

5¢

## FANTASY ASPECTS

15¢

To All  
N3F Members

To Others

THE REVIEW OF CURRENT FANTASY FAN  
LITERATURE

NOV. 1947

## CONTENTS

No. 2

Editorial. . . . .	Page 2
Metropolis / Forrest Ackerman Alchemist	Page 3
'Snow Use Tom Jewett . . . . .	Page 5
How Not To Believe A Critic. . . . .	Page 7
Bob Tucker Fan Tods	
It's Fiction But Is It Science? . . . . .	Page 9
Tom Gardner Fan Tods	
The Devil To Pay. . . . .	Page 11
Harry Warner, Jr. Horizons	
Eblis In Bakelite . . . . .	Page 13
James Blisch Tumbrils	
Collecting. . . . .	Page 15
H. Cheney, Jr.	
Pumping Station. . . . .	Page 17
Timothy Orrok Sparx	
The Spirit Of Man. . . . .	Page 19
A. B. Chandler Fantasy Review	
Synthesis. . . . .	Page 28
Chandler Davis Blitherings	
Letters. . . . .	Page 29
Readers	
Greener Than You Think. . . . .	Page 31
Book Review	

N. F. F. F.

Twin Star Pub.

FANTASY ASPECTS, presenting the best from the current fan publishing field, is published by Twin Star Publishings, under the sponsorship of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. Fantasy Aspects appears on an irregular schedule. Right now it seems to be a semi-annual. Oh Well. A fee of 5¢ per issue from "NFFF" members and 15¢ from non-members is asked to help defray publishing and postal costs. Only don't pay for more than one ish as a time.

AN AMATEUR - NON-PROFIT PUBLICATION

John Cockcroft 1947

EDITORIAL

Let us lead off this editorial with a thank-you note to all the swell fans who wrote about the first ish.

You seemed to like the idea of a reprint mag. Hope you like this issue.

There are a few changes this issue. As you requested we have double-columned the whole issue. Sorry that the cover is one color, next issue we'll have two colors. A real innovation, we believe, is our interior format. We have begun all the articles, etc. in the front of the mag, and continued in the rear of the mag. This is the format followed in the slick fiction mags. Do you like it? Instead of a variety in headings, we have made them all similar, to form a rhythmic pattern. Rhythm can turn to monotony, tho. Let us know what you think.

Our selection committee is working now and here are its choices: D. B. THOMPSON; Synthesis, How Not To Believe A Critic, The Devil To Pay, Snow Use, Collecting, It's Fiction But Is It Science. ART WIDNER; Pumping Station. JOE KENNEDY; Death Into Life, Eblis in Bakelite. HAROLD CHENEY, JR.; Metropolis. Don't get the idea that the picking of material is a closed matter. All your suggestions will receive close consideration. Next issue will introduce a feature that has been practically begged for. FANDOM'S HALL OF FAME; an article picked from the best of yesteryear. Any Nominations? And how about a better name for the feature. Suggestions are welcome. Don't know as we should talk about a next issue. If we maintain this schedule, it will be some time 'ere #3 comes out. To put it bluntly, our laziness coupled with our activities (8 hrs. work, 4 hrs. of p. g. high school, 8 hrs sleep, & eating, dressing, going to and from here and there) make the printing of FANTASY ASPECTS a long drawn out affair. If some ffans would like to help with the typing, we might do better.

PURELY PERSONAL the Editor

AT the PHILCON last august, Jack Speer attempted to have a resolution passed putting the PHILCON on record against the Shaver Stories and the magazine featuring them. Geo. Caldwell in his last LUNACY, expressed a forget-about-it, its-their-business attitude. I would like to take a stand mid-way between these. Certainly, as fans and enthusiasts of fantasy fiction, it is essential that we take an interest in the mags that present it. By virtue of having read varying amounts of stf, we can also feel able to criticize the stories they print. It is to our interest to discuss the Shaver saga, and do all logical and ethical to suppress them. However as somewhat sensible people, we must realize that no protest from a few hundred fans is going to dissuade the publishers from a policy that has boosted the mag to a circulation well over 200,00.

Miss Gnaedinger would like nothing more than to give us the old Munsey reprints. Sam Merwin would leap with joy if he could abolish the Bergey covers. John Campbell would like nothing more than to give us a large size Astounding. They can't. Popular pubs is bound to a no-reprint policy. Standard is devoted to its lurid, hack covers. Street & Smith can't spare the paper for Ast. It seems certain that Mr. Palmer has almost free hand with his two mags. He wants paper? he gets as much as all others put together. Art? ZD's art staff is one of the best. Palmer is in a position to give s-f fans the dream mag. What do we get? Shaver. No I'm not mad. Just sick when I think of what Amazing Stories could be, then what it is.

The sponsorship of this magazine by the N. F. F. F. does not necessarily mean that the NFFF or its Officers and members approve the views expressed in this magazine.

# FROM THE ALCHEMIST METROPOLIS

by  
FORREST J.  
ACKERMAN

"Metropolis" is a top contender for the greatest scientific film of all time. I first saw it about 20 years ago, and I saw it for the 10th time a few months ago. Tho the acting has become dated, its feeling of futurism has survived 2 decades -- its fascination is still fresh.

The picture opens in the Pleasure Gardens of Freder Fredersen, son of the master of Metropolis, the supercity of 100 years hence. Young Freder, clad in the "balloon pants" typical of the early work of the artist Paul, is amorously chasing about a bizarrely-clad group of beautiful female aristocrats. Haira, daughter of one of the subterranean workers who slave to keep the surface city operating, enters the Gardens. With her is a group of workers' children. On an annual holiday, she is showing the underprivileged boys and girls how their "brothers" live.

It is love at first sight for Freder. For the first time in his presumably wastrel life he becomes aware of the workers who support him in such idle luxury. He descends to the level of the Machines to observe their plight.

Work shifts in Metropolis are of 10 hours duration, and utterly drain the men, who march leadenly like robots to the descending elevators at the end of their work period. Freder is

dwarfed by the mammoth machines which are providing power to a city of (van Vogt's estimate) 30 million, and watches awestruck at their operation. The men operating them become mere automatons as they toil to keep up with the required adjustments.

One weary worker, unable to tend his job further sees with horror an indicator rising to the danger mark.

Suddenly the gigantic machine explodes! The steam spurts from its seams. The very floors are shaken. Corpses fly thru the air. Freder witnessing this disaster, is dazed. Before his very eyes the smouldering machine seems to take on the form of a monster-god with gaping jaws. Moloch! He imagines he sees slaves being whipped up the stairs and into the fiery maw of the machine-dAemon.

