton continued their experiments to create artificial matter. They first created Grag the robot, and then went on to create an andriod they named Otho.

But as fate would have it, the plotters discovered the moon hidaway, and



CAPTAIN FUTURE

killed Roger Newton and fatially wounded his young wife before the faithful robot and andriod in turn destroyed the murderers. The dying request of Roger Newton's young wife was that Simon Wright and the two artificial beings care for, and raise her newly born son, and see that he grew into a strong, educated manhood, knowing fully the difference between good and evil. The three loyally devoted their years to the task, and taught and raised Captain Future into an excellent specimen of manhood. From Grag young Curtis Newton learned strength, endurance, and patience. Otho taught him agility, speed and personal defense, while the Brain developed his mind, and schooled him in science and the other educational branches. The three inhuman companions raised and loved the youngster like parents, and the cronicles relate that young Curt in turn gave them the love he would have reserved for his natural parents.

It wasn't until Curt Newton reached manhood that he was told of his parents, and it was then that he decided to devote his life to fighting cosmic crime and injustice thruout the solar system. Realizing that in his day, a criminal armed with the might of scientific knowledge could prove to be a tremendous threat, Curt

decided to use his own scientific knowledge to battle against such criminals. To quote Curt from CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE, "Yes, Simon---Someone has to stand up for the system's peoples against their exploiters." This sentence was wisely eliminated from future stories. Curt chose the title of Captain Future because he believed he was fighting for the future of the solar system, and the future of civilization.

It's often been observed that space opera heroes are seldom gifted with expansive origins, or much of a past. You seldom hear of a space opera hero with parents or living relatives; for all you know he could have been generated in a test tube. These heroes exist in a sort of suspended void, they are of the lone wolf variety. Of those heroes who are given something in the way of a presentable past, invariably the origin is somewhat romantic, and the end result is the same; no living relatives, and a lone wolf hero. Captain Future wasn't very different. His origin was slightly more complex than the general run of origins are, it was somewhat more romantic, and more improbable. In later issues of the magazine, when Captain Future battled the Magician of Mars, a nearly equal match for the good Captain, Hamilton tells us that Roger Newton fled Earth to escape the evil grip of Victor Corvo. I don't think I'll be revealing any vital plot secrets by pointing out that the Magician of Mars was, naturally, the son of Victor Corvo. The Corvo version of the origin if only mentions three or four times in the whole series. One wonders if perhaps Hamilton isn't stretching the facts a bit, and that actually Simon Wright and Roger Newton were chased off Earth much in the manner of a latter day Count Frankenstein. Doubtless this speculation will never be answered.

If I were a James Blish sort of writer, I would probably pause here, and wonder in sharp, clipped tones, how inhuman creatures, two of whom were constantly quarrelling between themselves, and all three of them fanatically devoted to the youngster, could have raised so perfectly developed a man, emotionally, mentally, and physically, as Captain Future turned out to be. More likely, Curt Newton would have grown up a spoiled young brat, somewhat cowardly and inferior, after being with his nearly super-human foster parents, and with horribly twisted and confused emotions and desires. Logically now, if you had never laid eyes on another living human being besides yourself until you reached manhood, and you were raised and loved by three weird creatures as parents, having these three creatures dotting on you day and night, and not even learning of your natural parents until you were grown, wouldn't it seem logical to assume that your mental makeup would be somewhat different from that which we believe is normal?

But despite Hamilton's assertions to the contrary, it was obvious that a few emotional quirks had managed to creep into Captain Future's quick and agile mental makeup. The usual over-developed hero urge, and the love and disregard for danger which are common characteristics of most space-opera heroes, were well developed in Captain Future's case. We might be able to pass his inhuman ignorance and disinterest in the opposite sex, or the lack of desire for female companionship, off to his early training. Captain Future's interest in the opposite sex was remarkably void, and except for Joan Randall, beautiful & sexy secret agent for the Planetary Patrol, whom he seemed to have a passing affection for, his life was without knowledge of womanhood. In the early stories Hamilton introduced little or no romance whatsoever. Joan, poor girl, was shown to have something other than loyal devotion for the dashing hero, and every now and then it seemed as tho Curt might be on the verge of returning the emotion, from afar, but that's about as far as it went. The readers, however, would not stand for such undemocratic actions long, and they consistently asked, and even demanded, that romantic interest be injected into the stories, and a number of heartier readers even dared to suggest that Captain Future marry Joan. It seems to me that such a course would have effectively removed all romance from the stories (Meanwhile, back at the moon base, wife Joan is scrubbing floors..) Besides this, whoever heard of a lone wolf space-opera hero getting married? It would have crumbled years of tradition. But, relenting to the ceaseless demands, Hamilton finally did get around to putting in more romance with the adventure. Unfortunately, the balance was even more lopsided than it had been before. Joan grew more daring and more obvious, making crude, and sometimes laughable passes at our hero, while Captain Future continued to maintain the stoney silence. Curt told himself that Joan was only a thrill seeker, and adventure crazy female who wasn't really interested in him at all... Curt would, on infrequent occasions, make it known briefly that he thought a bit more of Joan than he had in previous adventures,

but a wide chasm still separated the two people.

In several later adventures, Hamilton chose to ignore and abandon Joan almost completely. Curt Newton and the Futuremen would travel beyond the solar system, or on some other outstanding adventure, and Joan Randall would never be mentioned. Even tho Joan wasn't along on the se few oassions, Captain Future still managed to turn up beautiful & sexy replacements somewhere in the stories. There was no romantic elements invloved with the se newcomers at all.

Still later, Joan and Captain Future decided to admit that they were really & truely in love, but due to Captain Future's work of saving the solar system and battling all manner of menace, he didn't have the time for marriage or really involved romance. However, wonder of wonders, a few soft words and kisses were actually exchanged between the two.

If Captain Future's interest in womankind seemed, at times, more than a bit void, we must remember that Captain Future was slanted toward a juvenile audience, to whom the element of romance, other than the sort involving blazing blasters and fast paced action, was little more than a bore. Puritan pulp regulations and the long standing historical demands made on all lone wolf space-opera heroes may have also had a hand in keeping Captain Future's love interests strictly on the mutual friendship level.

Only a few times in the stories did Captain Future seem to feel he was missing something by not being raised by normal human parents, or by not leading a normal human life. For instance, in CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE---

Throbbing, liltng music from a gayly lit pleasure palace he was passing reached his ears. He stopped, looking in thru its broad windows. In there, men and women were dancing joyously, under soft lights, celebrating the passing of the terror.

A queerly wistful expression came onto Captain Future's tanned, handsome face as he watched them. He was as young as they, really. Yet never had any such gayity been his.

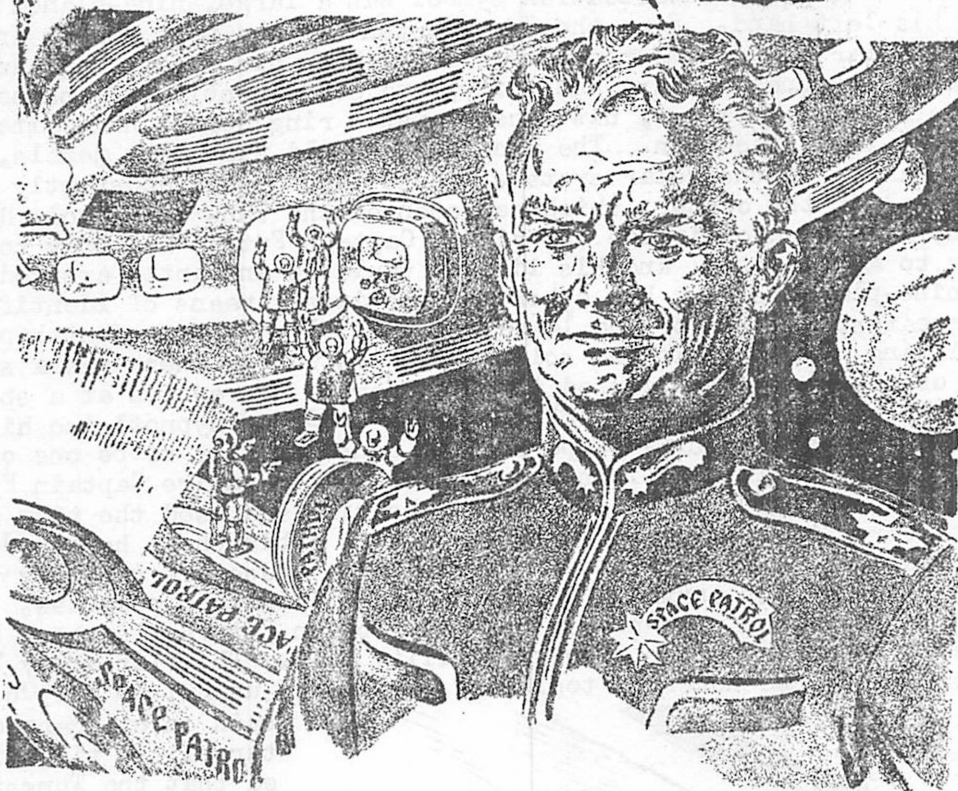
Even in his boyhood, when other lads his age had been growing up with friends and family, he had been already roving the spaceways with the Futuremen, meeting the dangers of far worlds. And since manhood, as Captain Future, he had never known at what time he might meet disaster on some mission in distant, perilous solar space.

However, these moods were infrequent, and tho Captain Future might feel he was lacking something basic and worthwhile in his life, he never let the lack of it deter him from his chosen path. Every three months Captain Future and the three Futuremen traveled the spaceways into high adventure and thrilling action, as the champion of interplanetary justice battled some new and gastly menace.

In addition to the three loyal Futuremen, Captain Future had two other more or less unofficial companions. These were Ezra Gurney and Joan Randall. Ezra Gurney was the veteran member of the Planetary Patrol, and seemed to be a back-woodish sort of character, who habitually chopped the beginnings and endings off his words. He managed to sound like the space-going counterpart of that dependable, courageous, proud old sea dog which inhabited adventure and sea pulps at about that same time. Ezra's accent was further complicated by a small hord of homey little space expressions, which he injected into his speech. Whenever he said something, he never spoke, or said, or exclaimed, or even asked. No indeed, Ezra Gurney "drawled" his sentences. The Brain "rasped" his words during the first few issues, but even the Brain's harsh "rasp" could never surpass, or even equal, Ezra consistent drawling.

Ezra seemed to have very few real uses in the stories. He filled the unwritten necessity of the fatherly police contact, (tho the Planetary Police never seemed to be of much use when Captain Future was on the job), he acted as the straight man for CF's brilliant genius, and I suppose his presence in the stories served to balance out the different character images the series featured.

Apparently the artists who illustrated Captain Future had never really bothered to read the tales very carefully. The third-page stock illustration of Ezra Gurney showed the veteran space-lawman in the foreground, while in the back-



MARSHAL EZRA GURNEY

ground, the reader could observe a pirate craft being boarded by the solar policemen. Unfortunately, Ezra's uniform showed very clearly a streaking comet emblem, and the words SPACE PATROL imposed over this, and the police craft in the background also bore the words SPACE PATROL plainly stamped all over it. It was several issues before Hamilton managed to fit the Space Patrol-Planetary Patrol into his basic background plotwork. It seems that the law enforcement agency thruout the solar system is called the Space Patrol, but the Patrol is divided into three sections. Ezra Gurney happened to be a member of the section which called itself the Planetary Patrol. Dark haired Joan Handall was a member of the third division, which specialized in undercover work and secret investigation. The Space Patrol explanation wasn't pawned off very carefully, and never made much of an impression.

Ezra and Joan managed to pop up in most of the Captain Future stories by virtue of some rather improbable circumstances. In the first few issues Hamilton and the readers were satisfied to note that Ezra and Joan "just happened" to be assigned to the same cases Captain Future was called in to resolve. In later issues tho, it was implied that Ezra and Joan had been placed on a special detachment, and their job was simply to assist Captain Future on whatever case he was handling, in every way possible. At other times Ezra and Joan would "just happen" to be on the scene when trouble broke, or "just happen" to be finishing up a case in the immediate vicinity. Ezra and Joan were involved in some way in most of the CF stories. Of course, during those times when CF and his crew of Futuremen ventured beyond the boundries of the solar system, Ezra and Joan were sometimes left behind.

It's probably a good thing there was no such thing as a Comics Code applied to the pulp magazines. Who could tell what deep psychological implications a metal slave, a dare devil, boasting andriod, a superman hero, and a cold, austere father image, along with a beautiful & sexy young woman might have impacted on youthful consciousness?

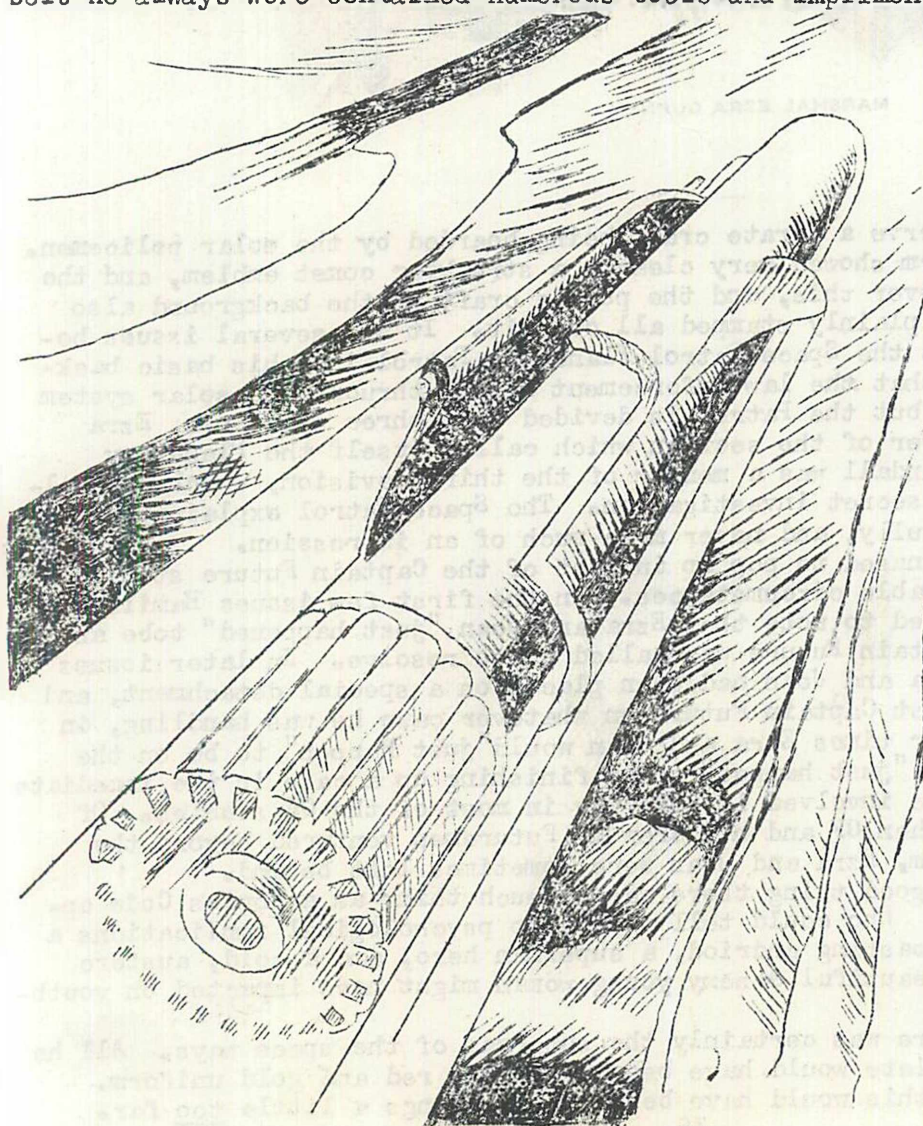
And Captain Future was certainly the superman of the space ways. All he needed to make his role complete would have been a dashing red and gold uniform. Perhaps Hamilton felt that this would have been taking things a little too far.

Captain Future's identification symbol was a large, nine-planet's ring, which he wore on his left hand. Even tho Curt Newton was the most famous and admired personality in the solar system, most people did not know his face. Captain Future made a habit of avoiding unnecessary publicity, and consequently, few photographs had ever been made of him. However, his nine-planet's ring served him quite well as an adequate means of identification. The ring facing held nine tiny jewels, representing the nine planets of the solar system. These tiny jewels constantly revolved around a larger jewel in the center, which represented the sun. The whole device was operated by a tiny atomic motor inside the ring. Captain Future had only to show this unusual ring to any doubter, and his identity would be instantly assured.

The nine-planet's ring had other uses besides a means of identification. Captain Future, greatest adventurer and lawman of the solar system, just happened to be the greatest living hypnotist in the solar system as well. There was a small stud on the back of the ring which caused the nine jewels to revolve at a speedier pace. Curt used this device in CAPTAIN FUTURE'S CHALLENGE to hypnotize his guard and force the outlaw to release him. I personally consider this to be one of the dirttiest rabbits-from-the-hat Hamilton ever pulled in the entire Captain Future series. In CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE he dismantled the ring and used the tiny atomic motor as a cutting torch to break out of a space ship's cabin where he and Joan and a Venturian scientist had been imprisoned. Fortunately, these are the only two cases in which the ring was used for anything other than identification purposes.

In addition to the nine-planet's ring, Captain Future also beat Batman to the punch by being the first hero to own a utility belt. The flat, grey Tungstite belt he always wore contained numerous tools and impliments useful to the Good Cap-

tain on his many adventures. At times it seemed that the Tungstite belt, like Batman's utility belt, concealed a whole field labratory and a mineateur arsenal as well. The reader was never exactly sure of what the belt contained, since Captain Future relied on it rarely, and only in the early CF stories at that. In stories after issue five, the belt was mentioned less and less frequently, until finally, it almost completely vanished from Captain Future's list of personal items. The belt did contain a few gimmicks that saw use in the early stories, such as numerous scientific tools and instruments, a pocket televisor, infra-red specticles, a flourescopic X-ray scope, and the invisibility disk. The invisibility disk was a device which had the power to twist light rays around its user, making him completely invisible to the world around him. However, since light rays were bent around the user, naturally he was left in total dark-



nass, and was unable to see. This never bothered Captain Future, whose super-sensitive hearing was more than adequate to guide him during the brief ten minutes the invisibility effect lasted. After issue number five the invisibility disk finally faded out and was seldom even mentioned again in the tales.

Captain Future was armed with a proton gun, his only other piece of personal equipment. The gun could be set to stun or kill its victims, depending on its user's intentions at the moment. It was an oddly squarish shaped, short little weapon, which didn't look especially harmful, but certainly did a man-sized job in every story. Thruout all the stories in which Hamilton mentions the blast of the gun, he refers to it as shooting out a thin ray, or a beam. However, in all the illustrations and on the covers, the proton gun was shown belching out three or four multi-colored smoke rings from its barrel, which presented a ridiculous effect, to say the very least. One reader comment in the letter section that he didn't know how Captain Future would survive if his proton gun ever ran out of tobacco. Hamilton finally got around to explaining his ingenious invention in OUTLAWS OF THE MOON. The butt of the proton gun held a magazine of "unstable" copper metal. A grain of this highly explosive metal was automatically destroyed each time the trigger was depressed, producing the deadly proton stream.

One other weapon seemed to be common thruout the solar system and the universe, and this was the atom gun. The atom gun operated by shooting forth atomic flares which exploded and destroyed whatever they touched. Members of the Futuremen team occasionally used atom guns in place of the standard proton weapons.

Like many space-going heroes of this era, Captain Future used his own special space ship, the Comet. And, like most space craft favored by most lone wolf heroes, the Comet was "known far and wide throughout the system as the swiftest craft in space." The Comet itself was a small tear drop shaped vessel, into which was crammed a multitude of equipment. The ship not only had room for the control chamber, sleeping quarters, storage space and replacement parts plus equipment with which to repair the ship, but it also carried a "supurb surgical outfit", a complete physics-chemical laboratory for carrying out any desired experiments, numerous delicate and bulky scientific instruments and inventions, a tremendous library of scientific books and papers, all reduced to microfilm of course. There were charts of the various planets and moons and of solar space inbetween, films containing the language of every known race in the system, and a complete set of vials with individual samples of the atmospheres of every major body in the system. Fully loaded and operating, the Comet would accomodate Captain Future and his three Futuremen, Joan and Ezra, and one or two additional persons as well.

The "tiny" ship was constructed of inerton, a super-strong metallic alloy much more durable than any other known metal or metal alloy yet discovered. The inside of the ship was lighted by glowing krypton bulbs, a common item thruout the system, and the entire ship was powered by nine mighty atomic cyclotrons. These cyclotrons, or "cycs" as Comet pilot Otho called them, were fed powdered copper, which they decomposed into raw atomic energy.

The Comet featured a novel means of disguise and defense. Four powerful proton cannons were mounted at strategic points inside the ship, and were capable of handling any foe within range. When the Comet was outclassed, however, a tiny red knob on the control pannel was depressed, and a stream of ionized particles was released behind, forming a long, glowing tail. The trim little ship would resemble an actual comet in flight. The device was used frequently in the early CF stories, but eventually Hamilton filled it away and forgot it. In several of those early issues the Comet is moving outward toward the outer planets, when the ionized tail device is used. Had Hamilton or his spacevillains been a little more up on their spacemanship, they would have instantly realized that a true comet never turns its tail toward the sun. If some enterprising villain had realized this fact, it is probable that Captain Future's career would have been terminated rather early in the game.

Apparantly all ships in Captain Future's time were equiped with faster than light drive, since it only took a sentence or two and apparently no time lapse for the Comet or other space craft to voyage from one planet to another. In STAR TRAIL TO GLORY, Hamilton even describes a space ship race, in which the participating ships are to fly from Mercury, out and around Pluto's orbit, and then back again, all in the space of a few hours.

The ships must have also been equipped with instant inertialess space drives. There was seldom any mention made of any ship decelerating before coming to a dead halt in space, or coming to land on a planet. Thruout the entire series space ships have an irritating habit of stopping at a second's notice, no matter what the prior speed may have been. The Comet was no exception to the rule; it combined instant deceleration, super speed and trimness with amazing maneuverability as well.

Roughly, Captain Future's illustrious career can be divided into five major parts. The first phase lasted the first four issues of the magazine, the second phase continued thru the publication of OUTLAWS OF THE MOON, the third stage continued thru the publication of THE RACE OF THE DEEP, the fourth stage continued until the magazine folded, and included those few additional stories sprinkled thru issues of THRILLING WONDER STORIES and STARTLING, and the fifth and final stage included the short-story revival of Captain Future in STARTLING during 1950-51. Each different phase was marked by certain obvious characteristics, and the passing of each phase in some way altered or changed Captain Future and the series, either in basic plots, writing, styling, characterization, or organization.

The first stage of Captain Future's lengthy and honorable career began with the appearance of CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SPACE EMPEROR in the first issue, dated Winter 1940, and ended with the publication of THE TRIUMPH OF CAPTAIN FUTURE, in the fourth issue, dated Fall 1940. Those first four issues were almost identical in their basic plotwork. The names of the villains, some intermediate action, the exact nature of the menace, the type of scientific weapons used and other minor details were somewhat different from issue to issue, but in general, one basic story framework covered the entire four issues.

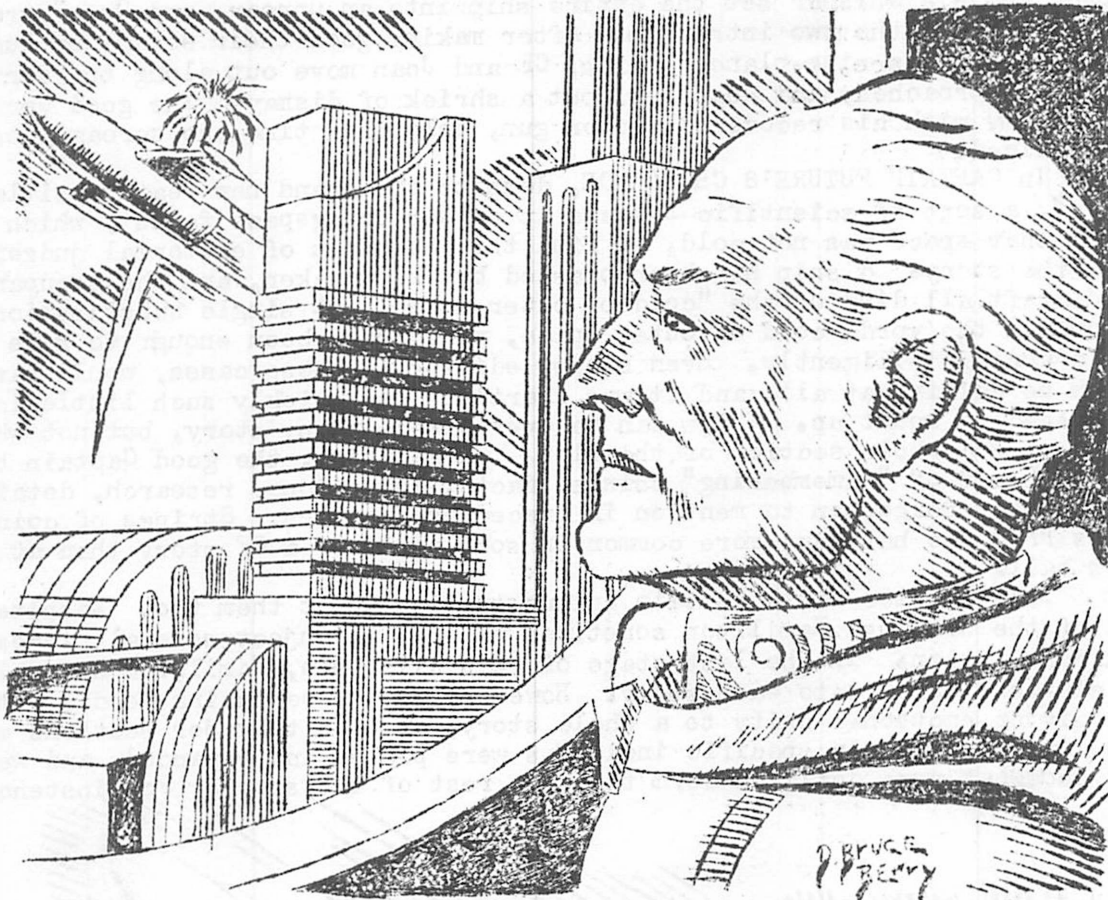
Hamilton created a strange solar system for his Captain Future to work and live in. There were gravitational equalizers which created an artificial gravity on any planet or moon exactly like the gravity of the user's home body. "Halos" of blue radiation were used by space ships to protect them when their orbits carried them close to the sun, or toward Mercury. Hamilton must have believed strongly in the future of the atom; everything in the stories, from space ships to air conditioners, were powered by compact, efficient, powerful atomic engines. These sturdy atomic motors seemed to be eternal, but it was not too unusual for some dependable piece of equipment to break down due to trouble with the atomic generator. Each world and moon of Hamilton's solar system held its own breathable atmosphere, and featured at least one strange and alien race. Earthmen were the leading spaceroaders of this system, and Earth was the capital of the nine-planets. All races on all moons and planets managed to live together with perfect peace and perfect harmony, and prejudice or creature-hatred was a thing unknown.

However, all within the system was not peace and harmony. Every three months, like clockwork, some Dire & Evil menace would sweep over the system, threatening the very foundations of the solar government. It was at these intervals that aging President Carthew sent the red flare blossoming over the North Pole, calling forth Captain Future and the Futuremen to battle once again for peace and justice.

The North Pole flare had something of a history about it too. During the first part of CF's existence, he was summoned by a red flare over the Pole. Later on Hamilton altered this, and took to calling it the North Pole beacon, apparently a beam of red light from the Pole. Finally the entire conception of a North Pole signal was discontinued and Hamilton brought the good Captain into his adventures in other ways. The basic structure of the stories has altered by the time the Beacon idea breathed its last, and Hamilton had little trouble involving his character with the right menace at the right time. Captain Future himself never noticed the change. He was quite content to save the system, every few months in his usual fashion.

Invariably the early stories featured a mysterious villain. Invariably he was in some sort of disguise. It didn't really matter whether he was called the Space Emperor, Dr. Zarro, The Wrecker, or the Life Lord, the type casting was one and the same. Invariably the stories were a rough combination of inter-space detective work, with much high adventure interwoven into the plot.

The idea of the science fiction detective story is a good one, and some very memorable stories have been produced using that formula. However, Captain Future stories at this stage were not exactly the ultimate in science-fiction detective



combinations. The action took a higher place on the scale than did the actual mystery or detective work. The plots were all rather uncomplicated in nature, but were cleverly hidden, twisted, and brushed over with incidentals that added quite a bit to the action side of the slate.

The writing itself was one of the major hinderences of the stories. It was remarkably crude, and was almost devoid of anything resembling decent styling or characterization. The writing was certainly not typical Hamilton, and I think I am safe in concluding that these early stories were nothing more than Hamilton's first draft work. The number of inconsistencies in plotwork and in writing should be sufficient evidence of this. Editorial planning, or a hasty glance at the finished produce might have eliminated a great deal of trivia and soul shattering statements, not to mention making the style a bit less archaic and perhaps even a little smoother reading all round. But at this stage Hamilton probably wasn't especially interested in quality production, and the same tried and true formula worked out well.

No piece of hackwork was too outlandish or improbable for CF. Doubtless you are all familiar with that cliché so beloved by crime movie makers in the late thirties and early forties, where one of the suspects has some vital piece of information, but before he can tell it to the investigating detective, he is ruthlessly murdered. (oh yes) This theme was remarkably common thruout the early CF stories, and even afterwards, up until the publication of QUEST BEYOND THE STARS, the idea had a permanent place in the basic structure of the stories.

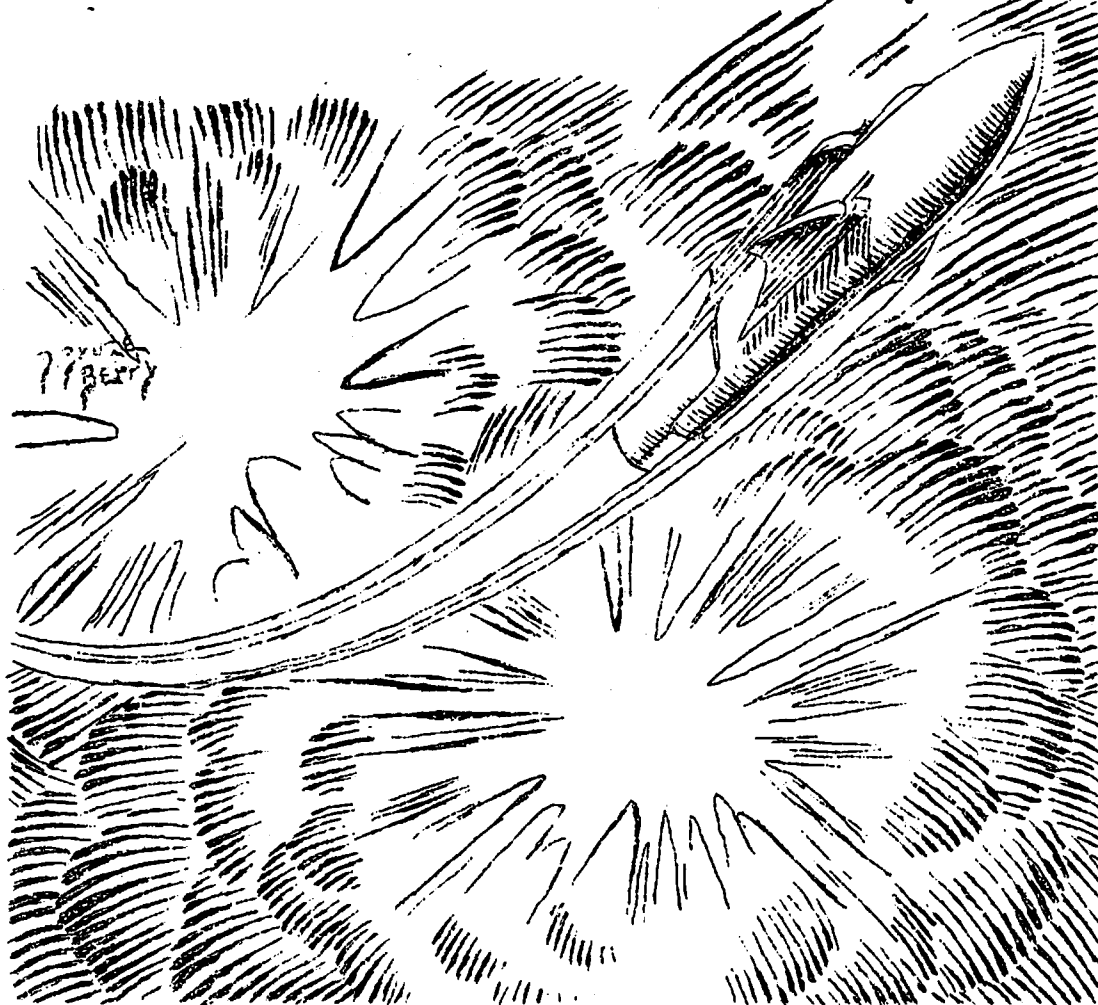
Thruout this first stage of CF's career, harmless, innocent alien races were being played for pawns by power hungry, evil Earthmen. The stories invariably concluded with an exposure of the dire villain, much to the surprise of all concerned. After reading one or two of these standard exposures, it wasn't really very hard to pick out the most improbable character as the villain of the plot. In this respect the stories never varied.

Inconsistencies in the plotwork were common. For instance, in CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE, CF and Joan are aboard a ship of Dr. Zarro's League of Doom. A few

words spoken above a whisper set the entire ship into an uproar, and Dr. Zarrb's men succeed in capturing the two intruders. After making good their escape by burning thru the door with his nine-planet's ring, CF and Joan move out along the corridor. A crew member approaches, and Joan lets out a shriek of dismay. The good Captain blasts the enemy with his recovered proton gun, only this time the scream goes completely unnoticed.

In CAPTAIN FUTURE'S CHALLENGE, despite the brand new feature title "If You Believe", a sort of scientific Believe it or Not usingspace facts, which clearly pointed out that space was not cold, we find this keen bit of editorial judgement lurking in the story. A ship had been blasted by The Wrecker, and the occupants of the gutted craft all died of the "cold of outer space". A single substitution of asfixiation for the words cold of outer space, would have been enough to make the matter read more intelligently. Even sloppy editing in these cases, would have been better than no editing at all, and it was startling how quickly such little inconsistencies managed to mount up. A few can be overlooked in any story, but not when they threaten to clog a whole section of the plot. In addition, the good Captain had a disagreeable habit of "remembering" things, facts, inventions, research, details he had conveniently forgotten to mention in preceding chapters. Strings of coincidence and rabbits from the hat were more common in some parts of a CF story than at a Magician's ball.

The stories had a certain unique quality about them tho. Despite the crudeness of the writing, Hamilton sometimes managed to inject several pieces of his excellent description. In the last stage of CF's existence, Hamilton was able to weave an emotional mood into each story. However, at the beginning he did not seem to bother giving emotional unity to a whole story, or even to major sections and incidents. Instead, certain specific incidents were picked and expanded, and were described in somewhat more detailed form than the rest of the story. For instance, in



CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE, CF and Joan have been dragged into the Sargasso Sea of Space, a whirlpool of ether currents in space, from which no ship or person had ever managed to return. Hamilton weaves an awesomely majestic feeling of the mysterious graveyard of spaceships extremely well. In order to escape, CF and Joan must strip the usable cyclotrons from the dead ships, and rig them into one super-ship. Hamilton's descriptions of the ships that are investigated, and especially of the pioneer ship and the log telling of its last, ill fated voyage, along with his description of the mystery alien vessel with its crew of octopus like creatures in suspended animation, are good examples of this.

But due to the slam-bang pace of these early stories, I'm afraid that in most cases, the entire plot suffered from lack of description. What was used, was lavishly poured onto those scenes that would create the most suspense and the most dynamic action-adventures. The writing was hurried, and there was never a chance for the reader to fully concentrate on an item; he was constantly being jerked from one interesting situation to another, until the whole array blurred slightly with the frantic story pace. The abruptness and the shifts in emotions were obvious, and somewhat discouraging at times. In CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE, we see that the Plutonian guide who has helped Captain Future is dying---

Tharb's fading, grotesque eyes clung to the face of Captain Future. "I---like you---Earthman," the Plutonian whispered.

Then his eyes dimmed as death relaxed his body, Captain Future felt a deep, moving emotion as he looked down on him.

He turned to Ezra Gurney, "where can I get full data about the moons?"

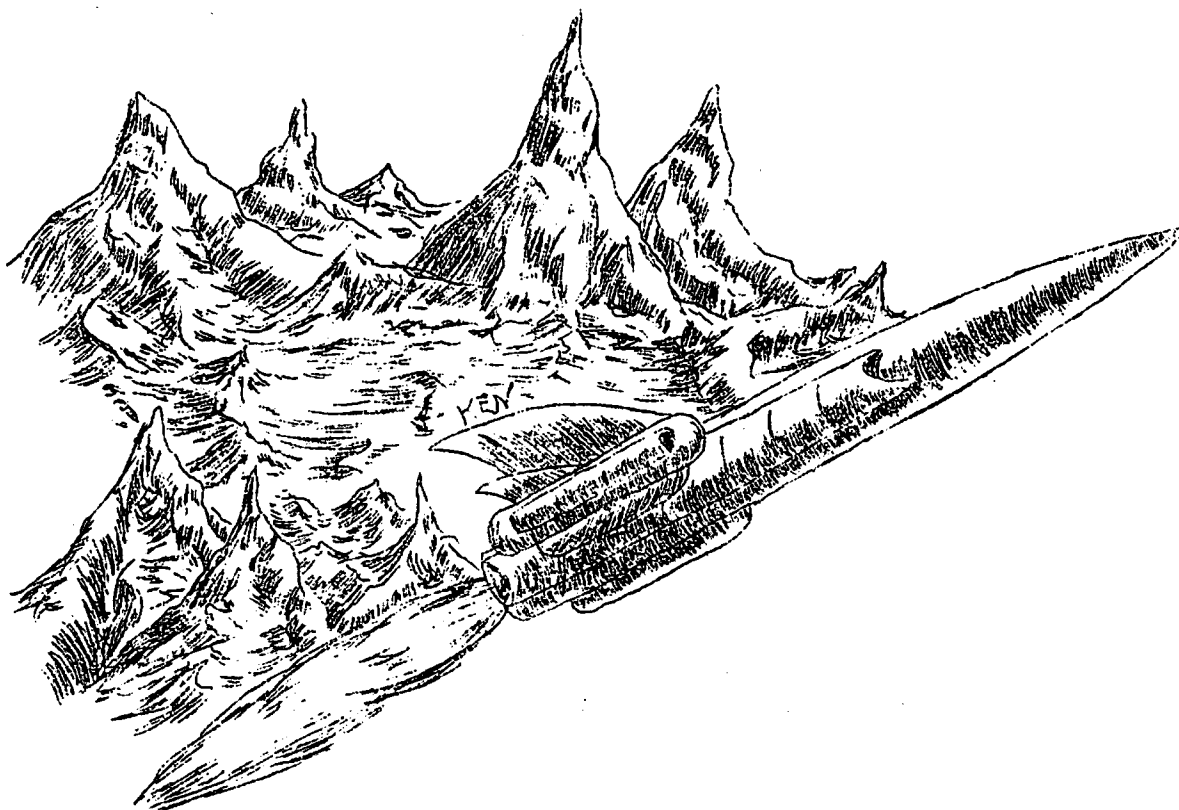
One wonders seriously how capable CF was of feeling any deep emotion after reading an entire story where the emotion shifts as abruptly as this. The entire first stage was filled with abrupt shifts in scene and emotion and concentration. The chapters were little mealadramas in themselves, and in the best cliff-hanging tradition, each chapter towards the end of the story closed with a bang, leaving the participants hanging in mid-air, while the story moved rapidly to somewhere front.