The workers, their spirits long dulled by subservience, are unaroused. Methodically the dead and maimed are removed, repairs to the Machine are commenced, new drones take the place of the missing men. Freder rushes in alarm to his father. High in his citadel, John Fredersen directs the destiny of the mighty Metropolis, uncaring for the downtrodden poor who make his luxury and power possible. There is only one word for the magnificent city itself with its aerial traffic arteries

And stratoscrapers: Overwhelming.

Freder babbles forth of the tragedy he has just witnessed. His father is cold to the suffering of the subterraneans. He is merely annoyed that his son should have seen this incident, and been so affected by it. Freder is appalled at his father's callousness.

Determined to help right the wrongs of his father, Freder again descends to the level of the machines. Here in the steam-murky atmosphere he comes across a man feverishly attempting to meet the demands of a clock-like machine. The machine is man-tall, with perhaps 60 bulbs on its circular surface. It has three movable hands. As bulbs flash on, the man must move the nearest hand to one. This, for 10 hours at a time.

The overstrained worker collapses in Freder's arms. Freder takes his place. Unused to such exertion, before long he is in agony and crying aloud, "I did not know 10 hours could be such torture!"

\*\*\*

For some time John Fredersen's spies have been bringing him mysterious scraps of paper, seeming to show some catacombs below the city. These sheets have been found on the bodies of dead workers, killed in accidents of when inadvertently dropped. Puzzled by them, Fredersen decides to visit Rowtang the inventor to get his opinion on their meaning.

Rowtang, a brilliant eccentric, lives in an old house in the middle of the city. The 5-pointed star, ancient symbol of the al-

chemist, appears in various places around his house. He shows Fredersen his latest invention: a robot. More properly it should be termed a robotrix - mechanical woman - for the beautiful metallic body is femininely fashioned. Rowtang commands his creation to rise. It slowly walks forward, extends a hand to Fredersen who is greatly impressed.

Meanwhile, Fredersen's son, having donned a worker's clothes and been accepted as one of them, learns the meaning of the secret sheets. They are directions for the meeting place where Maria, the worker's daughter with whom he has fallen in love, preaches to the workers. He attends a gathering in the catacombs, hears Maria tell the tale of the construction of the Tower Of Babel. This is graphically pictured. We see the noble dream of an ancient skyscraper to reach to heaven. But the men who conceived the super-building had no care for the hands which would have to construct it. At last the slaves revolted and tore down the tremendous edifice. "Halfway between the head and the hands must the heart be" was the moral of Maria's tale. Freder listened entranced.

John Fredersen, led to a secret observation vantage by Rowtang, also heard Maria's lecture. He did not like it. He instructed the inventor: "capture Maria. Make the robot into her likeness. Send it among the workers to stir up revolt."

/I must interject myself into this synopsis at this point to state that (cont. on page 22)

# FROM IMAGINATION S'NOW USE

by TOM JENETT

Several magazines have presented articles on producing snow by artificial means. A certain Vincent Scheafer of the General Electric laboratories in Schenectady, N.Y. developed this method in which pellets of dry ice (solidified carbon dioxide) are sprinkled over cloud banks. The moisture in the clouds is quick frozen and drops in the form of snow. It is expected that mountain health and sport resorts can be plentifully supplied with that cold, white stuff, and cities can be kept devoid of snow by salting prospective snow-clouds so that the snow falls on the out-skirts. Only it DOES seem peculiar to deprive the sterile hardness of the city of its only form of face lifting.

In the same vein, I foresee a flood of pulp stories with this idea therein. Let us take each of the stiff-antasy pulps and speculate as to how this latest scientific miracle will be presented. Authors please note.

In PLANET, the pulp of the pulps, we may see this: A fiendish plot is discovered by the I.S.P. (Interplanetary Space Police) by which the planet Venus, the California of the solar system, is threatened with instant freezing of its ever present moisture clouds by the simple method of a thorough dusting with dry ice. A sturdy I.S.P. agent volunteers to join the gang which he does after ingeniously cutting his affiliations with the

I.S.P. by beating up his superior officer. After joining the gang and telling cleverly twisted stories of secret devices, he is accidentally found out by the beautiful nymphomaniac daughter of the ring-leader. He professes to fall in love with her, tho, and if she aids him he will get for her a full pardon from the Tri-Planetary government. So after numerous trials and tribulations (it's a novel, y'know) both of them tie up the case by tricking a confession from the girl's father, and all the criminals go to the under-sea penitentiary on Venus, including the girl, who now runs the write-under-water fountain pen concession. Yes, the I.P.S. agent double-crossed her, for he was married to a girl from the Martain deserts and was the father of eighteen little sand-hogs.

AMAZING would handle this theme differently. Here we have a bunch of diabolical deros lousing up the fruit orchards of California by making snow from the inimitable smog, leaving only the smoke. Naturally this forces thousands of ochardeers out of business as there are only so many smudge-pots! So the Chamber of Commerce hires a private detective to check up on their long-time rival, Florida. Nothing incriminating is found there, however, and fearing exposure, the deros kidnap the pri-

vate eye and take him deep into the caves below Los Angeles. The confidential agent escapes finally and reports the cave-dwelling deros to John L. Lewis, who is converting his furnace to burn fuel oil at the time. An alliance between Lewis and the dero is suspected but nothing can be proven. The secret agent returns to Los Angeles and from observations taken while in the caves deduces that the deros are taking vengeance because of the skepticism of Bixel St. fans. Whereupon, an emergency L.A.S.F.S. meeting is called, and the resulting hot air completely defrosts the Atmosphere. Ackerman is pronounced Kink for a Day, and Tigrina made honorary member of the Chamber of Commerce, several other famettes becoming chambermaids.

THRILLING WONDER incorporates a novel twist by having a sane scientist wreaking havoc by inundating the editorial offices of Standard publications in tons of artificially-produced snow. This in revenge because of a rejected manuscript dealing with a threat to the safety of the solar system, which plot is naturally copyrighted by Ed Hamilton. But Manly Wade Wellman shows up with John Carstairs, the Botanical Detective, who sends out a Plutonian Frigiplant which traces the dry ice particles, and as a finale, freezes the sane scientist into an early grave. All the involved are unharmed except for Sam Kerwin, Jr. who suffered a strained sacro-iliac shoveling snow.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES might do it like this: Chicago is deluged by tons and tons of snow which cuts off

all Communication from the outside world, which maybe isn't so bad after all. But Hamling & Geier Literary Productions, Ltd. (to Z-D) goes into action, making notes and trying to figure out what happened. The Junior partners (senior partner is a typewriter) finally discover that all the dry ice in the city had been bought by one Joe Soaks, a FA proof-reader from Missouri who had been deported from that state because he hated pianos. Enraged at his thankless job, he turned as a side-line to spirit-Rappings -- knocking on the floor with emptied liquor bottles. Evicted, he planned a plan of reducing the metropolis of Chicago to a state of Paleolithic primitivity by an excess of snow. But Hamling & Geier, Literary Productions, find Soaks and threatened to turn him over to RSSHaver if he doesn't confess. He confesses. After putting him in a padded cell, the one recently vacated by you-know-who, Hamling & Geier, Literary Productions, scours into activity and soon every trace of snow in the Windy City is gone, due entirely to H & G's idea of tacking Esquires on every lamp post.

Whattaya mean, that ain't fantastic.....

STARTLING brings in Captain Future and the Futuremen. A secret cult, hipped up on isolationism, wishes to halt all rocket ship travel by disrupting landing field operations all over the Earth. So, clouds over fields are bombarded with dry ice, and valuable landing equipment is mired in deep snows. Moisture and dry ice are kept coming until not even the fiery blasts

(cont. on page 21)

# FROM FAN-BOOS

## HOW NOT TO BELIEVE A CRITIC

by  
BOB TUCKER

I hesitated somewhat (a lengthy matter of two or three seconds) before bursting into print with the following essay on why critics as a whole are about as reliable as a groundhog in February, because not so long ago Don Wollheim reprinted a professional review of one of his books and was promptly damned as an ego-booster of the first water. I came to the conclusion, though, that the results of this couldn't be much worse than a crushing attack or 2 similar to the one made by Harry Warner, commenting on the Wollheim reviews. Believing these old shoulders able to withstand such a jolt after the padding I am shamelessly going to give them herewith, I forge ahead.

Critics aren't worth a damn. No two of them agree on anything. As Exhibit "A" we will by chance --- oh, purely by chance mind you -- show you the professional reviews given a book picked at random -- purely by random, mind you. The book is "The Chinese Doll." The name of the author escapes me at the moment.

Review #1: "Suspicious drowning of Chinese chauffeur for ill. gambling den gets imaginative private eye Horne into all sorts of trouble. Horne tells capitally mystifying yarn in letters to gal he loves in spite of all temptations. Payoff is real sockeroo. Well worth read-

ing." --Saturday Review of Literature.

Sounds good enough to make you want to rush out and buy two or three copies, doesn't it? Ackerman bought four. But tarry a moment, loose money, and listen to another critic.

Review #2: "...Doll... is a new entry in the moderate tough vein but a regrettably clumsy one contrived to swing finally into a gigantic surprise which is, unfortunately, neither surprising or sensible. It telegraphs itself as a possibility almost from the first and when it comes it is flatly unconvincing and labored. Meantime the action has jumped about erratically and busily, but uninterestingly. The style is familiar, nudging toward literacy in that nervously lordly way which transmits staccato conversation in stilted polysyllables." --- Philadelphia Record.

Upon reading that, Ackerman will ship back all four copies. The review gives rise to the impression that the reviewer is a frustrated English professor who owns a trunk packed with rejected novels. But away with such thoughts; the above is an honest opinion of an honest reviewer. Look how wrong the Saturday Review was, look how their reviewer was taken in by my foul cunning. Let's try again below.

Review #3: "Sound the gongs for the most ingen-

ious mystery this reviewer has seen all year. It has novelty in form, simplicity and deception in plot and toughness and speed in action plus good writing. It starts with a bang and ends with a surprise twist as good as anything since "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd," altho we should say since we brought it up, the solution isn't the same as in that much discussed classic.

"The story's told in letters to the girl he loves written by Charles Horne, a private 'tec who gets one of those mysterious commissions followed quickly by the rubbing out of his client. There's a gambling den, a tuxedoed manager, sleek black cars with exotic Chinese girl drivers --- that's where the doll comes in --- a woman doctor, a group of amateur journalists, smalltime cops and politicians, sluggings, shooting and sleuthing. Not a thing new in the lot, you see, except the cleverness of the author who takes these well-worn items and combines them into a tale that sparkles with originality and winds up with a wallop not one experienced connoisseur in armchair mayhem in fifty will see coming." --Columbus, Ohio, Dispatch.

Ackerman will promptly re-order his four copies. Comparing this one to the one written in the City Of Brotherly Love, the harried author will begin circulating petitions calling for the transfer of that misapplied slogan to the beautiful Ohio city, where they really love all mankind. Even the clumsy mystery writers who nudge towards literacy at two-fifty a

copy. But seriously, review number three seems as far fetched in one direction as review number two seemed in the other.

Review #4: "Fairly tough, generally consistent tale of killings in small Illinois city mixed up with local politics and gambling. The solution involves an odd twist which you may not like." --Providence, R. I., Journal/

Ackerman ships back two of the four copies, deciding that perhaps he overestimated the worthiness of the book. And Then:

Review #5: "...Tucker chose one of the most awkward of literary techniques (he tells his story in letters from a man to his wife) for "The Chinese Doll." However, his chapters are so little like letters from a man to his wife that the reader will hardly be conscious of the device until, at the last, he finds out why it was adopted.....The setting is a small town but the pace of events in in big-time tempo. Tucker chooses to disregard one of the long-accepted limitations on detective fiction. The reader may form his own opinion as to the fairness of the solution." ---Richmond, Va., Times-Dispatch

There! Ackerman went and shipped back a third copy, keeping only one for his library. He has come to the conclusion that I played a dirty trick on the customers and keeps that one copy only because he is a completionist. In regards this continually--appearing hint in many reviews that I didn't play fair with this or that rule, or that I broke a long-standing convention concerning mystery (con't. on page 26)

# FROM FAN-TOODS BY THOMAS S. GARDNER IT'S FICTION, BUT IS IT SCIENCE? ED HAMILTON'S THE STAR OF LIFE

Startling Stories, after an appallingly long stretch of undistinguished writing, has shown, during the past year, a commendably steady trend to improvement. A notable example of this is to be found in Edmond Hamilton's "The Star of Life," in the January 1947 issue. Altho this story is marred by serious faults in logic, which preclude its being rated as a really top-notch job, it has a substantial plot which can hold the interest of even a veteran scientifiictionest.