The latter part of each story had a helter-skelter feel about it. It usually took Hamilton a good thirty or forty pages to get warmed up to his plot. It was as if Hamilton sat down before his typer with some blank paper and a blank mind, and began to write. As the ideas began to form, he wrote more and more furiously and as the plot action began to shape up, he sped along at a demon pace, ignoring the inconsistencies in favor of keeping the story going. The beginnings of the early CF stories were not very good. The first thirty pages or so were devoted to building a background, to setting up the menace, reintroducing the Futuremen to newcomers in the audience, getting the basics of the story down pat. Then there was the problem of bringing the Futuremen and the menace together, and getting things rolling in the right way. This probably took some time and effort. But after the heroes and villains were safely introduced, and the background was sketched in, Hamilton could unleash his red haired marvel in full force. The latter half of each story invariably was the part most filled with action-suspense and high adventure, and Hamilton wove a tight plot in that section. Everything went off with keynote succession; action and thrills followed one another in a vertiable cascade of words.

From a chapter in CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE we find, for instance, that CF, Grag and their Plutonian have flown out towards the Plutonian's village to see a native who might be able to help them locate a mysterious hidden race on Pluto. As they approach the Moving Mountains, a dark black cruiser drops from the clouds, and before our heroes realize it, the League of Doom has blasted away the entire tail assembly of the light flyer, and they are plunging to the ice below. They fall, but quick witted CF makes a dive for the remaining atomic motor in the nose of the craft, and against impossible odds, somehow manages to bring the flyer down on the hard ice and snow safely. But they are not out of danger, for they've landed right in the path of the Moving Mountains, a range of glacier peaks which travel continually around the planet at a fantastic rate of speed. The trio runs like hell, but they're cut off by an ice clogged river. Caught between the sub-zero, freezing, super-turbulent waters, and the Moving Mountains, Captain Future, keen witted devil that he is, orders them to heave a massive ice slab into the river, and the three manage to hop on board, and are carried by the murderous currents out of the path of the Moving

Mountains. But the life saving torrents are now a danger, threatening to toss them off the ice float and into the boiling waters, and they must work desperately against the pitching, twisting block of ice, to carve hand holds in the ice. They are temporarily safe, but unless they find some method of getting safely to shore, they will soon be swept over the rapids and out into the Icy Sea. The pessimistic Plutonian for the fifth time gives them up for lost, but Captain Future, always alert and ready, decided the only thing to do is to hold to the handholds, and try to use their weight to manover the ice block as best they can. In several thrill packed paragraphs, they are swept over the rapids and out into the Icy Sea. But all is not safe yet, for the Icy Sea is inhabited by gastly sea monsters, and sure enough, one of the worst of the lot, a Bilbur, rises up from the waters to crush them to mincemeat. In a flash CF draws his proton gun, and with a flick of his fingers to maxium power, blazes away at the creature. Unphases in the least, the Bilbur moves towards the ice float relentlessly. The good Captain takes careful aim, and blasts at the creature's eye. This action merely enrages the beast still further, and it charged at a faster pace. Cool and calm as ever, Captain Future keeps the destructive beam trained on the Bilbur's eye, and just as the beast rears over the ice float to deliver the smashing blow that will kill them all, the beam burns thru skin and bones and penetrates the creature's brain. But as the monster falls, a paw overturns the ice block (the same one that went hurtling over the rapids and came down right side up), and sends the occupants sprawling into the sub-artic waters. The Plutonian villagers manage to save Captain Future and his guide, but Grag, the metal robot, has sunk into the icy waters. Grag finally walks back to shore, and Captain Future manages to get that interview.

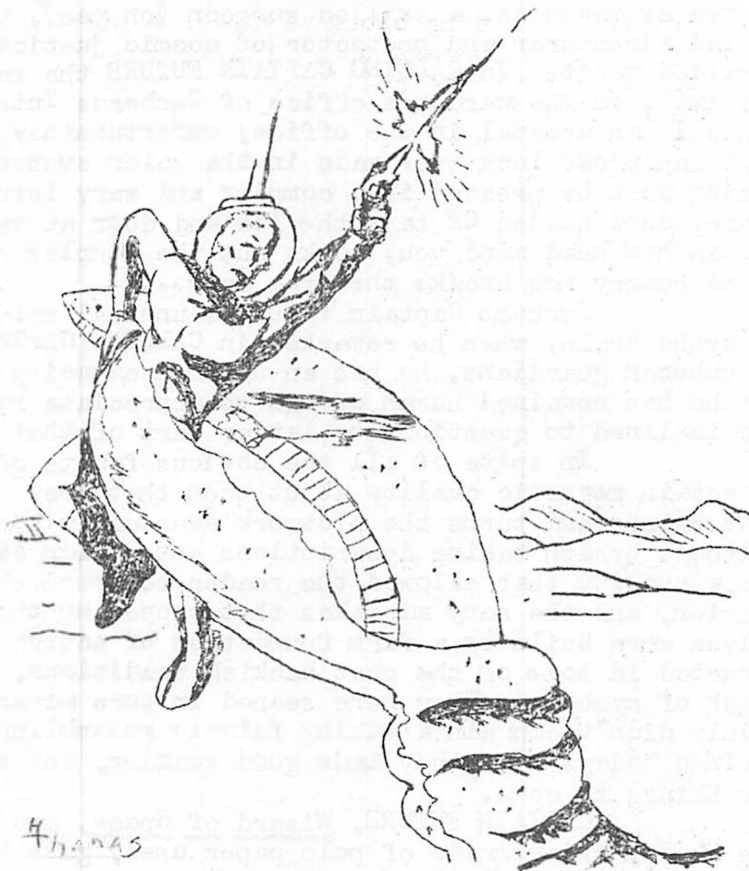
In addition to the inconsistent plot structure, the coincidences and the rabbits from the hat, the sharp shift in emotional content, underdevelopment of detail and description, and the stereotyped plots, Hamilton engaged in a sort of adjective madness when it came to describing his character. It was if he feared that perhaps someone might doubt the merits of his champion, and so he, the author, must continually explain to the reader Captain Future's many and varried talents, his many attributes, and in general, what a grand guy he was.



Captain Future was billed as the greatest scientist in the solar system, and no story in this first stage escaped without that statement being repeated at least six times. Despite this claim to fame, Captain Future never really got around to performing or explaining any real science in the stories. For four issues he was the most unscientific scientific detective cluttering up the space ways. Occasionally Hamilton would throw in various tidbits of science, especially towards the latter part of the story. At times these were remarkably clever and ingenious, at other times they were a bit too deductive to pass as even pseudo-science. Perhaps Hamilton, like Poul Anderson, was the type of writer who boned up on his science before writing a story, to be certain he would get the facts straight, and like Anderson, little of the research showed up after the story was written. But considering the amazing number of scientific mistakes these first four stories contained, I rather doubt it.

Captain Future was a super-inventor to end all super inventors, surpassing even such standbys as Ton Swift and Frank Reedman others of their kind. CF is credited with inventing, among other things, the invisibility disk, a telepathic disk, an ionic detector used to trail space ships thru the voids, a mental eraser, a super vibration space drive, a time machine, a machine to change metals from type to another (how the world could have used that one), and had done work on numerous others. As a matter of fact, for five or six issues Hamilton insisted that CF had done some sort of research along the same lines as the scientific menace which he happened to be facing at the time. Each story in this stage of his career, contained at least one brand new and unusual invention. Hamilton found it useful to introduce the Futuremen at times, just as they were completing their latest new invention. The scene shifted from the menace or whatever had occurred, to the moon laboratory, just in time for the readers to view the final testing of some new and startling super gadget.

Despite the fact that several very ingenious and useful inventions were produced during that four story span, and later on at a less frantic rate, the Wizard of Space seemed to forget about them completely when the next story was on the stands. For instance, Captain Future's element changing machine would have been of special use in OUTLAWS OF THE MOON, a story presented later in the series. In this tale CF is treated as an outlaw, and greedy criminal mining companies are digging out the hidden radium reserves on the moon. The ionic tracer found use in several other stories, as did the super vibration drive, but both these machines should have become standard pieces of equipment. It was rather distracting to realize that somewhere out beyond Mars CF had "lost the trail" of whoever he was after, when the ionic tracer had been used in the previous story. It always seemed to me to be a horrible waste of talent and also rather inefficient of the good Captain not to utilize his brain children in other stories. While it may have been impractical to carry the entire load of inventions on board the Comet, CF had easy access to them at his moon base, and in addition, many of his opponents's inventions were displayed in Captain Future's Trophy Room, and might have been put to good use. Such disrespect for practical application of super-gadgets did not set too well with the readers, who expressed themselves in the letter column on the matter in detail.



Not only was Captain Future a marvelous scientist, a super inventor, the greatest hypnotist and ventrilloquist in the system, the system's second greatest master of disguise, a skilled surgeon (oh yes), and a perfectly trained combat styled adventurer and protector of cosmic justice, but he was a mathematician of unheralded merit. In CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE the intrepid adventurer is trapped by criminals in the warden's office of Cerberus Interplanetary Prison. But fortunately there is an arsenal in the office; unfortunately, it is locked and guarded by the most foolproof lock ever made in the solar system. Certain buttons on the door facing must be pressed in a complex and very intricate order. With mere moments to spare, cool headed CF taps the lock and door at various points with a loop of metal, and in his head mind you, works out the complex mathematical formula, just as the blood hungry mob breaks thru the door...

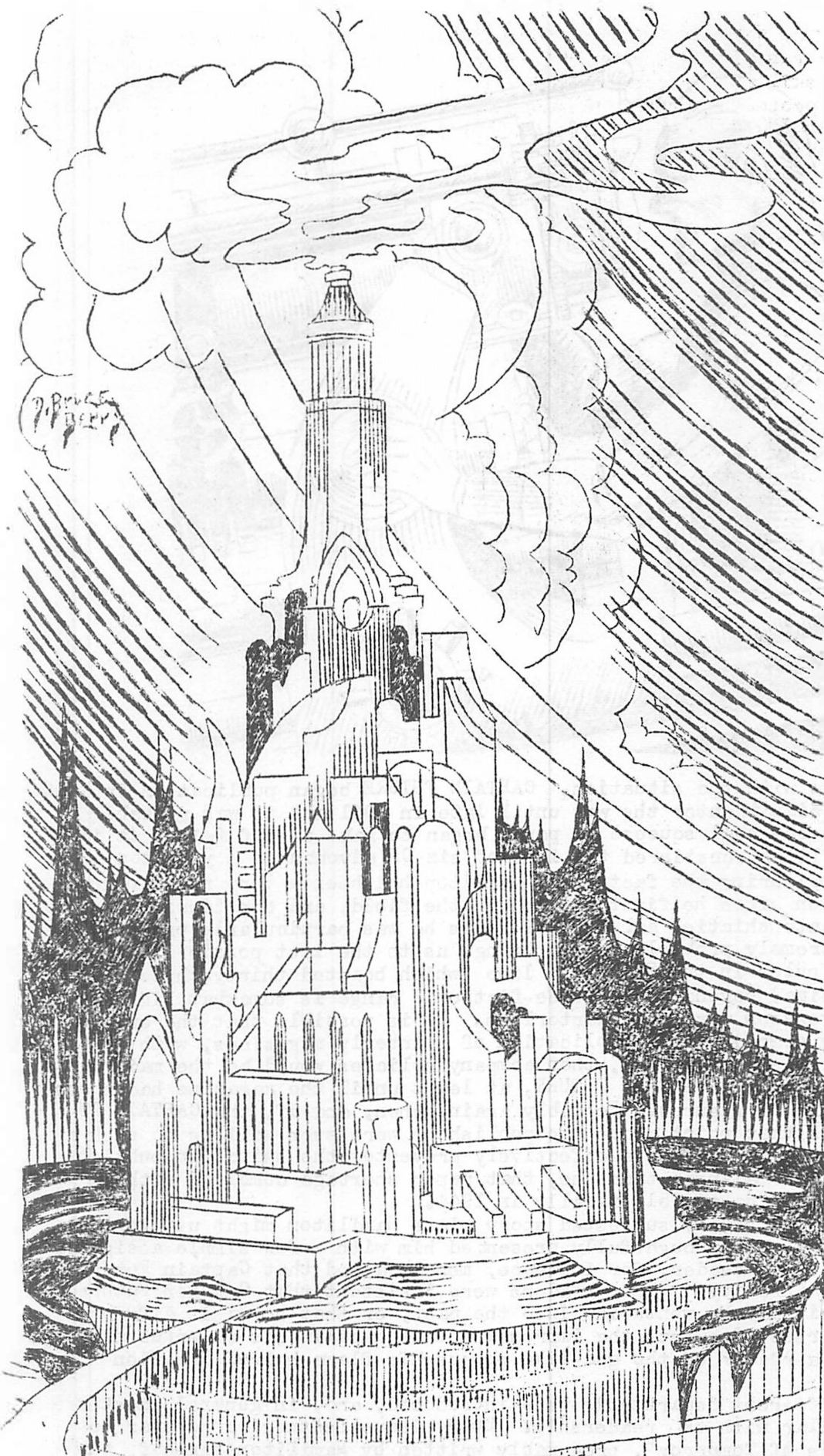
Perhaps Captain Future's unusual scientific abilities were best summed up by the Brain, when he remarked in CALLING CAPTAIN FUTURE that "reared as he was by us unhuman guardians, he has an unhuman capacity for concentration and research. Yet he has remained human enough to appreciate human needs and desires and hopes." I'm inclined to question the latter part of that statement.

In spite of all the obvious faults of those first four stories, there was a certain magnetic quality about them that drew the reader and held him no matter what twists and turns the plotwork eventually took. It was a quality that made Hamilton's breath taking descriptions and action sequences all the more realistic, it was a quality that allowed the reader to overlook bad writing style, poor characterization, and the many mistakes that popped up thruout the stories. The tales themselves were built on a firm foundation of action plotting, and were carefully constructed in some of the most hackish traditions, and they ended with a thundering clash of symbols. They were steeped in pure adventure and spaceopera, and they certainly didn't contain anything faintly resembling decent literature, as literature is defined today. But they made good reading, and they were only a vague hint of better things to come.

CAPTAIN FUTURE, Wizard of Space, generally ran 130 pages each issue. But the cheap, thick grade of pulp paper used, gave the magazine a bulky appearance, and made it appear to contain more material than it actually did. Advertisements cut the page count inside from 130 to 110 pages, and medium large-sized print shortened the actual word count still further. The ads were of the usual pulp variety; you could cure that nasty rupture in half a dozen Medically Proven ways, make millions of dollars in your spare time, build a business at home, take home study courses in every subject imaginable, borrow money by mail, obtain party records and books of various types, become an auto mechanic in six weeks, and purchase literally thousands of fascinating gadgets. When the final word count in an average issue was totaled up, our current AMAZING with its 144 digest-size pages and smaller typeface contained more wordage than any issue of CAPTAIN FUTURE.

The Captain Future stories themselves were billed as being "novel length". They were far from being novel length stories tho. Perhaps they might have filled an average Ace or Avalon offering, and a few of them might have filled out the short-short novels Doubleday offers now and again, but they couldn't be considered novel length tales, not by the standards we judge a novel length story by today. The first few issues presented 86 to 105 pages of Captain Future, but as the magazine progressed, the length dropped back into the low seventies, and there it stayed until the appearance of PLANETS IN PERIL, much later in the series. After the appearance of PLANETS the page count crawled back into the eighties and low nineties.

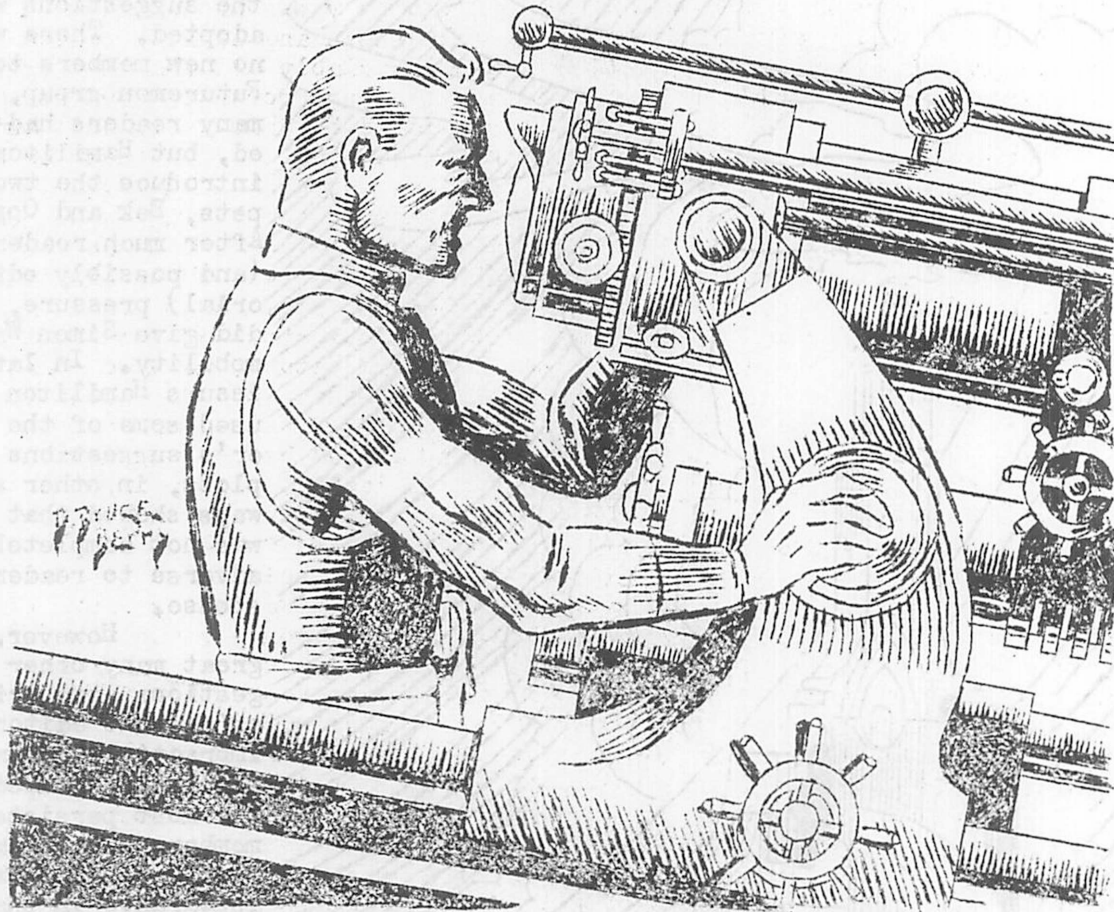
The second issue introduced a letter column-editorial combination, mostly letter column, called "Under Observation". The editorials rarely took up more than a column of print, and the remaining pages were given over to letters from the readers. The editor led off the second issue with what is undoubtedly one of the tripe expressions of the magazine industry, namely, that this was the reader's magazine, and his word would be law. Strangely enough, CAPTAIN FUTURE seemed to be one of the few magazines that actually was guided, occasionally, by the demands of the readers. I say seemed here because I have my doubts as to whether any magazine does more than politely listen to the requests of its readers. Considering that many of the suggestions were concerned with changing or altering the basic Captain Future background arrangement, I'm inclined to believe that the editors were a little careful about some of the suggestions the readers brought forth. There is little doubt



tho, that some of the suggestions were adopted. There were no new members to the Futuremen group, as many readers had wanted, but Hamilton did introduce the two pets, Eek and Oog. After much reader (and possibly editorial) pressure, he did give Simon Wright mobility. In later issues Hamilton even used some of the reader's suggestions for plots, in other small ways showed that he was not completely adverse to reader response.

However, a great many other suggestions were written off by the editor as impractical, or were pointedly ignored. The most persistent member of this large clan made its first appearance in that second issue's letter column, and died when the magazine finally folded. This was the constant clammer to change CF's publishing schedule from a quarterly to a monthly, or at least bi-monthly. I can think of only three reasons why the magazine remained a quarterly. Possibly the paper shortage caused by the advent of WWII prevented the magazine from switching to a bi-monthly schedule, or it might have been company policy, or Hamilton might have thought the grind of turning out a CF story every two months would be simply too much.

I somehow doubt that the paper



shortage had much to do with the situation. CAPTAIN FUTURE began publication in 1940 and the United States didn't enter the war until late in 1941 and it was probably later than that before the real squeeze on paper began to make itself felt. It is possible too that Hamilton considered the idea of six CF adventures a year too much to handle. However, considering the fact that Hamilton had been a very regular producer of science fiction since he first broke into the field, and considering the fact that during the late thirties and early forties he was particularly prolific, I don't feel this is extremely probable. This brings us to the last possibility. My experience with other pulps in the Thrilling line (which boasted thirty-three different titles at one time) beyond the science-fictional range is somewhat limited, but the examples I have seen were all quarterlies. It is possible that the entire chain of magazines was geared to the publication of quarterly magazines, with a few extra exceptions. If this is the case, then company policies would be the main factor in preventing a bi-monthly CAPTAIN FUTURE, at least until the magazine had proven its worth with rising sales figures. Possibly again, when, and if, the CAPTAIN FUTURE sales ever reaches that point where the publishers were ever willing to risk a bi-monthly venture, the paper shortage effectively prevented the switch in publishing schedule. There is some indication tho, that paper shortage combined with a low sales forced the magazine to fold finally in 1944.

The readers helpfully suggested story plots Hamilton might use for Captain Future's adventures, and thoughtfully presented him with a few simple assignments to liven up the plots. One reader, for instance, merely asked that Captain Future be sent to the edge of infinity. Other readers were insistent that Captain Future change the course of history by venturing into the past, or that he visit different stars around the universe. One gets the impression that Hamilton's cheerful propaganda convinced many a reader of the god-like powers his flame haired creation possessed.

Several different departments were introduced, and, in general, most proved to be very popular with the readership. Every issue featured a regular department called "Worlds of Tomorrow", presumably written by Hamilton himself, tho no author was ever listed anywhere in the magazine. The feature presented a close

look at whatever planet, moon, astriod or other solar body Captain Future happened to be adventuring on or near in that issue. A map of the body was presented with each installment, with the various points of interest clearly shown and labeled. These planetary maps always showed only one hemisphere, and invariably all the interesting and fascinating places of interest were found in the hemisphere portrayed by the map. One wondered at times if the other side of the planet could be completely dull and barren, as it apparently held nothing whatsoever of interest to the sightseer or reader. The text itself described the world, its interesting landmarks, and filled in with behind-the-scenes history and folklore. In later issues Hamilton was to weave an extremely fascinating history into his Captain Future stories, and this column filled in with some additional "contemporary" future history. For me, these historical notes were the most interesting part of the column. Several columns in particular, those dealing with Mars and Venus, and the ones that told the story of the first Earthmen to reach the planets, and the descriptions of Pluto and Saturn, were outstanding. Eventually, of course, Captain Future ran out of worlds to adventure on, moons to visit or astriods to explore, and took his little group out of the solar system. However, the feature was continued. Several moons not covered before were explained, as were some major astriods. The Comet was described in detail, and the moon base was portrayed, Earth was even examined, and at last, several stars yielded a few planets. The feature was continued right up until the magazine folded.

Another feature that proved to be popular, up to a point, was one titled "The Futuremen, Companions of Captain Future". I suspect that Hamilton wrote this one too. (maybe the magazine did remain a quarterly at Hamilton's request. Writing three-fourths of a science fiction magazine every two months, or even every quarter, sounds like work). This feature covered the Futuremen themselves, and explained a little more about them than was explained in the character introductions to each CF story. The first character covered was, naturally, CF himself. In short order Otho, Grag, and the Brain were described. The feature then went on to Ezra Gurney and Joan Randall. After finally covering all these possibilities, the column turned to showing some of the early adventures of a young Captain Future; before he became the solar system's greatest hero. It is interesting to note that even from the appearance of volume 1 number 1, the premise of Captain Future is an accepted fact. Even as we read the first issue we realize that CF has fought past criminals, and has built himself a strong reputation already. Apparently Hamilton didn't care to go about the somewhat difficult task of building a magnificent CF from scratch, and so these adventures related in the "Futuremen" column are the only guide the reader has of Captain Future's earlier life. These little episodes, relating his first case, life on the moon, his battle with the Charleton, the encounter with the dream planet and so on, are all uniformly crummy when it comes to readability. They were much too short to begin with, poorly written in all cases, and featured poor plots, if they had plots at all. Then too, once a heroic stereotype has been established (and it was six issued before these extra little adventures were featured), any adventurers, no matter how well written or presented, that violate the accepted stereotype, don't seem to be as "good" as the usual adventures. Captain Future's stereotype involved a grown man, a younger CF just didn't seem to fit the pattern, and the miserable writing and presentation of these incidents didn't help matters any.

Another department called "The Future of Captain Future" was devoted to a brief preview of the next issue's thrilling CF adventure. The feature was created in the third issue, and was continued right up thru the final issue. Be it noted here that this department was the first to make use of the stock illos, (beyond the contents page, that is. The contents page was gaced with a stock illo each and every issue). The fourth issue saw the true budding of stock illustrations. For those of you with tender young minds who might not know what a stock illustration is, I will attempt to give a brief description. In this case they were small box-shaped drawings, usually not more than an inch by an inch-and-a-half, tho several were three by two. Each little rectangle showed a mineateur science fictional scene. One showed Captain Future holding a test tube, another showed a comet streaking across black space, another showed Joan Randall holding a blaster, another showed a ship being sliced in half by some strange ray, another showed a spaceman firing on a dinosaur, and so on thru as many hackish sfional situations as you could care for. These little squares were first placed beside the enlarged first letter of the first sentence of the first paragraph of each new chapter, presumably to help make the pages of solid type a bit more attractive. Stock illos were used over and over again, and while

it was considered permissible to add illos to the files from time to time, no stock illo was ever discarded. Eventually stock illos were used not only at the beginning of every chapter, but at every change of scene, and sometimes they were injected by paragraph breaks and in the center of a column of print just for the sheer hell of it. Most of the stock illos were quite good, some were ridiculous, and some were just poorly drawn. Even after CAPTAIN FUTURE golded, the stock illos that were particular to CAPTAIN FUTURE were transferred and were used by THRILLING WONDER STORIES and STARTLING STORIES. It is rather interesting to pick up a copy of STARTLING from the fifties, long after the Captain Future character had died its final death, and see several Captain Future stock illos being placed in the different stories.

In the second issue the editor hinted obviously that a club for the readers was in the making, and sure enough, with the fourth issue, a new club called The Futuremen was unveiled. The club was open to all members of CAPTAIN FUTURE, and the editor promised that the club members would have an active voice in determining the number of Futuremen the CF group would contain, they would decide on which planets the good Captain was to adventure, and they would co-operate with the author in planning whether CF should investigate time travel, the fifth dimension and suchlike. Sounds rather like an elite dictatorship, doesn't it? I wonder what Hamilton thought of it all. While doubtless members of the club exerted a certain amount of influence, just as the readers exerted a certain amount of influence, I seriously doubt that the club actually had much to do with the stories and how they were planned or written. Rather, it was a participation device presented by the magazine to make the readers feel more a part of the magazine. I understand a great many other pulps which featured central heroes and appealed to a juvenile audience, had the same practice of starting reader clubs and handing out membership badges, rings, cards, etc.

To join the club, readers had only to mutilate their magazine by ripping off part of the cover so that the title loco with the date was visible, and clip out the membership blank inside the magazine. Then he sent these along with a self addressed, stamped envelope. In return the reader would be sent his free silver membership card, which fitted his wallet, and a set of the club rules which he must promise to obey. I would be interested in knowing exactly what those rules were, or what the membership card looked like. The only rule I have been able to deduct from careful reading of the letter column, was that the member agreed to write a letter of comment every so often. In any event, the club was popular with the readers, tho the things one had to do to his magazine to join the club, were not. I sympathize.

With the third issue Hamilton introduced a game called Compound Chess, woven into the usual Captain Future story. The editor asked for reader opinion on the game, and promised that if it proved popular, Hamilton would write a short article on the game, and if the idea of cosmic games was approved, Hamilton would introduce some solar game in each and every Captain Future story. (One gets the impression that Thrilling considered Hamilton something like the office slave, always on call at a moment's notice.) The proposed article on Compound Chess never appeared, tho several additional solar games did find their way into the Captain Future stories. In general, the whole idea of solar games was a disappointment. Compound Chess, for instance, was never really explained clearly, and leaves lots of room for questions on rules and exactly how the game was placed. The game is played on a board with one thousand squares (why a thousand?) between two persons, maybe more. Each player was given ninety-eight pieces, representing the different elements (today we would have to hand out 104), and the players took turns using their chips to create different compounds. Naturally, this required a bit of skill and attention to chemical valence and suchlike. No mention was made of penalties being leveled if an impossible compound was played. Whichever player used all his chips first, won the game. If the player wasn't careful he might find himself left with several impossible pieces, such a helium and chlorine, with no possible way to match these elements against his own or his opponents compounds. This game, by the way, was supposed to have been developed by Captain Future himself. Compound Chess was by far the most interesting and original of the solar games presents, the others were only vaguely outlined, and often the reader knew only their names. Radium Roulette and three dimensional billiards for instance.

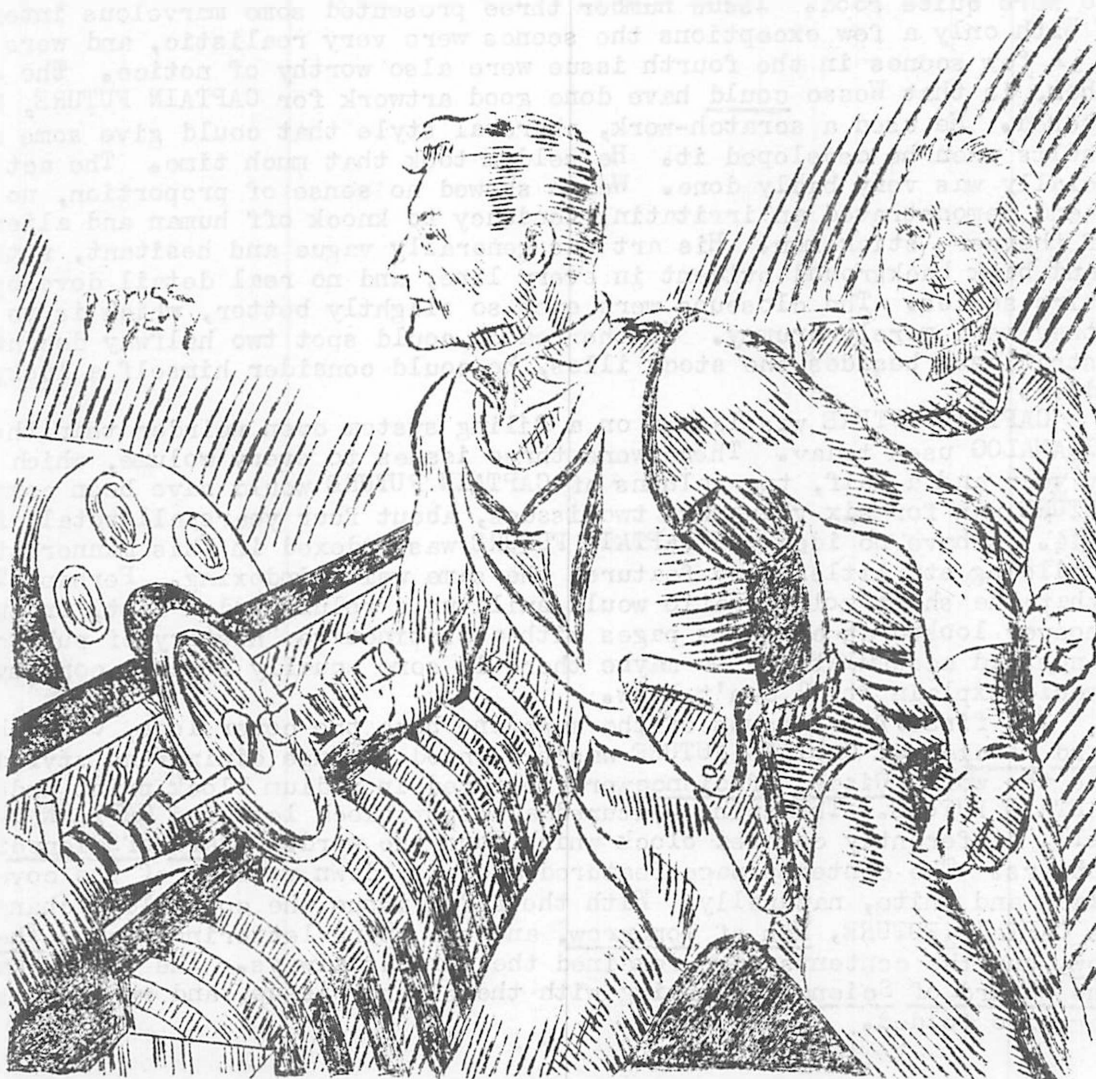
As expected, several other Thrilling publications were plugged regularly thru the pages of CF. GREEN GHOST DETECTIVE, SEE MAGAZINE, AIR FLYING STORIES, REAL LIFE COMICS, WAR STORIES, NAVY FLYING STORIES, etc etc etc were mentioned thru-out CF's publishing history. It was convenient to fill that blank space at the end

of the stories with a stock illo, and a friendly work about some other Thrilling publication that might be of interest to the average CAPTAIN FUTURE reader.

In the main, however, the two other Thrilling science fiction magazines, THRILLING WONDER STORIES, and STARTLING STORIES, SEE MAGAZINE, and TRUE LIFE COMICS (Approved by Parents and Educators Everywhere), were the publications most frequently plugged. The fourth issue brought forth an advertisement for a small herd of Thrilling Comics, including issue number one of STARTLING COMICS. Good eyesight enables to reader to observe from the mineateur line reproduction of the comic's cover, that it featured the adventures of a new comicbook hero, a character called Captain Future. Captain Future in the comic books was quite different from his fifteen cent counterpart. He featured slightly wavy hair, a strong, handsome, determined face, skin tight uniform with a cape even, and a lightening streak across his chest. I'll attempt to cover the comic book version of Captain Future in the the near future, since it's a complete story in itself.

Also offered to readers of CAPTAIN FUTURE, (and probably also to readers of THRILLING WONDER and STARTLING), were eight (count 'em) scientifiction booklets, all for a quarter, a bargain then and now. Also there were one hundred copies of Garrett Smith's book, BETWEEN WORLDS offered, which would be bought for fifty cents while the supply lasted. (the offer was introduced in the fourth issue, and the supply lasted quite some time).

In addition to the regular Captain Future stories, the letter column, the departments and ads, there was room left in every issue for one or two short stories, and an installment of a classic reprint story, presented serial fashion. During the first stage of Captain Future's existence, most of the short stories presented were uniformly inferior. I somehow got the impression that the editors had made some



strikingly bad choices in short stories for their other two science fiction magazines, and were fondering the bastard children off onto the young CAPTAIN FUTURE. Horace Gold, maturity seeker extraordinaire, was present those first few issues, and his stories were slightly better than the general gastly run. After CAPTAIN FUTURE gained a year's age, the editors began to present it with a better quality of short story, and in several cases some extremely good shorts were printed. But not very often.

Even tho a quarterly, CAPTAIN FUTURE presented a serial. This was the Classic Reprint of older stf stories that, for one reason or another, were presented so that the younger readers who had missed them the first time round, could read (and groan) and marvel. (Reprinted by Popular Demand was the excuse most of the Thrilling stf mags used.) The first such class was Doc Keller's THE HUMAN TERMITES. Allowing for much mildew and dust for age, this AMAZING STORIES reprint stood up fairly well. Discounting some of the gastly scientific flaws, the unKellerlike crudeness of writing, and some of the plotting flaws, the story presented a number of unique and interesting story plots. My only major grumble is with the particular brand of Keller propaganda, present in all Keller stories to a greater or less degree, showed up in this tale in full force, and sometimes managed to halt the story while it rambled on in clever, but often exasperating style, about the wrongs of the worlds and how human nature could be improved. MUTANT IN SPACE followed THE HUMAN TERMITES in the fifth issue, and was a total and complete waste of time and page space.

Practically all the interior artwork for the first few CAPTAIN FUTURE adventures was done by H. W. Wesso. Practically all of the Captain Future artwork ever done by H. W. Wesso was remarkably rotten and crude, even for that artist. The stock illos were presumably also done by Wesso, they seemed to show his style, and these were quite good. Each of those first four early issues, and right on up until the publication of THE LOST WORLD OF TIME showed a small illustration of the villain. These also were quite good. Issue number three presented some marvelous interior artwork. With only a few exceptions the scenes were very realistic, and were well executed. A few scenes in the fourth issue were also worthy of notice. The conclusion then, is that Wesso could have done good artwork for CAPTAIN FUTURE, he just never bothered. He used a scratch-work, charcoal style that could give some interesting results when he developed it. He seldom took that much time. The action artwork especially was very badly done. Wesso showed no sense of proportion, no perspective, and demonstrated an irritating tendency to knock off human and alien figures as if they were stick men. His art was generally vague and hesitant, with poor planning and back background evident in every line, and no real detail development in the entire series. The closeups were ever so slightly better, which is to say at times they were merely crummy. If the reader could spot two halfway decently done illustrations, besides the stock illos, he could consider himself a lucky lucky reader indeed.

CAPTAIN FUTURE was issued on a filing system even weirder than the one ASTOUNDING-ANALOG uses today. There were three issues to every volume, which means that every year and a half, two volumes of CAPTAIN FUTURE would have been completed. CAPTAIN FUTURE ran for six volumes, two issues, about four years all total, from 1940 to 1944. I have no idea why CAPTAIN FUTURE was indexed in this manner, the other two Thrilling stf titles also featured the same weird indexing. Perhaps Thrilling felt that the short volume ratio would build up a volume index fast, and might impress whoever looked at contents pages with a distinctive "history of publication" the magazines had accumulated. Or maybe there is some equally obscure company policy that would explain it; I don't know.

The first four issues of the magazine bore the cover loco, CAPTAIN FUTURE, Wizard of Science. CAPTAIN FUTURE was presented in huge cinimarama styled letters, while the words Wizard of Science were featured in medium block print under the blazing CAPTAIN FUTURE. The spine featured a bright block lettered CAPTAIN FUTURE, with a small, differently colored block which bore the words Wizard of Science in much smaller letters. The contents page featured a scaled down version of the cover loco done in black and white, naturally. With the fifth issue the cover loco changed, and became CAPTAIN FUTURE, Man of Tomorrow, and the spine lettering became The Man Of Tomorrow, but the contents page remained the same as always. The spine changed back to The Wizard of Science lettering with the sixth issue, and remained so until the magazine folded.

it was considered permissible to add illos to the files from time to time, no stock illo was ever discarded. Eventually stock illos were used not only at the beginning of every chapter, but at every change of scene, and sometimes they were injected by paragraph breaks and in the center of a column of print just for the sheer hell of it. Most of the stock illos were quite good, some were ridiculous, and some were just poorly drawn. Even after CAPTAIN FUTURE golded, the stock illos that were particular to CAPTAIN FUTURE were transferred and were used by THRILLING WONDER STORIES and STARTLING STORIES. It is rather interesting to pick up a copy of STARTLING from the fifties, long after the Captain Future character had died its final death, and see several Captain Future stock illos being placed in the different stories.