Standard's editors have adopted, it is said, a policy which requires the novels for Startling always to start off in the present and then to shift to the future for the action and the story. The repetition of this sort of interest-hook ever and again must prove very boring unless the story into which it leads has a vitality of its own. In "The Star Of Life" Hamilton has succeeded in writing just such a story. The introduction sticks pretty closely to the prescribed formula. The main character, Kirk Hammond, embarks on the first attempt at a rocket flight to Mars. When a gravitational field screws up his calculations, he uses up his fuel and then, rather than perish of slow suffocation when his air supply runs out, he choses a quick death by opening a port. But (as seems invariably to be the case in science-fiction)

his body freezes and is preserved for ten thousand years and then revived on recontact with the Earth's atmosphere. This, of course, is a stock situation, which may be accepted at its face value for story purposes. As a matter of actual, scientific, possibility, however, it is an extremely shaky structure. Now it is true that small forms of life, one-cell animals, and even a few metazoa, are revivable if frozen suddenly so that the ice crystals formed are so small that they do not ruprure the cell walls. The trick of revival is of equal importance, as well. With complex organisms it is certainly imperative that the thawing-out take place very uniformly. That is, some parts of the organism should not be fully revived while other dependent or supporting structures are still inactive. Short-wave radio heating from the inside is best. I doubt severely if Hammond would revive as easily as described, even if we assumed that he was frozen instantaneously (which he quite certainly wouldn't be, as the cooling would be only by radiation into space) and that he could survive the effects of the sudden pressure drop, which include such pleasant things as rupture of the intestines and ear drums, detachment of the retina of the eye, and so on. Nevertheless the cold-storage method of travel into the future is a

definite possibility for some forms of life, and perhaps even for man under very rigidly controlled conditions unknown to us at the present time. Most certainly sperm can be so preserved, for that has been done successfully already.

The world into which Kirk Hammond is thrust on his resurrection is one in which the normal human species exists under the domination of a mutated human type. These "Second Men" are immortals who arose when interstellar explorers penetrated a distant star cluster, where they were exposed to hard radiations which produced an evolutionary change rendering them immune to natural death. The Second Men consist entirely of the original exploration parties, plus later recruits to their ranks. All were originally normal men, but on exposure to the rays from the Star Of Life they had undergone the metamorphosis to the immortal species. Here Hamilton makes the mistake of having the adult individuals themselves mutate to the second men, rather than have the change occur in their descendants. This is probably impossible, as it would require the same gene change in every cell of the body and then somatic development of the whole system towards a one-line evolution. The immortal second men have children who are further mutations, in a one line direction, and constitute the Third Men, who beget the Fourth Men, who are entirely mental in their reactions to environment and thus completely unhuman in their mental processes. Now it is a

genetic impossibility for a whole group of people to mutate all in one direction! Most mutations are lethal, and the beneficial ones would yield many variant strains, instead of one. Hamilton may have considered that man can mutate in only one direction, but on the basis of already accomplished work in genetics, I believe this, too, must be dismissed as impossible. Thus dozens of traits would appear, some good, some bad, but it is possible that a few individuals would have children who were a new species, but not possible for all the group to mutate first themselves and then produce children of the same genetic make-up to produce a third species, and in turn a fourth species. There you have the first major flaw in Hamilton's story; gross scientific impossibility.

A second fallacy, which is equally bad, is in the matter of human relations and common sense. For thousands of years the Second Men had denied themselves love, and by direct implication sexual intercourse and marriage, because their children would be the inimical Third Men. That is the most obvious tommyrot I have encountered in a long time in science fiction. Let us assume all the bases of one-line mutation in the story and accept the situation as presented. Obviously the logical thing would be for the Second Men to practice rigid birth control or even outright sterilization, and live a normal emotional life. Instead, Hamilton pictures them as horribly repressed, and the whole social set-up that he en-

(cont on page 24)

# FROM HORIZONS THE DEVIL TO PAY

by HARRY WARNER, JR.

Last Summer I spent two month's spare time reading "Science and Sanity," which seemed likely to be the peak of sluggishness for a long time. But barely six months later, that record is completely shattered, for it has taken me a full three months to plow through the original German of Goethe's "Faust." It would have been much easier to read a translation, of course, but the opera libretto knowledge of German that I've picked up, aided by a good annotated edition, made it not too difficult--just very slow. And now that I'm finished, I'm convinced that a poet as great as Goethe would be required to do a really competent translating job. Further, individual phrases or brief passages are flatly untranslatable into good poetry, because they express the thought in the perfect way, and that way naturally fails to scan and rhyme if translated literally, but loses its effect if put into different words.

Externally, of course, "Faust" is the familiar story of the man who signs away his soul to the devil which removes the danger that someone will complain that I'm putting non-fantasy matter into HORIZONS by writing about it. This theme is familiar in English literature through Marlowe's play, and in music through works by Gounod, Wagner, Liszt, Berlioz, Boito, Bus-

oni, and many others. In science fiction it still bobs up occasionally; witness the recent ASTounding yarn, "The Code." Goethe goes immeasurably farther than any of these, and is at once more explicit and more puzzling.

Philosophically, it's still not easy to settle on a "meaning," although the question has been argued for more than a century. The edition to which I had access insists that a middle course must be taken: the reader must consider the drama neither as a single unit in which everything contributes to the whole, nor as a series of disconnected and meaningless episodes. The underlying philosophy might be construed as a vaguely pelagian and a very comforting one to the man who can believe it, although hardly a logical one: that salvation, or some kind of eternal reward will come to those who try earnestly to live a fruitful life, even though their efforts often results in events that turn out to have quite evil results. "A good man, through obscurest aspirations, has still the instinct of the one true way," the German-speaking God tells the Devil in one translation of the prologue in Heaven. Faust, who very frequently in the play symbolizes humanity as a whole, gets himself into some awful messes, partly through the machinations of the

devil, partly through his own human weakness. He deserts the girl he has seduced and becomes responsible for her ruin. He helps out the Devil in various diabolical schemes that lead only to trouble for everyone in the surroundings. Even when he becomes old and begins to get truly altruistic ideals, Faust quite ruthlessly removes an old couple who annoy him by living quietly in a hut which spoils the view on his domain.

This enormous work, longer than 12,000 lines in all, contains a lot of concepts straight from the volumes of Arkham House. There are two long Walpurgis Night Scenes, one in the best German tradition, the other a Classical one, in which anything from debates over geology to the wildest of revels happens. Once Faust visits a mysterious spot where apes are playing with a ball which, being the earth, is liable to explode at any moment. After his affair with Margarita, Faust enlists the aid of the Devil in bringing back to quasi-life Helen of Troy: the couple promptly bear a son who turns out to be the manifestation of poetry, but destroys himself after a few moments of life in an effort to soar too high into the airy heights. Then there's a little critter in a glass tube, all intelligence and no body. He represents artificially created life, and has quite a time before he finally learns a way to get a real body. The realm of the Mothers is described in terms more awe-inspiring than anything in Lovecraft of Dunsany. However, the

reader gets the impression that this particular matter is a tongue-in-cheek affair, somewhat like another set of gods whose stupendous powers are exalted at length, but finally appear and turn out to be nothing but a few little-clay-filled pots.