In the second issue the editor hinted obviously that a club for the readers was in the making, and sure enough, with the fourth issue, a new club called The Futuremen was unveiled. The club was open to all members of CAPTAIN FUTURE, and the editor promised that the club members would have an active voice in determining the number of Futuremen the CF group would contain, they would decide on which planets the good Captain was to adventure, and they would co-operate with the author in planning whether CF should investigate time travel, the fifth dimension and suchlike. Sounds rather like an elite dictatorship, doesn't it? I wonder what Hamilton thought of it all. While doubtless members of the club exerted a certain amount of influence, just as the readers exerted a certain amount of influence, I seriously doubt that the club actually had much to do with the stories and how they were planned or written. Rather, it was a participation device presented by the magazine to make the readers feel more a part of the magazine. I understand a great many other pulps which featured central heroes and appealed to a juvenile audience, had the same practice of starting reader clubs and handing out membership badges, rings, cards, etc.

To join the club, readers had only to mutilate their magazine by ripping off part of the cover so that the title loco with the date was visible, and clip out the membership blank inside the magazine. Then he sent these along with a self addressed, stamped envelope. In return the reader would be sent his free silver membership card, which fitted his wallet, and a set of the club rules which he must promise to obey. I would be interested in knowing exactly what those rules were, or what the membership card looked like. The only rule I have been able to deduct from careful reading of the letter column, was that the member agreed to write a letter of comment every so often. In any event, the club was popular with the readers, tho the things one had to do to his magazine to join the club, were not, in my sympathize.

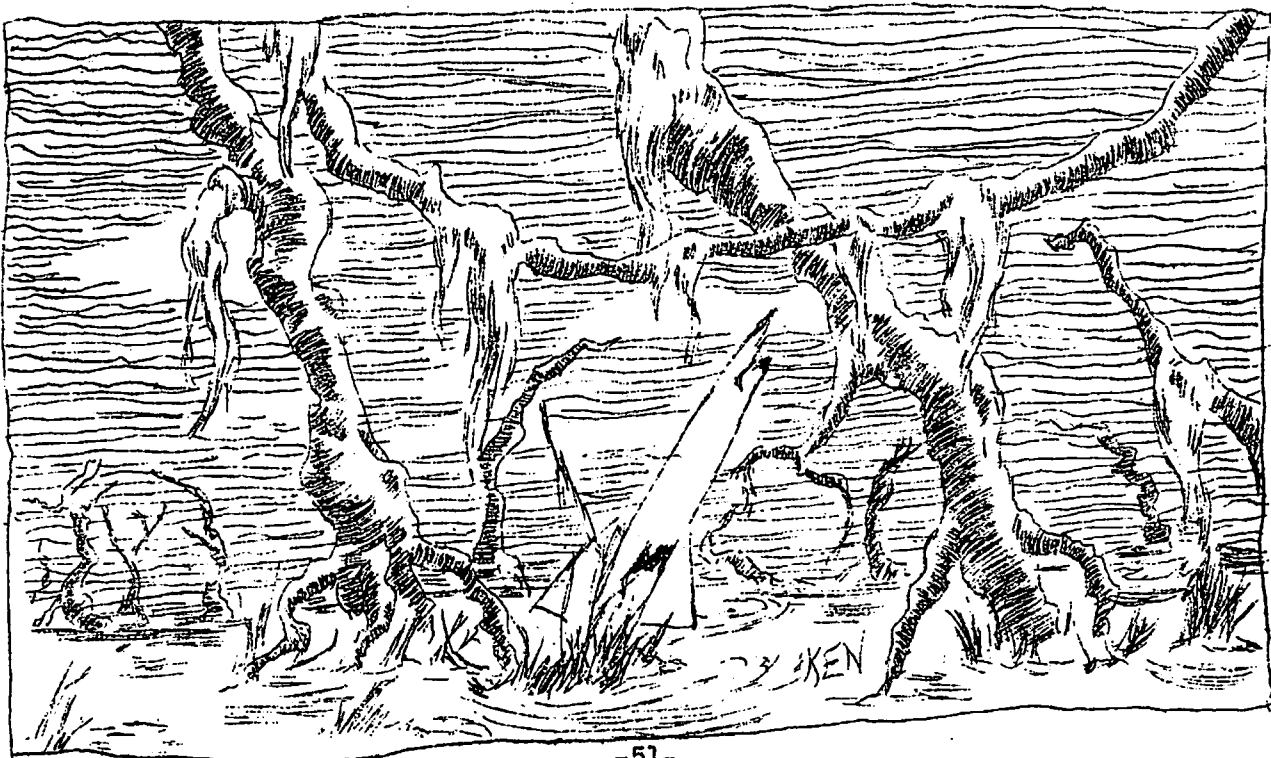
With the third issue Hamilton introduced a game called Compound Chess, woven into the usual Captain Future story. The editor asked for reader opinion on the game, and promised that if it proved popular, Hamilton would write a short article on the game, and if the idea of cosmic games was approved, Hamilton would introduce some solar game in each and every Captain Future story. (One gets the impression that Thrilling considered Hamilton something like the office slave, always on call at a moment's notice.) The proposed article on Compound Chess never appeared, tho several additional solar games did find their way into the Captain Future stories. In general, the whole idea of solar games was a disappointment. Compound Chess, for instance, was never really explained clearly, and leaves lots of room for questions on rules and exactly how the game was played. The game is played on a board with one thousand squares (why a thousand?) between two persons, maybe more. Each player was given ninety-eight pieces, representing the different elements (today we would have to hand out 104), and the players took turns using their chips to create different compounds. Naturally, this required a bit of skill and attention to chemical valence and suchlike. No mention was made of penalties being leveled if an impossible compound was played. Whichever player used all his chips first, won the game. If the player wasn't careful he might find himself left with several impossible pieces, such a helium and chlorine, with no possible way to match these elements against his own or his opponents compounds. This game, by the way, was supposed to have been developed by Captain Future himself. Compound Chess was by far the most interesting and original of the solar games presents, the others were only vaguely outlined, and often the reader knew only their names. Radium Roulette and three dimensional billiards for instance.

As expected, several other Thrilling Publications were plugged regularly thru the pages of CF. GREEN GHOST DETECTIVE, SEE MAGAZINE, AIR FLYING STORIES, REAL LIFE COMICS, WAR STORIES, NAVY FLYING STORIES, etc etc etc were mentioned thru-out CF's publishing history. It was convenient to fill that blank space at the end

The stories underwent a rapid change after the publication of THE TRIUMPH OF CAPTAIN FUTURE in the fourth issue. By the fifth issue the changing style was plain to see. Perhaps Hamilton had begun to take some of the criticisms directed towards his stereotyped writing style to heart. With the publication of that fifth issue, which featured CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SEVEN SPACE STONES, Hamilton proved to his readership that the good Captain could engage in well written, well planned, thoughtfully plotted adventure. The fifth CF story had a certain smoothness of writing that the earlier tales had lacked. The backgrounds were well handled and were well developed, the characters, while still leaving much to be desired, were sketched in more carefully than before, and they seemed much more human than they had in past issues. The cliff-hanging plotting was on its way out, and the plot and action scenes were executed with a careful style that heightened the suspense element of the story. The description was good throughout, though still sketchy, and in several places the description equalled the best descriptions of the earlier stories. Hamilton also stopped bragging and boosting the virtues of his hero, and CF seemed much more believable than he had before without it. The rabbit from the hat plotting also suffered a happy decline, though it never actually disappeared from any of the CF stories. In general, these new stories gave evidence of a new type of CF emerging, and it showed that perhaps Hamilton was beginning to take his hero a bit more seriously.

CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SEVEN SPACE STONES, STAR TRAIL TO GLORY and THE MAGICIAN OF MARS, the first three stories in the second stage, were sort of inbetween adventures, bridging the gap between the old style CF, and the new CF that was to be. All three of these stories featured the detective-space adventure plotting, but it was much different from the stereotyped-crime-in-space stories that had marked the first four stories. The writing was a bit more advanced, there was not as much pure action, and the action was handled more carefully. Plotwork enjoyed more attention than it had previously had, and there was a very definite touch of imagination and ingenuity inserted into these stories that set them apart from the early adventures. These bits of imagination, and the better plotting and the careful writing style, gave the reader a brief preview of the newly emerging Captain Future.

There is no doubt in my mind that CF's finest space-crime adventure was CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SEVEN SPACE STONES, with THE MAGICIAN OF MARS running a close second. Both of these stories concern Captain Future's battle against an arch enemy, Ul Quorn, the Magician of Mars, one of the most dangerous and capable villains the good Captain had ever encountered. The two characters were almost equally paired



off. Ul Quorn was the son of Victor Corvo, who had murdered Captain Future's parents and in turn had been killed by Otho and Grag (thus adding the grudge element to the story). He was armed with the fantastic power of the ancient Martian science, and a driving ambition to control and rule the solar system. Captain Future was armed with his keen intellect and training, his companions, and the best science that Earth had developed. It was a classic battle.

The story revolves around the desperate search to find the Seven Space Stones, and the secret they hold. According to legend, one of Mars's greatest scientists had stumbled across a fantastic, terrifying secret. He did not wish to release this secret to his world for fear of the consequences it might bring, yet he didn't wish it to perish either. So he placed the secret and an explanation in seven Space Stones for safekeeping. The Space Stones had sense been carried to all parts of the solar system, and must be located before they will yield their telepathically held messages. The mad scramble to find those stones, intermixed with the minor battles between Ul Quorn and Captain Future make this an extremely good story. It was more by a stroke of luck than by actual scientific talent or ability that Captain Future finally succeeded in defeating his opponent, even after Ul Quorn held the final secret in his hands. That secret and its adventures, related in the last few chapters was further evidence that Captain Future was in the process of shaking his stereotyped plot pattern for something more expansive and imaginative.

The sequel to this story appeared two issues later, and was titled, appropriately enough, THE MAGICIAN OF MARS. Ul Quorn is still intent on mastering the system, and seeks the final secret of fifth dimension travel, and several other little useful items. The writing and action of this story are not quite the equal of CF AND THE SEVEN SPACE STONES, not so far as suspense and space-crime plotting go. But as an imaginative adventure it surpasses everything printed in the magazine up to that point. The sub-plotting, the descriptions, the off trails action, the interesting sidelines (fifth dimension travel the fifth dimension, the invisible planet, the black-put astrid etc) make this an interesting story all thru.

Hamilton had been pressured from the letter column to add another Futureman to CF's crew for quite some time. The opinions on the subject were pretty well divided by this time, but with the appearance of THE MAGICIAN OF MARS, Hamilton relented to public pressure, and introduced, temporarily, another Futureman. His name was Johnny Kirk, a tough youngster between fourteen and eighteen years of age, from NYCity, whose one ambition was to become a Futureman. His appearance added nothing to the story, and after the Magician of Mars was successfully defeated a second time, Captain Future returned the youngster to Earth, and placed his name on the "Future-Futureman" list.

CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SEVEN SPACE STONES revealed yet another talent the Good Captain possessed. It seems he was rather fond of singing space ballads to the sounds of his twenty stringed Venturian guitar. Hamilton injected several verses of various space ballads into a few stories. The following two verses appeared in CF AND THE SEVEN SPACE STONES, and seems to sound best to the tune of "It is no Secret"---

The Moons of Mars outshine the stars,
And Earth's moon's fairest yet,
And Saturn's night is gemmed with light,
Yet still I can't forget.

Old Venus's moonless, cloudy sky,
Down by the Western Sea,
Where the night wind's damp from the inland swamp,
And one girl waits for me.

Other fragments of other space ballads were far and few between, but they were present. Otho sang these two verses in CAPTAIN FUTURE'S CHALLENGE---

Freezing out of Pluto,
Roasting near the sun,
Drenched by the rains of Saturn's plains,
It's all a spaceman's fun!

Tramping old Mars's deserts,
Or sailing Neptune's sea,
Or wading the damp Venturian swamp,
Oh that's the life for me.

As near as I can figure, the verses go best to the tune of "Thunder Road". Two additional verses were added to this "Song of the Futuremen", and apparently weren't written by Hamilton. They popped up in the letter column of the sixth issue, 1941---

Oh Venus is too hot for me,
And Mercury's worse yet,
The desert of Mars is far to dry,
And Neptune's much too wet.

The icy fields of Pluto,
Are frozen and forlorn,
So take me back to good old Earth,
The world where I was born.

It's not too difficult to observe that Hamilton and the editors had two vastly different views of space adventuring. One last short verse showed up in STAR TRAIL TO GLORY, and again in THE COMET KINGS and PLANETS IN PERIL---

I'm only a lonely spaceman,
With no world to call my home,
I've seen all moons and planets,
But I still just like to roam,

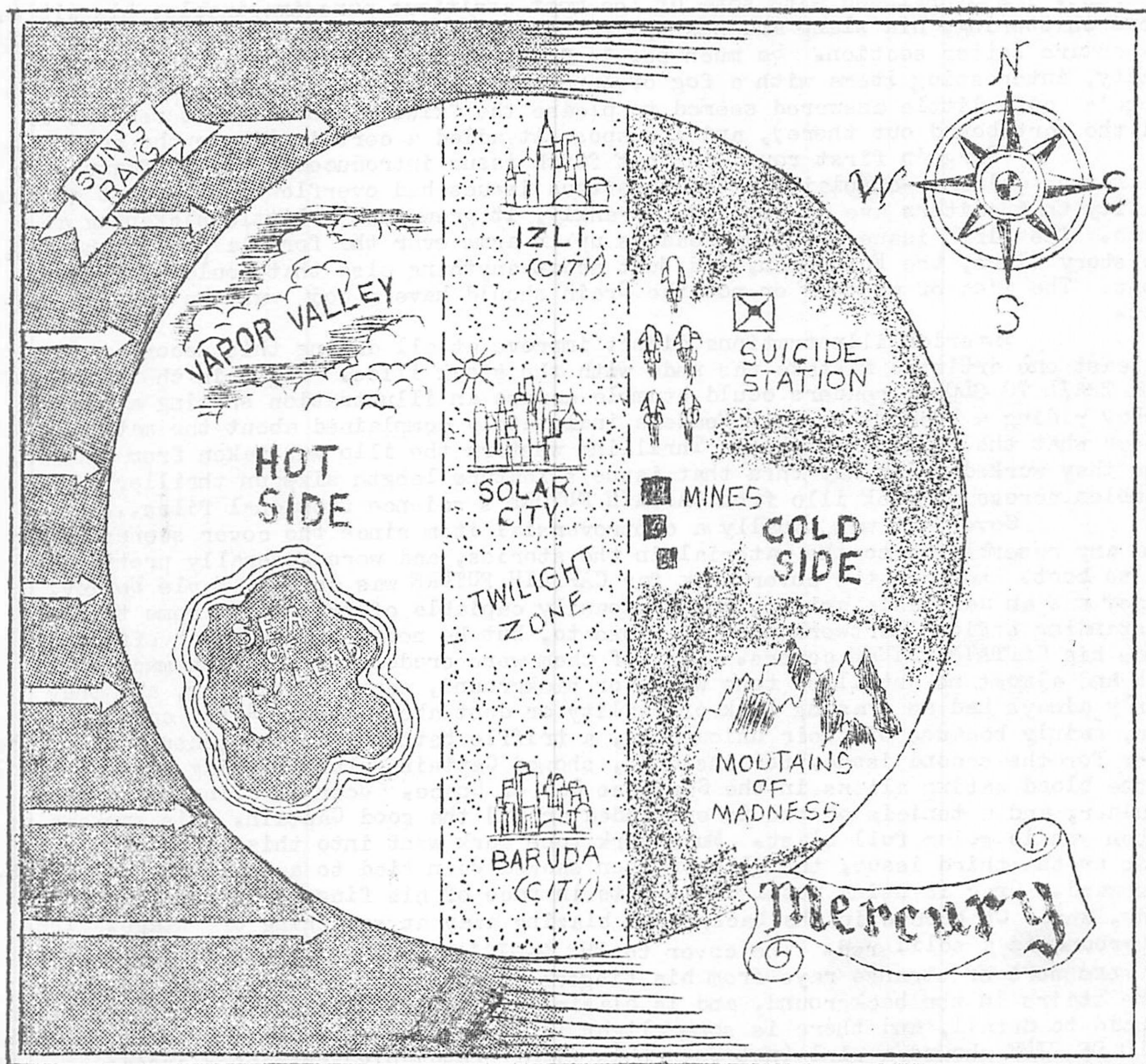
While it's pretty obvious that Captain Future was no Riceley when it came to creating space ballads, at least they held together better than some examples I've had to suffer thru. Perhaps if Hamilton had ever presented one whole ballad, the end results would have been a little more appealing than these various fragments are.

The fifth issue also marked the beginning of a slow and careful elimination of many items, traits, and devices used in the first four stories. In the fifth issue, CF entered his story without being called by the North Pole beacon, and in a few more issues, the beacon idea was dispensed with completely. Other traits and devices were carefully ignored and placed out to existence this second stage. Right at present believe only Otho's power of disguise, out of the beacon idea, the Comet disguise, the tungsted belt, the nine-planet's ring and a number of others, was retained. Hamilton may not have wanted these slightly juvenile items to interfere with the new CF storytype he was creating, and by the close of the second phase, he had eliminated most of them; CF was a changed hero.

The sixth issue presented STAR TRAIL TO GLORY, which retained many of the characteristics that had marked earlier CF adventures. It was a detective-space adventure, with the added Hamilton-like touches of imagination that separated from the other CF space-crime stories. In this tale Hamilton introduced his Planeteers, which were test pilots stationed on Mercury in this case. Their task was to test the new space ships and see that they were safe to sell. The story featured erector-set robots, space ship bandits, a machine which speeded up time sense, and a space ship race around the system, among other things. It was an action packed story.

Hamilton also reintroduced his blood-eating aliens in this issue. Ever since their appearance in the second issue, the readers had demanded a reappearance and an explanation. CF was once more drawn into the deadly Sargasso Sea of Space. His only hope of escaping is to somehow use the powerful alien ship to override the tremendous ether currents surrounding the Sea. He cannot control the strange vessel, and the aliens are all in suspended animation, due to their lack of food supplies. CF awakens the crew, and they strike a bargain: he will make them food chemically, if they will take him out of the Sea. Descriptions are not as good in this incident as they were that second issue. The change over from the blood-eating octopus like monsters as shown in the second issue, to the peace-loving, helpful alien friends from beyond the stars as seen in this sixth issue, make an amusing contrast.

With the fifth issue, the regular editorial-letter department, "Under Observation", introduced to science fiction one of its most gastly and ridiculous creations. In that infamous issue, the editor complained that he had enough work to do without the Futuremen club members pushing him around too, and so he felt compelled to turn the column over to a character who could push back. Thus began the reign of Sargent Saturn... With all due respect, to Don Franson and a few others who happen



to still feel that this type of letter column was interesting, and even...worthy... I'll say that "the old space gog" with his eternal jug of Xeno and his hord of revolting puns and homey space expressions, literally turned my stomach. The opening installments of the Sarge Saturn brand of letter column were not too bad. It appeared mainly to be a sort of running editorial on wheels, with letters tossed in to flavor the whole affair. In fact, if Sarge Saturn had continued with his newsy, slightly chatty style, and if maybe he had eliminated a few of those ghod-awful spade expressions, I don't think I would have become quite so alienated to the form. But he did not.

No indeed. As the column progressed, the true nature of Sarge became apparent. He overflowed with some of the most atritious puns imaginable, his wit was nerve shattering, his slang and his spaceexpressions were unbearable, and clogged up the entire letter section. So much so, in fact, that the abliterated the newsy, chatty, interesting items with a fog of Xeno spray and salty space expressions. Sarge's cute little answers seemed to please the "kiwi peelots" (that readers to all the Earthbound out there), and I suppose it added a certain Air to the column...

Sarge's first round in that fifth issue introduced a unique feature to the letter column---complaints. All previous iswues had overflowed with that goshwow quality that editors are so fond of. Frankly, it grew just a little sickening at times. The fifth issue found the readers up in arms over the formula plots, the art, the story flaws, the Futuremen, and just about anything else that could be argued about. The idea of whether or not the Brain should have a body was the central subject.