In the wildly improbable event that all this may inspire someone to investigate the drama for himself, I would like to make one suggestion: don't read the first part without immediately following it with the second part. The first part, by far the most widely read, simply poses the question and shows one of the events in Faust's career, that of the affair with Margarita. I'm inclined to think, too, that the second part contains some of the highest spots poetically in the entire work, although it also contains some of the less satisfactory moments-----the German monarch whom Faust and Mephistopheles assist with such spectacular results is probably the greatest bore in all literature, and the scenes in which Faust is reclaiming land from the ocean just don't come off. But the whole scene with Helena is tremendously great poetry, the dirge on the death of Euphorion---probably intended as a lament for Byron, whose death had occurred just before it was written---and the final pages of the second part match the superb rhetoric of the first section's prologue in Heaven, the lyrics which Margarita is given to sing, and Faust's philosophizing in the early stages of the work.

It is easy to read a  
(cont. on page 18)

# FROM TUMBRILS EBLIS IN BAKELITE

by JAMES BLISH

Clark Ashton Smith has been called "the greatest American poet" by Edwin Markham, and while it is obvious from internal evidence that "The Man With The Hoe" was a fluke, it is possible for a man to be right twice in his life. Benjamin de Casseres, once a considerable figure in American letters before he took a job with one of Hearst's papers, spoke of Smith in glowing terms; David Warren Ryder and George Sterling, as well as Samuel Loveman, may be added to the list of discerning people who have found things in Smith's work to admire. If one adds to the list the nearly endless columns written about Smith by fantasy fans from Lovecraft on down, it becomes evident that this one man has been one of the most extravagantly eulogized figures in American literary history--the sheer wordage concerning him nearly equals that written about Branch Cabell, a truly fantastic numeral if one attempts, as I have, to run most of it down.

In the attempt another fact soon becomes evident: except for one or two short articles, totalling perhaps 2000 words, no true criticism of Smith has ever appeared in professional or amateur print. I have sought nearly fruitlessly for paragraphs about the man which set forth a clear perception of the kind of work he does, its relation-

ship to the rest of literature past and present, its antecedents and progeny; for any paragraph about him not crammed with sweeping dogmatic statements, false associations, basis of judgement that shift at the whim of the writer sometime in the very course of a line, report of estimates without documentation or demonstration, and emotional assessments which clearly indicate nothing save that their author likes fantasy no matter who writes it, or how badly. More: until last year, despite the fact that Smith has been active for more years than most fans can remember, there was no anthology of Smith's work, nor did any general anthology include a line of his much lauded poetry --- nor are any of the latter ever likely to do so now, since the Arkham bookbinders in their expected way have crammed every turkey egg Smith ever laid into print without the slightest discrimination, so that Smith in book form actually means less than Smith hidden from sight in pulp, amateur, and private publications.

It would be interesting to compile a list of representative paragraphs from some of the best articles about this man with comments appended in the style of the Institute of Propaganda Analysis, but the space limitations of TUMBRILS being what they are, a bibliography must

serve. In the meantime, the pertinent question is: Does Smith deserve the damnation his admirers have visited upon him? And the business with which I concern myself is to answer this question in a milieu as remote as possible from the unselective happiness with which the average Weird Tales reader has greeted every tale of Xothique or Averroigne, upon the premise that such an estimate is grossly unfair to the poet and scholar which is Smith at his best.

For Smith as his best is a fine creative scholar. I know of no more impressive way to introduce Smith to a stranger than with The Kingdom of The Worm, which was published in THE FANTASY FAN many years ago. The episode was perfectly in the style of its ostensible period; it could have been easily slipped into The Voyage and Travel of Sir John Landeville, Knight without the unwary reader detecting it in his perusal of that recondite volume; as an entity in itself it held together beautifully, and preserved throughout that atmosphere of naive wonder mixed with uneasiness which is the literary signature of the great French liar -- and a far more difficult thing to achieve than a mere parrotting of stylistic tricks. Some time later, in R. H. Barlow's excellent mimeographed magazine LEAVES, Smith addressed himself to the fragmentary narratives of the prisoners of Elbis which Beckford had planned for Vathek but never included. If anything this performance was the more exacting of the two; Vathek

anticipated the main course of literary development by a century in several ways, but in general Landeville's way of doing things is much closer to what we know as the "Smith style" than Beckford's, since the last-named remained always an undoubted child of the Eighteenth Century, wherein Neither Smith nor Lovecraft, despite the propaganda, could reasonably be expected to feel at home: but Smith carried it off with manifest ease and pleasure.

One of the consequences of these observations is to separate his poetry rather sharply from his prose, in a manner which will become clear in a moment. A study of his poetry will convince anyone seriously interested that its idiom is the product of a pyramid of influences --- Poe and Wilde particularly, and then Shelly, Milton, James Thompson and a lengthening list of stragglers, who exert their effects not in concert but one at a time in the most marked fashion. The Constellations of the Law, for instance, is The Massacre at Piedmont to the life; Satan Unrepentant advertises its parentage too loudly for me to even bother naming it; Requiascet is Wilde's, well-thumbed; and so on. It is not so easy to attach single names to individual prose stories of Smith's, though the influences are plain enough (I am not counting, naturally, the prose-poems, though even there Lanier occasionally nibbles at the edge of the Baudelaire.) One expects poets, however, to be an ancestor-worshipping race, and if Smith

(cont. on page 20)

FROM the FAPAZINE H. CHENEY JR.

# COLLECTING

BY H. Cheney, Jr.

To many fantasy fans, and indeed to nearly all neophytes, an important aspect of fanning is that of collecting fantasy prozines. Every new fan dreams of the time when he may at last have a "complete file." The exotic names of past classics and the exciting recollections of old time stfists only serve to whet the appetites of those who enjoy fantasy literature.

Upon embarking upon his plan for a collection of fantastic magazines, the fan soon runs up against the three principal means of procuring old fantasy magazines: (1) The back-issue magazine stores, which fall into two rough classes; the "ignorant" type who have no knowledge of the prices being paid for magazines of a fantasy or weird nature. To him all old mags are the same and he charges a cover price for them all. Usually this type has a very poor assortment of stf magazines, mostly recent ones with the name strips or whole covers torn off. These dealers never build up large stocks of magazines as they are picked clean by eagle-eyed fen as soon as anything shows up. In extremely rare cases, you may find a place like this, untouched by slannish hands, this would be a gold mine. Then we have the second type, those who are "in the know." These are the type who, upon being asked if they have any stf,

will slyly wink and lead you into their back room and show you a disorderly heap of colorful old fantasy mags. This type usually has at least a hundred stf mags, and sometimes as many as five hundred. However, they are at the extreme as far as prices go. Prices usually start at 50¢ for the newest mags and go up to \$2.00 or \$2.50 for the old stuff. Their weakness lies in the fact that "a little learning is a dangerous thing" because they rate all mags by age, not by name. They have heard that suckers will pay huge prices for fantasy mags, and so they carefully sort out their stock and separate the stf from the rest and slap high prices on them all. They'll price a 1936 Astounding the same as a TWS of the same date. They charge as much for a 1930 Amazing as for a 1930 Ast. Then too, with a few exceptions, the quality of their mags is low, mint copies being almost unknown. There are few in-between grades, but back-ish mag dealers fall pretty generally into these two classes.

(2) we have next the fan dealers. These fellows are very well acquainted with the current market and their prices, though high, are usually on a comprehensive scale, all prices in proportion. They usually start at about 35¢ for the recent mags and scale back to from \$3.00 to \$5.00 for

the old Weirds. The distinction between these boys and the "pros" is, as I have said, their greater knowledge of the market. To the fan dealer a shaver amazing is worthless; to the pro, it's worth just as much as an Ast. of the same date. Another distinction is the fact that fan dealer's merchandise is usually in good condition, or priced down in relation to the condition. To sum it up, it can be said that these dealers are more sensitive to the trends of current fandom.

(3) Our last group is the "casuals." These are the ordinary Joe Fanns who either have duplicates for sale or who wish to dispose of their collection. This is the group that offers the real bargains. Maybe they remember the hard time they had building up their collection and wish to spare some youngster the same troubles. Maybe they get a warm feeling in being able to think that they may be bringing prices down by undercutting the dealers. Anyway, for a large group of mags, their prices are almost only half that asked by dealers. The two new ad-zines out have done much to increase the effectiveness of this category.

Up until now, these fields have pretty much been the only ones to exploit in building a collection. However, even at their cheapest (3) they are a mite to expensive for furthering the enjoyment of fantasy. At the exceptionally low price of 30¢, a file of FFM's would run over \$13, low compared to the \$30 that dealers ask, but still a lot of money when you're

trying to save money for college. My FFM's are nearly complete but if they weren't, and I recieved the above offer, even though it is a bargain that comes once in a lifetime, I'd be forced to refuse. In the same vein if I were offered a set of Clayton and Tremaine Astoundings at 50¢, a ridiculously low figure, it would run near \$45

Now I will describe a different approach to the problem. The basis of which are two separate sets of experiences.

The first experience is one that has occurred with astonishing frequency (3 or 4 times). I'll be talking with someone and the topic might drift towards speculation in science. The other person will casually mention that he used to read stf once and drop the bomb-shell "used to have a lot of them in my attic, throw them away in the war-paper drives, though." As they would drag me away from his throat, I'd speculate upon this virginal, untouched field. The attics and cellars of the nation. Of course the war has played havoc with this field. It cannot be completely ruined.

My other experience was the way I used to help my father, who was a semi-professional book dealer. He had I-don't-know-how-many thousands of cards printed up giving the fire alarm signal numbers for out town; a thing that everyone would look at and notice. He had a short ad on it to the effect of Cash For Old Books, address, phone number, etc. A party would phone and say that they had some old books for sale. Before the war made

(cont. on page 27)

# FROM SPARK PUMPING STATION

by G. TIMOTHY ORROCK

The building spans the canal at its narrowest point, taking in all ten of its component streams. It is perhaps fifteen feet in height, but any closer inspection is halted by the centuries-thick mat of heavy vines, which strive for light as urgently as the roots suck at the water which flows past. It is built of a light-colored concrete, which is impervious to anything but an atomic bomb. Even this has begun to flake off, under the incessant incursions of the creeping tendrils of the plants. Around its base the roots mingle in a tangled knot, save only where the waters of the canal enter, smoothly and certainly, already under the influence of the mechanism within.

The vegetation hangs in leafy festoons across the channel. On it perch a few rodent-like animals, picking away at the tiny leaflets and the insects that live there. These Mars rats are delightful creatures, with fat bellies, sparkling eyes, sharp but pleasant faces, and much keener brains than might be expected in such a race. The Mars rat has seven fingers, two opposable, on each of his six feet. Yet none of these feet have become hands. Why not? Why is it that one race grows great, and builds pumping stations that live for millenniums, while another must sit in the branches of

trees, and eats insects with its marvelous feet? Alas, the Mars rat is content with its lot, and, being content, he cannot advance. Only he that strives can grow.....

The canal waters pulse evenly from the outlet of the station, and flow on, slowly and smoothly, rippling under a low hanging vine, eddying around a huge rock, and continue on their course, straight and true. A small but brilliant sun shines in the sky, through an atmosphere that is seldom anything other than clear and cloudless. A small bird whizzes by, flapping its wings at a tremendous rate to stay aloft in the extremely tenuous ocean of air. Suddenly it closes its wings, and plummets to the surface of the canal to seize some choice minnow. Its larger cousins sometimes feast on the young of the Mars rat, as predators always triumph over the incautious.

From the bird's viewpoint, above the thicket, the canal is seen to stretch out for miles on end, the several channels merging into the wide strip of vegetation in the far distance. On and on it goes, straight as an arrow, and with much more steadfastness of purpose. The canal is not to be turned aside at the whim of a vagrant wind, or deflected by a chance tree or boulder.

The sun falls lower in

the sky. and the temperature falls in direct proportion, as the shadows of the great plants spread out along the smooth surface of the stream. The Mars rat retreats to an overhang in the bank, a hollow in one of the roots, a den burrowed out of the root-filled soil, any place where two or three may get together, and keep warm.

The sun drops behind the smooth horizon, and, almost instantly, tiny fingers of ice form on the surface of the canal. They are swept away, and broken, but, more insistently, they form again, are caught, perhaps, in an eddy, or in the clutch of a trailing fiber. Soon the surface has congealed, though the water ripples on beneath. By morning the ice will be an inch in thickness, and the sun will thaw it out only slowly. The vines retain their internal warmth in thick root stems and heavy trunks, and life processes continue. Synthesis and analysis, energy released by oxidation, life....