Interior illustrations didn't improve at all during this second stage. At least one artistic mistake was made with the stock illos. Right in the middle of STAR TRAIL TO GLORY, readers could stumble across an illustration showing a western cowboy riding a bucking horse. Readers indignately complained about the matter. I wonder what the readers of whater Thrilling western the illo was taken from thought, when they worked their way thru that issue's feature length sixgun thriller, and stumbled across a stock illo from CAPTAIN FUTURE's science fictional files...

Cover art was usually a controversial item since the cover scenes rarely held any resemblance to the material in the stories, and were generally pretty poor art to boot. Most of the cover work for CAPTAIN FUTURE was done by Earle Bergey. Bergey was an adaptable artist, and was easily capiable of presenting some truly outstanding stfional artwork when he chose to, but he never exerted much effort towards his CAPTAIN FUTURE covers. Most of them were crudely drawn, with much solid work and almost no detail or tone work, or background, worth mentioning, and they nearly always had an amazing lack of reality or dept about them. A few covers emerge, mainly because of their uniqueness, a triffle better than the general run. The cover for the second issue, for instence, showed Captain Future blazing away at one of the blood eating aliens in the Sargasso Sea of Space. Joan is clinging to his shoulder, and a tenicle or two is entwinded around the good Captain. His smoke ring proton gun is going full blast. Much dark tone work went into this illustration. Again on the third issue, the illustration showed Joan tied to a small rocket, pointed upward. Grag is using metal drill bits in pace of his fingers to cut away her bonds, while CF hovers in the background blazing away at something off stage. The background is a solid red. The cover to THE MAGICIAN OF MARS showed Ul Quorn emitting some sort of strange rays from his fingers at Grag. CF has just emerged down stone stairs in the background, and is blazing away at the attacker. More attention is paid to detail, and there is some slight tone work present. The cover to THE LOST WORLD OF TIME showed a girl (not Joan this time, presumably) entrapped inside a small rocket, with only her face showing thru a glass port in the rocket. A metallic, solid colored figure in vaguely Egyptian styled clothing is either pushing or pulling on a lever, while CF is firing the weirdest looking proton gun of the series at him. The cover for THE COMET KINGS impressed me as being one of the finest CF covers of the series. It was done by Balarski, and showed CF and Joan riding an air sled. Joan is scantily clad, riding in the seat, while CF mans the running rails. They are being attacked as they fly over mountains and sucklike, by batlike creatures. CF has wavy red hair, and a slender, artistic looking face. The cover for THE STAR OF DREAD showed a scantily clad Joan being attacked (frankly, it looks like attempted rape), by a half man, half, bird creature. The bird creatvre is the only presentable part of the dover, but he was well done, and the cover stands out for this reason. The cover for DAYS OF CREATION showed Otho, Grag and Joan gathered about a reclining CF, while the Brain is preforming some sort of brain operation. The cover for RED SUN

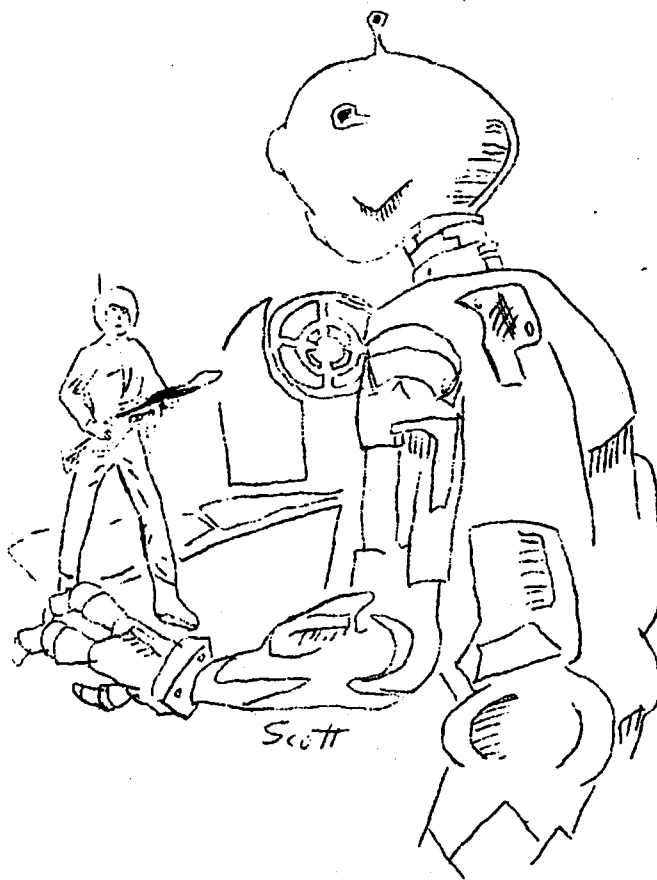
OF DANGER is probably one of the finest covers of the lot. It was done by Bergey, and showed the most presentable Joan Randall of the series (outside of the stock illu that is). She is very scantily clad, with the typical Bergey brass, unsupported, almost brassier-like arrangement supporting her breasts (or the other way round), and tight silk panties. Grog is in the immediate foreground doing hand to hand battle with a dragon creature.

Of all the covers presented on CAPTAIN FUTURE only eight had anything remotely to do with the stories inside, and most of these stretched a few points on important details. In one case, reader complaints about the non-related covers was so persistent, that Hamilton went out of his way to add a chapter to OUTLAWS OF THE MOON so the cover would represent a scene from the story. Reader complaint, persistent as it was, never managed to change the editorial policy on the matter, and right up until the magazine folded, the covers were showing scenes that bore no relationship to the stories inside.

Len Collins, Kindly Fannish Friend, was good enough to sent me a list of the cover artists for CAPTAIN FUTURE. Only a few cover artists were actually mentioned in the magazine itself, and it wasn't until the last three or four issues that the magazine took to naming the cover artist on the contents page. However, Len doesn't vouch for the absolute authenticity of his list, and you will notice in the indexes, that beside the names of several cover artists there is a question mark. I would appreciate it muchly if someone would send me definite information on these artists.

I personally feel that the third stage, which contained the six issues presented from Fall 1941 to the Winter 1943 issue, were the finest Captain Future stories of the series. Those six issues impress me as about the closest to a "golden age" Captain Future ever enjoyed, and all but one story stands out over any Captain Future stories presented before, or after, their publication.

The prevalent theme of the third stage was imagination. Hamilton opened the flood gates to speculative science fiction in those six issues, and showed that his character was fit for more than roaming the dark stars and emptying his proton pistol at whatever moved along the way. There was a greater attention paid to detail, and the mood, as well as the suspense element of the tales, was well developed. For the first, and the last, time, characterization was given a little more attention, and several characters, including the good Captain himself almost emerge as being truly outstanding. But only almost. Characterization has always been one of Hamilton's weak points, and more so in the Captain Future series. Still, ignoring a few flaws and slips, and a few melodramatic inventions, the characterization in this period was one of the strong points of the stories. There was a certain feeling about these six stories, call it a touch of that elusive "sense of wonder" if you must,



that made them come alive with a new vitality and uniqueness that hadn't been present before.

In the eight issue CF showed signs of becoming restless with his little corner of the universe. It seemed as tho all the fun had been taken out of his life, what with the constant grind of knocking over space villains once every three months, inventing super machines, and saving the system from Dire & Evil menaces regularly. His adventures with the Magician of Mars had apparently convinced him that there were other worlds and other adventures more interesting than those found in the drab, normal solar system, and he went adventuring beyond it.

So in the eight issue Hamilton relented to public pressure again, and sent CF back into the distant past to answer the call for help of a doomed race. The time machine used bore very suspicious overtones of the machine used in STAR TRAIL TO GLORY, but the adventures the good Captain encounter more than made up for any lack on the scientific side.

This was the first of the "new" CF stories, it was straight space-adventure, with no hint or overtones of being a space-crime story. From this issue on, until this period ended, no more space-detective novels were printed. The new stories abounded with strange and unusual items, Hamilton made a point of describing the weirdness or the unusual situations of Captain Future's universe.

It was in this issue also that Hamilton began to develop his unique future history of the past. In the story, the inhabitants of Venus, Mars, Earth, and Kaitan refer to Deneb as the "sacret star". With the aid of CF's time traveling device we later observe huge fleets of ships moving from Deneb to the solar system, establishing colonies and regular lines of communication with the mother world. But, as the time passed, something happened, and the glactic empire of Deneb crumbled, and gradually the colonies began to regree and lose the great science of the mother world until the inhabitants of this period CF visits refer to Deneb as the "Sacret Star", and have forgotten their proud heritage. CF realizes that the forgetting and the regression will continue until, in his own time, there will be no memory at all of the mother world and the mighty empire that spread the human seed thruout the galaxy. The worlds would change the inhabitants into special breeds and special types, and barbarism and a return to a new civilization would have run the cycle by his own time. Hamilton continued to add juicy tidbits of information with each succeeding issue, until finally, in THE STAR OF DREAD, Captain Future ventures to the sacred star itself, and discovers the cause of the empire's destruction, and at the same time uncovers another, more intricate and confusing puzzle. Hamilton was very adept at tantalizing his readers with these facinating bits of information.

The crowning glory of this third stage, or rather, one of the several crowning glories, and one of the finest Captain Future stories ever written, was the super-saga titled QUEST BEYOND THE STARS. Mercury is dying, and unless some method can be found to rejuvenate the oxygen content in the atmosphere, Mercury will be a dead and barren world within a few years. To find a solution to the problem, Captain Future decided to venture to the center of the galaxy, in hopes of discovering the Birthplace of Matter. The Birthplace of Matter is the therodically possible place towards the center of the universe, where the raw energy released by the suns is changed, and is reconverted back into matter, establishing a true balance between matter and energy in the galaxies.

To span the tremendous distances, Captain Future and the Brain devise the vibration space drive, which is capable of speeds beyond that of light. The drive is installed in the Comet, and Captain Future and the three Futuremen set off into the void, on one of the finest space-going odessies I've ever encountered. The whole scope of the saga is nothing short of spectacular. If you are in need of something to revive that fading sense of wonder, then I unhesitantly recommend this story as the perfect prescription. One amazing sub-adventure follows another, as more and more fantastic, puzzeling pieces are added to the problem, as Captain Future ventures closer and closer to the Birthplace, and finally manages to fight his way into its heart, only to discover yet another amazing adventure awaiting them inside the deadly, swirling clouds. This has become something of a trype expression in recent years, but I was truly unable to lay the magazine down as I read this...

Any story following QUEST BEYOND THE STARS would be anti-climatic. And the story that did follow QUEST, OUTLAWS OF THE MOON, was anti-climatic. The story is not one of Hamilton's better efforts. The whole idea of CF & crew being branded

CAPTAIN FUTURE

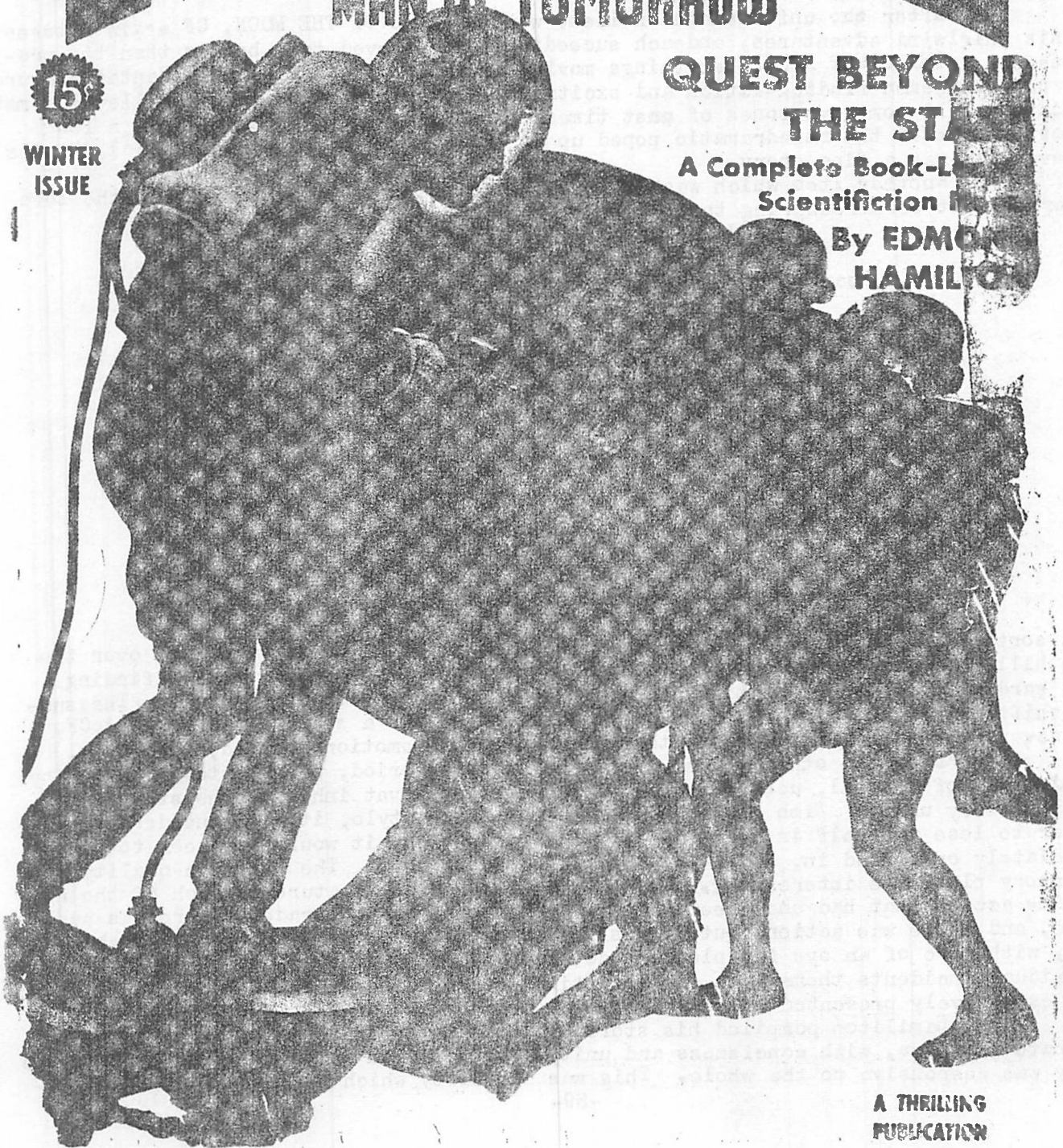
MAN OF TOMORROW

15¢

WINTER
ISSUE

QUEST BEYOND
THE STARS

A Complete Book-Length
Scientifiction Novel
By EDMOND
HAMILTON



A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

as outlaws and having to prove their innocence is rather crude. The plot idea and handling reminded me very much of a poor grade comic strip or radiodrama. It was certainly a poor showing after the preceding two stories. Hamilton did manage to inject a little into his descriptions toward the end, but the melodramatic ending (just as the final fateful moment arrives, just as CF is about to go down before the advancing tide of blazing atom pistols, he is saved by a free-will army made up of his friends from across the system), managed to spoil that rather effectively.

OUTLAWS OF THE MOON is interesting for one item. Apparently Hamilton decided to eliminate all resemblance between the old CF image and the new CF type, and in this issue, President James Cawthow, long time friend of Captain Future, and practically a regular fixture to the stories, was killed off by the murdering criminals. No really suitable replacement was ever found, or even mentioned for that matter, until MAGIC MOON saw publication. This tale made scant mention of a President Daniel Crewe, but that's about the last the readers ever heard from him. The readers were not extremely happy about this sudden, unexpected action, but no explanation was ever presented.

After the unfortunate incident with OUTLAWS OF THE MOON, CF again returned to his whirlwind adventures, and each succeeding issue proved to be better than the previous one. THE COMET KINGS set things moving again in fine style, with Captain Future and the Futuremen finding action and excitement in a civilization inside Halley's comet. The story held some overtones of past times; there was an alien menace, and a few almost tinges of the melodramatic popped up in the story. Barring such trivial details however, it was a fine story.

Another item which was interesting to observe, was the shift in the love interest that occurred during this stage. To quote from THE COMET KINGS

"Why Joan, what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing---I'm just foolish," she muttered, "But I can't help feeling a little sorry to leave the comet."

He did not understand. Joan looked up at him with deep emotion in her fine eyes.

"Out here, Curt, you belong to the whole System. I know you love me, but duty comes first---your obligation to use your scientific powers to help the System peoples."

"But if we'd been forced to remain on the comet world, cut off forever from the outside, nothing else would have come first for us. It could have been a paradise for us. But it's lost now."

Curt Newton bent and kissed her.

"Joan, don't feel like that. Someday when our work is done, we'll find our own paradise. I know a little astrid that's waiting for us. It's just like a garden. Some day."

This sort of mood was prevalent thruout the third stage. Someday was just over the next hill, of course, and lone wolf Captain Future never dickered around to finding that garden astrid, tho at times he seemed almost as eager to as Joan was. The sudden shift in romantic interest was a pleasant change was a stiff and one sided CF, who never seemed to believe that other sides of human emotion existed, previously.

Among the other pleasant changes in this period, were better readability, elimination of trivial, unnecessary and archaic points that inhabited the story, and greater story unity. With the improvement in writing style, it was considerably easier to lose yourself in an issue of the magazine than it would have been to become immediately engrossed in, say, CAPTAIN FUTURE'S CHALLENGE. The magnetic quality of the story plots was interesting. This stage also did not feature so much of the rip-roaring action that had once been Captain Future's stock and trade. There was suspense, and there was action, but it was more carefully handled, and seemed to be toned down, with more of an eye for plotting details and overall impressions than for the individual incidents themselves. Descriptions were shorter, but they were broader and more extensively presented thruout the story.

Hamilton compiled his stories in this stage carefully, with almost deliberate slowness, with consistency and unity, so that each incident, each part of the story was responsive to the whole. This was a quality which had never seen much de-

velopment before, and it gave a better balance to the tales. There was very little of the harshness or obvious cutoff between incidents, they were all interwoven with the whole. This unity of purpose and plot made, I think, for better stories all round. The more careful development, the characterization, the attention to style and the unity of the stories are the most obvious advantages in the writing itself this stage presented. Un addition of course, were more original plots, imaginative details and a wider range of action for the good Captain, which certainly didn't hinder the tales.

There was a tendency, however, for Hamilton to build his story carefully, to create it with smoothness so that each separate piece fitted the pattern, then as the story was ending, to wrap up the tangling details with a few short, choppy paragraphs and finish the rest of the tale the way he wanted, without such items to occupy his time. For instance, from THE COMET KINGS.

It proved so indeed. The next days saw a great migration of the Cometae people along the road from Moon to the black citadel. They passed by day and by night through the copper chamber, until at last the last of the Cometae had regained normal humanity.

There were feastings and rejoicings in Moon beneath the coma-sky. Infants would be born again, and the cries of children would be heard once more. The comet people had returned to the ancient ways of their race.

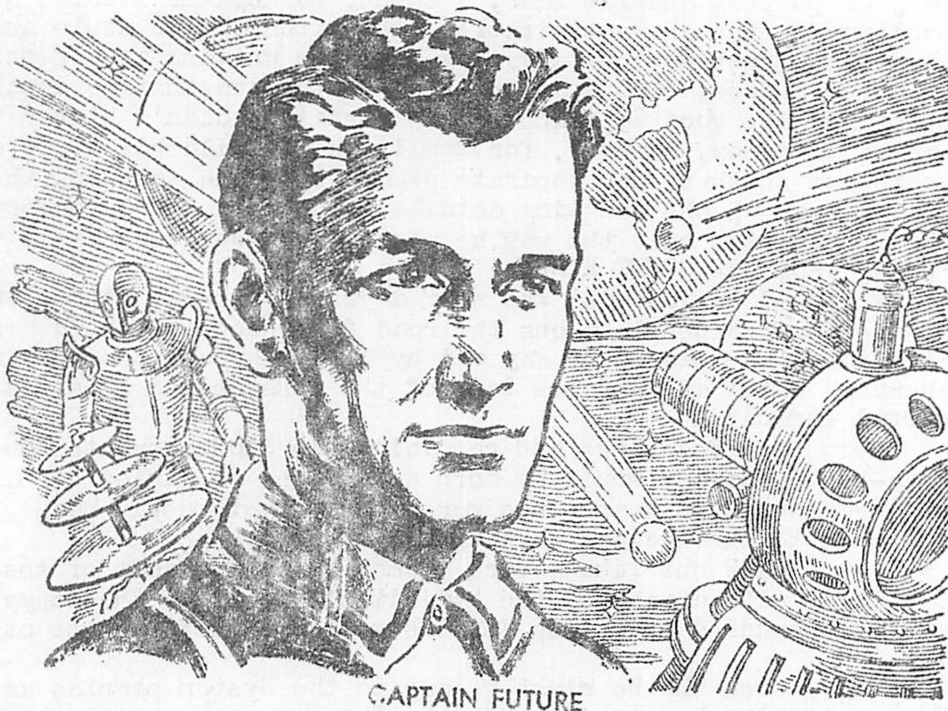
Not only does such writing stick out like a sore thumb, but this habit of tossing off all the troublesome details with a wave of the hand didn't help out the story unity especially since Hamilton handled trifling details more carefully in the other parts of the story.

In this stage, even tho he might belong to the System peoples as Joan had said, Captain Future didn't show it very often. This was the period where the good Captain helped those he wanted to help, and pretty much did his own adventuring. In THE LOST WORLD OF TIME he helped a doomed race from the distant past, in QUEST BEYOND THE STARS, it's true he was out to save Mercury and help the system, but I get the impression that this was somewhat secondary. In OUTLAWS OF THE MOON CF & Crew work to save themselves, with the interests of the system definitely secondary, in THE COMET KINGS he adventures inside a passing comet, PLANETS IN PERIL finds him in the far distant future, while FACE OF THE DEEP again shows him trying to save his own neck. The System was, apparently, safe and sound during this period of his existence. The space villains and would be conquerors must have seen the folly of their ways, or some such, and they did not turn up again until THE STAR OF DREAD saw publication.

To my mind the finest Captain Future adventure ever written appeared during this period, and was titled THE FACE OF THE DEEP. I won't attempt to describe it, I am impressed with the sheer scope of it, the writing, but mainly the old human dogged determination Captain Future holds to in the face of impossible odds. It's a very good tale, worth rereading.

In the Winter 1943 issue, the muddled Under Observation department received a letter from writer Hamilton himself. It seemed that Hamilton, on learning of the objections and grumblings of various readers, had mentioned a few of the complaints in his latest chat with Captain Future. (Naturally, you didn't think he dreamed all that up by himself did you?) It seems that the science for most of the inventions and suchlike mentioned in the stories was not explained in detail, because it was not understandable by our terms. (Hamilton compared it to one of today's readers trying to explain a radio to the pilgrims. You could tell them what it did, but not how it worked). It also seems that Curt Newton didn't reuse some of his Fabulous Inventions in later issues, because his ship didn't have room for everything he had invented. Besides that, some of the inventions were too dangerous to have along on some assignments.

Un that same issue, Captain Future was given a new face. One reader remarked that the old stock illo of CF resembled "Carry Grant's space brother". The new stock ill of the good Captain bore many facial differences. The features were roughly the same as those Hamilton occasionally mentioned in the stories, which isn't saying much. Hamilton always preferred to avoid direct description of the good Captain, and relied on generalities. The new illustration showed a younger, leaner Captain Future, with perhaps a little less intelligent, confident look about him. To my mind the new stock illo was not as good a representation of the good Captain



CAPTAIN FUTURE

as the old one was, even if the old one did feature slightly curly hair. It impresses me as never being a good idea to replace a stock illo of a central continuation character such as Captain Future. Once a model is chosen, it should be used thruout the series. Readers tend to identify the hero image with the illustration, and a change in illustrations can lead to slight confusion. Naturally, it is impossible for an artist to create a picture of a fictional heroic character like CF which would completely satisfy every reader. In the human mind the vision of a hero is never well defined or sharp to begin with, and the mind tends to change and shift the personal image continually. In any event, I liked the old picture better.

The third period featured a few changes in the magazine makeup. The two best serials ever presented in CAPTAIN FUTURE appeared during this period. THE MAN WHO AWOKE appeared. The story was really a series of continued incidents. The magazine merely took the first one of the incidents, and used it as a serial. Several of the older readers asked that the other parts of the story also be published, but they never were. THE ALIEN INTELLIGENCE, by Jack Williamson was started in the Spring 1942 issue, and ran for three installments, completing itself in the Fall 1942 issue. The story is remarkably good, especially the first two installments. It stirs the old sense of wonder emotion with its attention to detail and its descriptions and plot. This is a "lost-land-in-danger" story, and while it certainly wasn't anything new or startling, it was entertaining to read and is better than most stories featuring that plotwork.

With the Winter 1943 issue the editors announced that there would be no more serials. I suppose that the war time conditions, paper shortage and uncertainty of publishing made the editors consider the possibility of CAPTAIN FUTURE folding. It has been considered somewhat in poor taste for a magazine to fold right in the midst of a serial, and it was decent of the editors not to burden the readers with this horrible possibility. If they ever thought of that angle of course...

The merry Captain rolled along in fine style, and it was four more issues before the final fatle blow did fall. With the spring, 1943 issue, the notorious reign of "Brett Sterling" began. According to the departments featured in the Winter issue and again in the Spring issue, Hamilton had been called into service for the duration of the war, and while he was away, "Brett Sterling" would take over the writings about the good Captain.

Readers were immediately suspicious of the new writer (who wouldn't be, with a name like "Brett Sterling"), tho his first story for CAPTAIN FUTURE showed promise. There is complete misunderstanding, as far as I'm concerned, on this "Brett Sterling" business. According to the Day indexes, the first "Brett Sterling" story, WORLDS TO COME and also the last "Sterling" story for CAPTAIN FUTURE magazine, titled DAYS OF CREATION, were written by Joseph Samachon, a writer I am completely unfamiliar with. All other stories bearing the "Brett Sterling" title were written by Hamilton himself. However, according to the May 1951 issue of STARTLING STORIES and the editors at that time, "Brett Sterling" was none other than William Morrison. One story, THE SOLAR INVASION, which is supposed to have appeared in the Fall, 1946 issue of STARTLING STORIES bearing the "Brett Sterling" title was supposed to have been written by Manley Wade Wellman. I, personally, have only read the Captain Future stories presented in CAPTAIN FUTURE magazine, and in STARTLING from 1950 and 1951, plus the Spring, 1945 issue featuring the last scheduled Captain Future novel. According to Len Collins, after that Spring, 1945 issue of STARTLING STORIES, two additional Captain Future stories were written; Never the Twain Shall Meet, a short bearing the "Brett Sterling" name, appearing in THRILLING WONDER STORIES, Fall, 1946, and OUTLAW WORLD, a novel by Edmond Hamilton, which appeared in STARTLING for Winter, 1946. Len makes no mention of a story titled THE SOLAR INVASION, and the editors in the May 1951 issue of STARTLING make no mention of these other two stories. Someone who has the above mentioned copies of the various magazines, and also definite information on "Brett Sterling", please send said information along. Who the hell was "Brett Sterling"?

Whatever the answer may be, "Brett Sterling's" stories were popular with readers who delighted in comparing "Sterling" and Hamilton. If Hamilton was "Brett Sterling" or part of that disguise, he must have gotten a good laugh from those letters which proclaimed that "Sterling" was much better at handling the good Captain than Hamilton had been.

There was a shift in the CF character and story plot during this period. WORLDS TO COME was the opening "Sterling" story, and it showed, nor would have shown, rather, promise, if Sterling had been a brand new writer to the CF type. The story is roughly, sharply and very noticeably divided up into various parts. The writing style does not seem to be that of Hamilton's, the writing is pedestrian and short, detail is not taken care of, and there is a certain lack of reality about the story plot and its characters. Whoever wrote this story bit off more than he could chew. In the past Hamilton never attempted a full scale war, nor did he send him hero out on sagas that were too expansive. The new Sterling involved Captain Future in a full scale intergalactic war, and only give this problem half the attention it deserved. The action is slip-shot, suspense is very poorly developed, and the style of presentation is not exactly rough, but it could be much better. A story of this scope and size deserved better treatment than it received. Still, it was an interesting, if vaguely disappointing tale.

THE STAR OF DREAD also left me dissatisfied. The characterization is poor, the action is not handled decently, the writing is slow, but mainly there seems to be a lack of real interest in the story by whoever wrote it. There is no mood, no evidence of plot organization. It's written as tho someone was handed an outline, and attempted to write a story around it. For one thing, the reasons for the collapse of the Denebian empire, and the motivations in this story, don't strike me as being very realistic. What use does a super-civilization, with a stellar empire have for half-man-half-animal slaves? An ordinary machine can outproduce a slave about five hundred times to one, and with an entire empire pouring its wealth into one planet, the need for slaves of any kind would be non-existent. Then we are asked to believe that the ancient Denebian people, who had raised this mighty empire, were naive enough, and stupid enough to allow their deadly secret to fall into the wrong hands, we are asked to believe that a civil war broke out on this question, and that an entire empire collapsed because of these conditions. None of it makes sense.

In the past issues Hamilton had made a point of bringing into his future history, two pre-Denebian alien races which ruled the stars before the coming of mankind. One race the Denebian people, after much difficulty, beat back, but only scant mention came down to them of the other, more sinister race. I would have suspected that Hamilton would perhaps dig up some past specimens of this sinister race

to kill off the Denebian empire, with perhaps Captain Future having to battle a few scrawny, but still super-powerful remains of this alien race. Maybe I'm reading excess meanings into these hints offered before, but it strikes me that not only was THE STAR OF DREAD poorly written, badly styled, loosely organized, but it was much to pat and illogical to fit into Hamilton's future history scheme. It has its good points, but it doesn't deliver the quality of story, even accepting the imperfections in the future history, that one would expect.

MAGIC MOON is a revival of the first stage, or so it seems. Evil Earthmen decide to take over a native moon of Pluto, and Captain Future must stop him. The writing is very poor, coincidents occur with disturbing regularity thruout. There is some good suspense, and a few good action scenes, but that's about all this story has to offer. A poor offering.

The paper shortage or company policy must have caused a little difficulty. THE STAR OF DREAD appeared, and was dated Summer 1943. MAGIC MOON appeared in the Winter, 1944 issue, tho the volume osuence shows a normal order. This skipped issue was probably due to paper shortages, at a guess.

In MAGIC MOON we also, at long last, learn that Roger Newton's young wife and Captain Future's mother was named Elane Newton. Fifteen issues to learn her name...

DAYS OF CREATION is by far the worst Captain Future story ever written. After some interesting advancement, and six very good science fiction adventure stories, this Brett Sterling phase seems to be a complete reversal to the past, or worse. The writing was bad, the plots were bad, the handling was bad. In this tale Curt Newton loses his memory, and goes thru most of the story not knowing who he is, while he is impersonated by half-witted criminals. (oh yes) A more hackish plot would be hard to think of. The story shifts and slides thru sixty-four pages, thru an attack on the moon base (Curt beats them back, but he doesn't know how he knew to do it), thru numerous attempts to kill off the fake Captain Future, thru plans to create an artificial planet (brace yourself) which will releave the excess population of the solar system. The characters of this story have suddenly been struck wittless, they betray no suspicion doubt or intelligence, their characters are as pure and simple as the driven snow, and about as stable. The plot is childish, and the writing is dull, dull, dull. It was a total lose, the worst of the series.

With this Spring 1944 issue, CAPTAIN FUTURE magazine folded. Apparently the paper shotrage caught up withit. The other Thrilling publications cut back on their page count and used small typeface, and thruout the publishing field, various magazines began to fail. The regular department, The Future of Captain Future in this last issue promised that next issue another CF story, RED SUN OF DANGER, would appear.

The story did appear; it was carried over to the Spring 1945 issue of STARTLING STORIES. This story was the best written, and the best plotted story of the "Brett Sterling" phase. According to mention made in this tale, it took place ten years after QUEST BEYOND THE STARS was supposed to have happened, but age did not show in the good Captain's actions. Basically, its a simple tale of CF battling the Earthmen villains, with an extra thrill tossed in at the end. However the plotting, the writing, the characterization and the whole story bore a resemblance to other, better times. The story is logically developed, there is unity to the plot, the characters are more realistic than they had been for four issues, and the attention to detail and the overall presentation is well executed. A great deal of improvement after four sub-par "Brett Sterling" stories.

According to Len Collings two other CF stories appeared between 1945 and 1950, however I haven't read them, and can't give an opinion.

From what I've seen of the "Brett Sterling" stage, I would conclude that if anything could give the Captain Future stories a bad name, these tales could do it. They were poorly constructed, showed a truly amazing lack of logic, were poorly plotted and lacked most of the basic story values. Perhaps the best words to sum this period up would be crude, underdeveloped, and childish stories. Of the Brett Sterling tales I've read, only two impress me as being worth the printing space. WORLDS TO COME was a fairly good story, while RED SUN OF DANGER was well worthwhile, and emerges as the only truly decent CF story of the Sterling reign.

Nothing notable occurred with the magazine proper during the "Sterling" era. Since the seriels were discontinued, on the excuse that it took to long for

the readers to get the installments (something that never bothered the editors before) an extra short story was added, making three short stories, one novel and the departments filling the magazine.

At long last Wesso dropped from sight, and a few other artists took a hand at Captain Future, without notable results. About the best art by these newcomers appeared with MAGIC MOON. One of the last artists to butcher Captain Future and the Futuremen was Virgil Finlay.

For several years, this was the end of Captain Future. An inglorious ending to a great career. But then, with the appearance of the January, 1950 issue of STARTLING, the editors announced that they had commissioned Hamilton to revive, temporarily at least, the popular hero, and a "novelette" titled THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN FUTURE appeared. This last, and unfortunately, final, stage of Captain Future's existence contains seven stories. All of them are short stories, by my own personal definition of what constitutes a short story, though many of them were billed as "novelettes" by STARTLING.

There is not really a great deal to say about this final stage. It might be adequately referred to as a twilight of the gods, a shadow of a past glory. In the space allotted the good Captain, twenty pages or less, usually less, no really decent stories could be produced. After all, how many space sagas have you ever read that occupied a mere twenty pages or less? Hamilton always impressed me as a writer who liked to take his time with his stories, and let them go where they would. Very little of any real worth emerged from this revival. Hamilton turned out stories which ignored basic plotting, scope and imagination, and substituted characterization, and mood in their place. Mood was the overriding element of these last stories. If there was no room for the good Captain to adventure in, there was room enough for Hamilton to weave a certain specific mood and ensnare the reader. Each paragraph was written to heighten or to amplify the mood, each scene was constructed carefully to give the right impression with a minimum of words.

But the old spark was missing. It impressed me as though, somehow, Captain Future himself realized that this was his last appearance, and the mood was often somber, and sometimes embittered. There was no carefree joy in these stories, no adventuring for the thrill of high adventure, no noble thoughts of mankind and the system. Only grim purpose and Duty compelled the Captain to go through his paces. The mood was there, but it left me with the bitter-sweet feeling of something lost, or something lacking. There is often a sense of defeat lurking in the words and actions of the Captain, a feeling that his Duty compels him to do this or that, and that he is being cheated by the fates in this adventure and the other short revival adventures. In Moon of the Unforgotten for instance, Captain Future is compelled to use the dreaming device, and traces his ancestral memories back to the ancient power of Deneb, and is about to trace the final secret, the key to the puzzle he has wanted for so long, when he is saved by the Futuremen and men from the nearby town. Captain Future feels a bitterness at not being able to find that final secret, and shows it. In The Birthplace of Creation, CF returns to the awesome Birthplace to stop a madman from gaining control of the power of the Birthplace, and almost falls prey to the urge to tamper himself. He leaves wondering and half wishing he had taken those controls and done what he almost did. The defeat symbolism is prevalent throughout these tales. Captain Future is not the character he used to be. The stories were nicely written, they were good mood pieces, if you like a diet of somber mood pieces all the time, but they ended on a note of bitterness, and these stories made a poor memorial to one of the greatest space-opera heroes who roamed the space-ways.

To the best of my knowledge no Captain Future story has ever been reprinted by any source. While many of the stories justly did not deserve reprinting, it strikes me as a great waste of such a fine character as the good Captain certainly is, not to reprint some of his better adventures. In this day and time, when science fiction certainly needs action stories and action heroes to interest new readers to the field, to help hold our present readers, to act as a sort of bridge between advanced comic readers or readers who have graduated from hardback juveniles, Captain Future, with his daring exploits, the action, high-adventure, suspense and imagination that was in every story, would be the perfect character to fill this need. Most of the novels and novelettes could be reprinted with only minor rewordings to tighten up the plots, eliminate a few flaws and make them read a bit smoother. Some of the stories, of course, would be unsuitable. I don't think many of the "Brett Sterling" stories would be likely candidates, but...

and perhaps a few of the novels might not make good choices. But the other stories, from the first period, from the last period or inbetween, would be ideal. What does it matter, really, that the early Captain Future stories were cliff-hangers in the traditional sense of the word? What does it matter that the short stories in the last phase of Captain Future's existence concentrated on a mood of sorrow, loneliness, frailty or bitterness? Captain Future is the sort of hero that would appeal to a new reader, a young reader, and to many experienced science fiction addicts as well. They would make perfect choices for Avalon editions. Avalon has long made a policy of reprinting the shorter action-slanted science fiction works, primarily for library sales. Ace Double Novels, also a publishing section that appreciates and uses action-slanted science fiction, could make use of these. I think that the Man of Tomorrow would sell well if he was reprinted; a market for such material exists today, and no one is filling the need. The good Captain's adventures would read just as well today as they did in 1943, and I feel that he'll certainly deserve an opportunity.

I suppose that all enjoyable things come to an end sooner or later. Captain Future died his final death with the publication of The Birthplace of Creation in the May, 1951 issue of STARTLING STORIES. Captain Future was the crowning achievement of a golden age, and he marked the tragic passing of that age when CAPTAIN FUTURE magazine folded. A few magazines like STARTLING and PLANET would try to hold out against the turning tide, and in later years Larry Shaw and Bill Hamlin would try to create a flicker of that golden age with their magazines, to little avail. Captain Future signaled the glorious end of an age of super-science, daring lone wolf heroes, scantily clad young heroines, heartless villains and alien hords whose one desire was to ravage Earth. It was the era of the thought-varient story, of super-science and much pseudo-science, and stories that raised as their gods the plot and the action of a story, while dooming characterization, writing style and readability to second place. This golden age had a hord of supporters, it still has its supporters today. It produced many great works of our literature, works that will be remembered as long as our type of literature endures. Who can forget the brilliant sagas of E. E. Smith, and his supermen of space? Who can lightly forget the magazine epics of Mory, Wade and Alcott as created by John W. Campbell, Jr? Who can forget the Legion of Space, with its eternal foes, Doc Keller's imaginative propaganda and character studies, Weinbaum's beautiful, almost poetic works, or Merritt's tales of super-fantasy in never-never lands that seemed all too real? And certainly no one can forget one of the greatest writers of that period, or any other period, Edmond Hamilton himself; whether he wrecked worlds and saved universes, or whether he gave us a gentle story of dying races. Captain Future was a part of that world, and it is sad that Captain Future was to be the epithet written for that time; when adventure was king, and science played host to high action and romance in the voids between worlds. Even as Captain Future appeared, John Campbell was making serious strides for the complete reformation of the science fiction field, which emphasized writing style and human characterization more than it did high action. Captain Future will go down in science fiction history as the last of the great space-opera heroes, and perhaps the greatest of them all. Captain Future may be the last, the singing end of a glorious, and perhaps more carefree age, and his passing was a fitting tribute to this pioneering period.