When the sun is still barely above the horizon many of the bright points that are the stars are seen, and, as soon as its brief twilight is done, the glories of the Martain firmament open out with all their splendor. A million glittering points of light, splashed on the inner surface of a sphere by a celestial painter's brush, are there; dim phobos is rising in the west, Demios is at the zenith. The Milky Way is a mist of silver across the sky. But for whom? The Mars rat is sleeping soundly in his burrow, the plants are not sensible to

the grandeur. The old lartains have gone to far ends of the Galaxy long since. Only the tireless mechanism in the station works on, pulling water in, pushing it out again, striving boldly so that life on Mars shall not cease.

REPRINTED FROM SPARK #3  
H. M. Spelman III, 75 Sparks  
St., Cambridge 38, Mass.  
free samples upon request.

Cont. from Page 12

THE DEVIL TO PASY

By HARRY WARNER, JR.  
From HORIZONS #30

lot of false meanings into the poem, some of which Goethe could not possibly have intended. When Faust and the Devil produce inflation in the kingdom by issuing currence on the treasures which everyone believes is buried in the ground, the whole thing sounds like an inveighing against capitalism; and the little artificial man acts as if he knew all about the evolutionary theory when he decided to dive into the ocean and work up to the body of a man by starting with the simplest os forms. It isn't too easy to decide exactly what Goethe did mean in some places, and it is probable that he meant nothing at all in quite a few spots; and the whole thing is perfect proof that, the latest experiments notwithstanding, it's perfectly possible to write great and very clear poetry without being in the least obvious or superficial.

REPRINTED FROM HORIZONS #30  
Distributed through FAPA and  
VAPA by Harry Warner, Jr. of  
303 Bryan Pl., Hagerstown, Md.

# FROM FANTASY REVIEW THE SPIRIT OF MAN

A REVIEW OF OLAF STAPLEDON'S "DEATH INTO LIFE"  
by A. BERTRAM CHANDLER

In Stapledon's last book, "The Darkness and the Light," we were given a picture of two warring principles. In his own nature -- if I may be permitted to conjecture -- there has been a similar struggle, a conflict between the novelist and the philosopher. In this book the philosopher has won.

Those of us who like our pills sugar-coated need not be discouraged. The pill, undoubtedly, is stronger than of old. The sugar coating has diminished in quantity, but the quality has not deteriorated.

There is a hero in this book. It is not the moth (beautiful symbolism!) trapped in the big, doomed bomber over Germany. It is neither pilot nor rear-gunner, nor any of their individula spirits, nor is it the group spirit into which they merge after the destruction of their ship.

It is the Spirit of Man. And the Spirit of Man is the moth, trapped at the finish and destroyed, when ages hence the Sun, flaring into a nova, engulfs and annihilates all the Man-colonised planets of the Solar System.

As a piece of philosophy, comforting to the agnostic to whom the conventional heaven and hell of the positively pious and the eternal blackout of the negatively pious are equally distasteful, I can recommend this book. As fine

writing that is a pleasure to read I can also recommend it. But as fantasy it fails to make the grade.

I have wondered many a time why Mr. Stapledon persists, with the Moon already at our back doorstep, in postponing for so long in his future histories the first interplanetary flights. And I wonder why his future men, faced in this book as in others with the not-too-immediate peril of an exploding Sun, make no attempt to bridge the gulf between the stars. To him, and to his characters, Far Centaurus is not even a dream, let alone a possibility.

The Neptunians of "Last and First Men" did, to their eternal credit, attempt the Dissemination when the End was upon them. But there was not over-much enthusiasm. And "Odd John" went all philosophical on us and demonstrated the lack of survival value in that particular mutation by refusing to put up a fight. Only "Sirius" - a dog - of all Stapledon's characters demonstrates that will to live that is an essential part of the Spirit of Man.

His Spirit of Man is a fair substitute for personal immortality -- if it itself is immortal. But it is not. Symbolised by the trapped moth, it is lost in an ecstasy of adoration when its not inevitable end approaches.

It is all very beautiful. But I'd prefer something with more guts.

Reprinted From FANTASY REVIEW #1 Published by Walter Gillings at 15 Shere Road, Ilford, Essex, England.

## EBLIS ON BANKEDLOUE

by James Blish  
FROM TUMBRILS #2

appears to be more than a little overly sensitive to the decadent-Romantic universe of discourse, still and all such a pressure is not lightly shrugged off. In addition, the synthesis of the best of bygone poems, up to and including direct quotation, has become by The Waste Land and the Cantos a nearly standard Twentieth Century technique; and Smith occasionally achieved some really moving effects with such electric material -- witness the ending of Medusa, or In November, or even more markedly, in Chant of Autumn where the intoxication is no less magical for being the heritage of Swinburne. Occasionally the results are more unfortunate and Smith gushes forth a Hashish - Eater - "perilous nightmares of superterrestrial fairylands accursed," in Lovecraft's mashed-potato language, but to the sober reader merely the sewage of a plastic-and-chromium Eblis.....The matter, it appears, is not entirely under Smith's control, and until he decides just who he is, we must be content to spear the effective poems like fishes as they float by.

In prose the matter is entirely under Smith's control. In the two works I have named above, and in one or two others, he has demonstrated conclusively that he has the sensibilities and the sensitivity to handle nearly any prose style that happens to appeal to him, excepting only the very tightest and sparest

of modern idioms. The inevitable conclusion is that his characteristic prose manner, with its material drawn exclusively from the Poe horror story and the Wilde fairy tale, and its style from the glaucous logorrhea of Sir Thomas Browne's Hydrotophia, is a bad one. It is incomprehensible and boring to the pulp readers whom he has - perhaps perforce - addressed most often. It is moribund and intolerably "arty" to a literate reader. The best he can hope from it is that it will please the very tiny segment of the reading public which is made up of men like Derleth and Lovecraft, who, incapable of distinguishing the artistic from the arty, can pass it through their digestive tracts and absorb from it the little nourishment that it contains.

As a product of irresistible influences and inclinations it might have been forgivable. As the conscious choice of a man who has shown that he can do better, it is funny. And tragic? Yes; if you think Smith could do that much better. When the laughter is over it might also be counted as evidence for damnation, however; and probably it is better, in the long run, to let his admirers attend to that.

---

REPRINTED FROM TUMBRILS #2  
Published by James Blish of  
325 West 11th St., New York  
City. Distributed through  
the Vanguard Amateur Press  
Association.