But, perhaps when conditions are right again, perhaps someday, readers will tire of "maturity" stories carried to an unbearable limit, perhaps someday readers will refuse to recognize small character sketches or trange incidents as science fiction. Perhaps someday in the not too distant future a red flare will blossom over the North Pole, and science fiction will once more be, Calling Captain Future...

---END---

MY THANKS

to---Edmond Hamilton, who wrote these marvelous tales,
Clay Hamlin, who was kind enough to loan me copies
of CAPTAIN FUTURE and STARTLING,
Len Collins, for help in indexing the missing stories,
the cover artists, and on the "BretteSterling" matter,
D. Bruce Berry, for artwork thruout.

VOICE OF THE SPIRITS OR THE EDITOR ANSWERS WITH A FIFTH

Dick Luppoff; 215 E. 73 St.; New York 21, New York

I will not attempt a point-for-point argument of your position on the copyrighting of fanzines. I will, instead, tell you in a minimum number of words, why XERO is copyrighted: some of the stuff in it is of commercial value, at least potentially. If it is published sans copyright, it enters public domain and is lost to its author. If it is published with copyright, it is safeguarded, legally, against piracy.

Of course, this position carries with it the implication that Pat and I consider material in XERO to be as good as material in professional magazines. Well, it is. Not every article in XERO is of commercial quality, but a good many of them---I'd say at least 50%, probably 75---are. Not every article is of a commercial slant---but some of them are, an average, I would guess, of over one-per-issue.

Examples, starting with the issue of XERO which first bore a copyright notice---(#1)---

NEXT WEEK: The Phantom Strikes Again	Chris Steinbunner (#4)
Okay, Axis, Here We Come	Don Thompson (#4)
cover	Larry Ivie (#5)
The Fantastic Paperback	Charles M. Collins (#6)
The Master Shall Not Abate	Hoy Ping Pong (#6)
Notes on Tolkien	Lin Carter (#7)
cartoons and drawings	several artists (several issues)

Also, several book reviews and book columns by Larry M. Harris and by James Blish. At least one of the latter was written for XERO but appeared in F&SF first at the request of Mills and Blish and was reprinted in XERO because of the expurgations of the F&SF version.

Now notice, I am talking only of articles of commercial type and quality. XERO has also run a couple of items, I blush to admit, of commercial type, but inferior quality. And, I say with the opposite of shame, several---no, many---items of commercial or better quality, but of non-commercial nature.

These latter two categories need no protection---the fannish pirate is a nuisance but no menace---but the listed articles ought not to be abandoned.

(I also might mention that one pro who sometimes contributes to XERO---I will not tell you which one---has told me that he is very glad XERO is copyrighted. He once dug an old fanzine piece of his own out of the trunk and sold it to a pro-zine many years later. He had to pretend to them that it was new, or they would have

I can see why NEW FRONTIERS, AMRA & XERO might need to have their contents copyrighted (mainly for protection of their pro contributors), but the rest simply seem to be jumping on the bandwagon. An exception is AJ Budrys, whose DUBIOUS (a superb item, tho altho infrequent) is copyrighted because he expects to use the material elsewhere; so was Poul Anderson's oneshot SMORGASBORD. I agree with you about the general inutility of the copyright in fanzines. I'm glad someone had the courage to speak out.

To the circular, I see I'm among the privileged. Nice. ++And maybe you can be the first in ~~your~~ ~~block~~ your sector of the Galaxy to tell the MITkey Mice how to be stf-oriented without pubbing cruddy verses, Certified Galaxy Rejects and heavy-handed Uncle Hugo letters. ++ Last I heard Lownders was pubbing a psi-oriented zine called TOMORROW. ++ I think the Fanvets are organizing because Taurasi wants egoboo. Like, why did you think JWCampbell created the universe? ++ DOES ANYONE KNOW What happened to Craig Cochran, have heard nothing from him in 2--3 months now. ---Why College students at Cal are required to take ROTC?---That RAHeinlein has produced another book, evidently reprints of an old Future History series---Whether JWCampbell, Jr., has decided to get onto another kick yet?---Who would have back issues, in good condition, of LeZombie for sale---If Bloch still has Tucker's 10 of clubs, if he doesn't, then who does, I wouldn't mind owning it either.---Why Bloch hasn't written any more Lefty Leep stories?---What Dick Geis is doing these days?---Why the Lunarians are reorganizing?---If J. Fred Muggs is really a Hoax?---How many issues NIRVANA ran?---How big an inflated medical ego can get?---Why crudzines are worse than ever?---that the flat-earthier's still have about 200 converts?---when this nonsense is finally going to end?---(all in good fun, naturally)

///Humm, The Breen version of my DOES ANYONE KNOW section has its Points I suppose. Cochran, by the way, quit fandom a while back, just in case you didn't know. I still didn't find whether Larry Shaw still had that facial portrait of Leland Hale (DO YOU HEAR ME LARRY SHAW?), and I'd still like to own it rather badly.---On your MIT reference, I turn you over to Fredrick Norwood.

As for the IES item, I take my correspondent's word for it when he said that IES members objected to the use of Soviet releases because of gov. security problems. Perhaps Hans is not reprinting from the accepted agencies, or his material is mixed with a liberal amount of propaganda, I know not more of the matter.///

IN QUICK PASSING This letter col is very short, but Things Happened, next issue it will be longer, Promise even. ++Ed Bryant says there were at least 5 issues of DYNAMIC (I know that, I own six issues, how many more did it run tho?), that Clay Ha,ling is Fafia,---while Clay Hamlin reported he is alive and well, but fafia for sure,---Bill Wolfenbarger says his zine will not be copyrighted unless someone wants him to, in which case that somebody can pay half or more of the copyright fees. Best idea all round. He also tells the world that RAWLownders is act-ually editing a occult-type mag, called EXPLORING THE UNKNOWN, which sells for 50¢ a shot, and that his latest editor's interest to stfen because it tells of dreams Lownders had in connection with stf covers, and he wants to know my policy as regards serious poetry. I'm all for it, if it appeals to me, I'll print it.---Redd Bpggs says that John Doe is not a hoax, and sedns a real life honest to Ghu address to prove it. Bedammed. He also says he's sure that the Shakers have more than 200 converts. Ridiculous says I, considering that they don't sanction or believe in marriage, rely solely on mass meetings and such to bring on converts, and enlist a Puritian system a trifle outdated and unattractive, plus other items.---Earl Noe says fanzine copyrighting is Good, and uses the Public Domain item also, even tho he has no plains for selling material from KARMA.---Art Hayes agrees on copyright, and wishes to hell the fannish people would let faneditors know when they plan to reprint, if ever. He sights incidents. I agree.---Dick Ambrose tells me that I've finally gotten around to charging what my zine is worth (30¢ was the opening price for this issue, price is now 40¢ by the way). I'm flattered, but don't really agree, I'll hold out for a buck a copy, just wait.---Dave Locke says he's not paying one red cent for this issue, but donated mags to the Cause. Why don't the rest of you do this. see the ad there.---DON'T LOOK AT THE PAGE NUMBERS OF THIS ZINE, they are well mixed up. Actually there is a total of pages this round. Lucky you. Write me a letter of comment on this and maybe I'll shut up...Do it Now.

know it was in the common domain and might have either then declined to use it...or could even have used it and not paid him. Once something is abandoned, you cannot reclaim a common law copyright on it, it's gone.)

So...I do not advocate copyrighting all fanzines. And I agree that in some cases it is a mere conceit to copyright. But anyone who throws material of commercial worth into the public domain when it could be protected at a minimum inconvenience, seems to me rather foolish.

///You defend the copyrighting of fanzines on the grounds that some fmz contain material of commercial value. This is hard for me to accept. Except in a few very scattered cases, such as NEW FRONTIERS, there does not seem to be much opportunity for fanzine material to ever be snapped up by outside sources. How many pro editors or publishers receive fanzines? Count them on the fingers of one hand. How many of these are in any phase of publishing that could use fanzine material? Oh sure, the articles XERO runs on comic book characters are interesting, and perhaps one or two might be of commercial quality, perhaps, but who in hell's name is going to print such material? Written as they are at that? Who is going to reprint "cartoons and drawings" (not a wne ofwhich, besides the portraials of comic characters, impressed me as being above the generalfanzine run)? Who would have use of that cover illo of the Atom by Ivie? Who would want to use The Master Shall Not Abate? In other words, in the vast majority of cases, your material, and almost all material appearing in a fanzine is perfectly safe without a copyright. How much material has ever been reclaimed f om fanzines? Larry Shaw had a habit, when he was editing, of ocasionally reprinting an item now and again, and perhaps you'll find cases of pros over the years reclaiming some of their earlier material, but this is about the limit. Granted here that some of your material could well find public use. The Blish review, perhaps with adaption the article on Captain Vadio, maybe one or two others, but not without reworking to set the articles apart from fanzine matterial and make them decent general reading.

I feel you are wasting your money on a copyright symbol that has no real value or use, outside of a statis symbol. The material is thrown into the common domain, certainly, but since XERO has a limited circulation, since the material is of interest only to a very few people, since it is written primarily for those few people, and thus has little or no commercial value, then your contributors rights will not be endangered in the least by not copyrighting the zine.

If any fanzines of any era deserve copyrighting for the rather flimsy reasons you have given, then it is the New Trend fanzines. These zines contain materialthat has commercial slant, and what is more important, commercial writing style. The material is of general interest to the reading public, it is not segregated to a few fans and lie individuals, it covers problems and situations well known to the general public. I feel perfectly safe in assuming that much material found, in say, HABAKUK could be sold or resold to any number of interested national publications. Met not a one of these New Trend publications, despite their material, is copyrighted. I assume then that they realize that limited circulation, and other factors which are particular to fmz is about the best protection they can have.///

From a second letter---

Well, let's getthis copyright business settled quickly.

Who would buy "The Fantastic Paperback"? Publisher's Weekly would buy it. They have already bought and printed a somewhat related piece of shorter length but similiar theme from the same author, and they had a copy of "TFP" for over a month now, trying to decide wather to use it or not.

They think it's too long, Charlie doesn't want to out it (at least not tothe extent PW wants him to) and they're sort of rocking back and forth, each waiting for the other to make the first move. Or rather, the next move.

Who would reprint "cartoons and drawings" from XERO? Andy Reiss and Bhob Stewart are both currently selling cartoonist, and Andy has asked me specifically about copyright protection because he might try to sell some of his stuff from XERO.

Who would reprint the comic book selections. On Thursday night, November 16, 1961 a (professional) publisher sat in my living room and said that those articles should be collected and published commercially. Now, before you fly off singing that AICFAD is going to be published commercially, let me point out that

HE did not say that HE would publish it, merely that he thought it "should be done." I will also tell you frankly that I did my best to change the subject. For one thing it would take several more articles to get even a skeleton of a complete picture of the comic heroes. For another, there is too much conjecture and inconsistency in specific articles and between various articles. And for a third, there are too many in-group references that rubbed from stfandom onto AICFAD.

All of this means a lot of work which I've neither the time nor (at present) the inclination to do. At some much later date...maybe.

As for "wasting ((my)) money"...well, obviously I don't regard it as a waste or I wouldn't be doing it. But even if it were, wouldn't that be my business? I mean, we each of us spend our money in such a manner as to derive the greatest pleasure and satisfaction we can. One man insures himself up to the neck and socks every spare cent into premiums. He derives satisfaction from knowing that he will leave a very rich widow. Another man spends his money on automobiles, another puts it in the bank or invests it in stocks, another puts it into high rental so he can live in a fancy apartment while someone else lives in modest surroundings but eats/drinks/dresses better on the money thus saved.

I copyright fanzines.

You know, to each kook his own kind of kandy.

///Like, OK, so you are right with your last paragraph, tis everyone's right to do with his life and cash as he sees fit. Howsomever, you opened the case to discussion when you sent your first letter, and I thereby feel obliged to swap opinions with you. I realize it is your right to do as you wish, but since you invited discussion, then I'll discuss.

As for fanzine reprints. I'll go back a step here again, in saying that certain fanzines (again I refer primarily to fanzines such as NEW FRONTIERS, whose material was of professional caliber, submitted by professional writers, which could be picked up right from the pages of the zine and be reprinted in the magazines. the point then, is whether I consider XERO to be in that class. Many readers did (see Breen's letter for one), however I don't, yet. The point I wanted to make, before we bogged into these specific cases, was that in most cases these days, when fanzines are copyrighted, the material does not deserve copyright, the material is inferior in many cases, and that the copyright symbol had become little more than an expensive status symbol. Now then, I mentioned XERO several times in the editorial because I quite frankly blame you and Pat for starting the whole damn mess. Now, I still stick mostly to my original stand, by far, almost all material in almost all fanzines doesn't need copyright protection because fanzines are too limited in circulation, they do not reach the hands that can plagiarize if material is there which might be used by outside sources, the material is not generally of commercial style or slant, the material is of no interest to a larger reading audience, most of the material has, as you put it "too many in-group references that rubbed off from stfandom". That's why I consider copyrighting fanzines to be worthless.///

Walter Breen; 1205 Peralta Ave.; Berkeley 6, Calif.

I notice in the latest GHOST an item of very great news interest namely the impending explosion of the IES. I have heard reports of this kind from several other sources in recent months, but this is the first one I have seen in print. If I print anything about it in FANAC, it will presumably not violate your anonymous correspondent's wishes under the circumstances, so I hope he doesn't grouch. I know both Hans and Alma Hill, and they are the two BIG reasons why I haven't done anything actively in the IES. I also know that the Journal of the IES is the biggest disappointment I could possibly have received after its big buildup. However, I think your anon. correspondent is a little on the far side for grotching at Hans for printing Soviet stuff. For heaven's sake, there is a gov. agency and a private firm (Consultants Bureau in NYCity) which are devoted almost full time to translating Soviet scientific journals for gov. scientists & others in private industry---regardless of clearance level---to read and check up. Other things of the kind are reprinted or digested or referred to in almost every issue of SCIENCE, which is the official journal of the AAAS; and every professional scientist of any stature reads SCIENCE, and most of them contribute to it. Does the presence of Soviet material therein hurt their clearances? If not, then why should IES members be so touchy about Han's printing Soviet press releases?

WANTED

ALL copies of CAPTAIN FUTURE

Having read the stories, I'd like to own the magazine now. Will pay any reasonable price, single copies or the set.

STARTLING STORIES for Spring 1945, Winter 1946, Jan, May, Sep, Nov 1950, Mar, May 1951

THRILLING WONDER STORIES----Fall 1946
AMAZING STORIES----

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VENTURE SCIENCE FICTION

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IF, WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION

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Vol 7 1957
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Vol 9 1959
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COMDITIONS

All mags must be in good or better condition, or I'm not interested. They must be suitable for a collection, which means no pages loose or missing, nonbent or wrinkled covers, no ink smears tears and the like, frayed spines and worn covers are also out. In some cases, I already have the mags, but due to rereading they are unsuitable for collection, so see that the condition is good. State condition, price and what you have, and send list along to me. I've got a hord of comics I'd like to get rid of also, if you're interested.---Bob Jennings,
Box 1462, Tenn. Polytechnic Institute
Cookville, Tennessee

INDEXES TO CAPTAIN FUTURE, Man of Tomorrow and the Captain Future stories,
by Robert Jennings (with help from and much thanks to Len Colling)

(Titles in capitals denote a "novel length" story, otherwise, a short or novelete)

Title	author	mag	date
CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SPACE EMPEROR	Edmond Hamilton	CAPTAIN FUTURE	Win 1940
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THE TRIUMPH OF CAPTAIN FUTURE	" "	" Vol 2	Fall 1940
CAPTAIN FUTURE AND THE SEVEN SPACE STONES	" "	"	Win 1941
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THE MAGICIAN OF MARS	" "	" Vol 3	Sum 1941
THE LOST WORLD OF TIME	" "	"	Fall 1941
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OUTLAWS OF THE MOON	" "	" Vol 4	Spr 1942
THE COMET KINGS	" "	"	Sum 1942
PLANETS IN PERIL	" "	"	Fall 1942
THE FACE OR THE DEEP	" "	" Vol 5	Win 1943
WORLDS TO COME	****"Brett Sterling"	"	Spr 1943
THE STAR OF DREAD	" "	"	Sum 1943
MAGIC MOON	" "	" Vol 6	Win 1943
DAYS OF CREATION	" "	"	Spr 1944
RED SUN OF DANGER	" "	STARTLING	Spr 1945
Never the Twain Shall Meet	" "	THRILLING WONDER	Fall 1946
OUTLAW WORLD	Edmond Hamilton ??	STARTLING	Win 1946
Return of Captain Future	Edmond Hamilton	STARTLING	Jan 1950
Children of the Sun	" "	"	May 1950
The Harpers of Titan	" "	"	Sep 1950
Pardon My Iron Nerves	" "	"	Nov 1950
Moon of the Unforgotten	" "	"	Jan 1951
Earthmen No More	" "	"	Mar 1951
Birthplace of Creation	" "	"	May 1951

****Brett Sterling can either be Joseph Samachon for WORLDS TO COM and DAYS OF CREATION, and Edmond Hamilton for THE STAR OF DREAD and MAGIC MOON and all others bearing the "Sterling" name, or it can be William Morrison for the lot, take your choise.

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Vol. 1, No. 2 Spr 1940

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Men of Honor Will Garth
The Human Termites (1st of 5 pts) Dr. David H. Keller
Under Observation
The Worlds of Tomorrow (Pluto)

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cover by Bergey (?)
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Death at the Observatory John Russell Fearn
The Human Termites (2nd of 5 pts) Dr. David H. Keller
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Do You Believe? Jack Binder
The Worlds of Tomorrow---Neptune
The Future of Captain Future The Editor

- Vol. 2, No. 1 Fall 1940 cover by Bergey
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 Black Absolute H. L. Gold
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- Vol. 4, No. 1 Spr 1942 cover by Orban (?)
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 The Alien Intelligence (1st of 3 pts) Jack Williamson

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-----END-----

REMEMBER WHEN---

Ron Haydock appealed to the editors of AMAZING STORIES to return to the pulp sized format?
 Emile Greenleaf was a regular correspondent in the Sarge Saturn columns?
 Mike Deckinger placed his name in "The Space Club" of AMAZING?
 There was only one branch of stf fandom?
 Superman was "just another comic hero"?
 Larry Shaw printed Harlen Ellisen's first story?

ARTISTS AND ARTWORK IS NEEDED my art files are pretty low at the moment, too low for confort as a matter of fact. There's not even enough left to publish a colorful, leasurly styled layout type PADAWAY next quarter, and artwork from you enterprising artists out there would be trippily appreciated.

WRITE A LETTER OF COMMENT ON THIS ISSUE NOW,
 WRITE A LETTER OF COMMENT ON THIS ISSUE NOW
 DOIT RIGHT THIS VERY MINUTE
 WELL??

FADAWAY

(Formally titled THE MONDAY EVENING GHOST)

#13

is a science fiction slanted fanzine which appears on the scene (much in the manner of the Abominable Snowman), quarterly during ye old college school year, and perhaps more frequently during the summer months. It can be had normally for 15¢ per single copy, or 60¢ for four copies. No more than 60¢ in subscription will be accepted from this time onward. It may also be had for trade fanzines, or for material printed herein. This issue, being the anniversary, is more expensive. The zine comes to you from the pages of Bob Jennings, Box 1462, Tenn. Polytechnic Institute, Cookeville, Tennessee.

A listing of the staff----

Robert Jennings---Editor/Publisher
Clay Hamlin-----columnist
Ron Haydock-----columnist
KEN Gentry-----art staff

ART STAFF and
KEN Gentry---4, 8, 23, 26, 32, 43, 51

ART CREDITS

Ralph Rayburn Phillips---2, 67
D. Bruce Berry-----5, 37, 40, 41, 46, 47,
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Tim Dumont-----10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20,
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