---

Dear Editor Merwin:

When are you going to  
revive the one and only UN-  
KNOWN WORLDS. Phil Confan

Continued from Page 6.

## 'SNOW USE

by Tom Jewett

### FROM FAPARATION #1

of space ships can clear the fields... Rocket travel is at a standstill; no ship can land, none can take off. It's a mess, ain't it! Nweton and the Futuremen are stranded on Earth, but Cap and the Brain work feverishly in a laboratory. After weeks of ceaseless activity and after consuming forty-two cases of No-Nod, they set up their device on a mountaintop. Turning on the power, a hyper-magnetic force bends several million cubic feet of air into a gigantic lens, which concentrates the awful heat of the sun on a rocket field, melting all the unnatural snow and ice. Soon all the fields are cleared, the cult rounded up, and the Futuremen hunt for new adventures.

FALOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, with a Finlay cover of course, would have a try at the "lost world" theme. Like This: A dictapator propagates the third world war, not by atomic bombs, but by artificially-produced snows, freezing crops and starving people by the millions. The Dictapator rubs his hands in glee and orders the freezing destruction ceased. But his joy turns to fear as he learns that the oceans of the world are freezing because of the reversed scorched-earth policy. Soon the lands of Earth freeze, and glaciers creep down from the frozen North and cover lands down to the equator. ((The editor presumes that a similar process occurs below

the equator, also. Ed.)) Finally only small, isolated segments of the human race are living, and the future is very black indeed! Now we focus our spot-lite on a man and, naturally, a woman. The last in their tiny settlement, they bravely face frozen death searching for other humans. But in vein. Finally, exhausted, the two take refuge in Mammoth Cave, expecting to die there. Providentially, on the page before the last a fiery comet passes close by the Earth and its heat defrosts everything, and the man and woman come from the cave and look upon a Bright New Earth!

In Astounding SCIENCE-FICTION it'd go like this (We of course would deal with the sociological aspects of the plot): A synthetic-food manufacturer creates snow above the numerous sites of hydroponics companies in the hopes of driving them out of business. The snow raises hob with the liquored-up plants and kills every single solitary vegtable. So until the hydroponics engineers can get into production again, the synth-food manufacturer has one helluva time at the expense of the food-eating people, which includes practically everyone. Money rolls in by the car load, and the synth-food manufacturer plans to snow out the hydroponics companies continuously. Finally one of the hydroponics engineers gets tanked up and goes out and shoots the synth-food manufacturer right in the -- ahem, where it hurts. So the two rival industries square off, gather their forces, and go to beat the bujunior outa each other. And while the bat-

the royal royals, everybody goes back to the farms and raise all the food in the good, old-fashioned way. And hydroponics and synthe-food go out of business and everybody is happy bu them.

WEIRD might go at it this way: Terrific blizzards completely cover Rhode Island with deep snow, at which Lovecraft turns restlessly in his unheated sub-apartment.. At first this is blamed on outre' monsters elated with the death of the late HP Lovecraft (ten years late). The Abominable snowman has his share of the blame. But Wellman brings out his Shonikins who, it seemed, were incensed about being given second billing in Wellman stories. So they conjured up this dry-ice trick and freezed over Rhode Island. On Lovecraft. Carnacki was powerless, and John Thurston and Crash Collins could do no better. Neither could Jack Snow. Lovecraft keeps turning over in his grave. 'Weird Tales' editor goes out to Rhode Island to investigate the supernatch occurrence, but only succeeds in freezing her toes and finding a couple new writers. Lovecraft keeps turning. Several fan organizations offer Satan a few souls if he'll come up and banish the snow but he refuses. Seems he was having a helluva time keeping deros from overrunning his joint. Lovecraft is rhumba-ing by now. Frantic, fans are wielding flame-throwers, blow-torches and Ronson lighters in a last ditch attempt to unfreeze pore little Rhode Island. But in vain. Finally everybody is exhausted and all prepare to leave the

frozen waste; except Admiral Byrd, who likes it there. Then, a miracle occurs! Rhode Island begins to thaw out! First the barren tops of the trees appear, then the tarnished crosses atop church steeples (tall trees). Then chimneys protude from the snow drifts and puff indignantly. The snow level lowers and figures of school children appear where they had been journeying to school. But they thaw out to life, as do the birds caught in flight. Finally at last every trace of the snow is gone. The reason for this is a mystery, until one Lovecraft fan discovers that the frictional heat developed by HFL whirling in his grave melted the snow! Fandom rejoices, and Hadley puts out a revised edition of Lovecraft Under Rhode Island.

---

REPRINTED FROM FAPARATION #1  
edited and published by Tom  
Jewett at 670 George Street  
Clyde, Ohio; for distribu-  
tion through the FAPA

---

Continued from Page

## METROPOLIS

By Forest J. Ackerman  
FROM THE ALCHEMIST VOL 2- #2  
the picture does not make sense. This is probably the fault of the American editor who cut 4 reels from the original script by Thea von Harbou (then the wife of director Fritz Lang) and made a version of his own. I only report what one sees, without always being able to explain the whys and wherefores.7

The workers disperse. Freder is left alone with Maria, who recognises him and greets him with modest affection. They part after

arranging to meet again on the morrow.

Rowtang comes from hiding, pursues Maria. Her flight from Rowtang's flashlight in the styrian dark is really scary stuff. At last she is captured, taken to the laboratory.

Laboratories in American scientifilms have become pretty well standardized in the past 10 or 15 years, patterning pretty much after the original "frankenstein" lab. But, The "Metropolis" lab was German conceived and about twice as complicated as any of them. And much more imaginative. There is one tremendous sequence, where, with halos of fluorescent light encompassing the robot, moving up and down and bathing it from head to foot with radiations, the physical form of unconscious Maria is transformed to the metallic body.

Young Frederesen, attracted to the inventor's house by Maria's screams when she was struggling to escape participation in the experiment, has been a prisoner of Rowtang and unaware of what has gone on. Rowtang sends the robot-Maria to John Frederesen for inspection. Freder Frederesen at last escapes and, arriving at his father's office, sees what he takes to be his sweetheart in his father's embrace. At this the world seems to explode in Freder's face (shown on the screen) and the floor opens up and he falls into a bottomless pit. In a delirium he dreams that Rowtang invites a number of aristocrats to see the robot-Maria perform, to convince them of her lifelike qualities. The robot

looking exactly like Freder's flesh and blood sweetheart, does a licentious dance. The witnesses of this exhibition are hot-eyed, dry-lipped, convinced of Rowtang's genius in creating a simulacrum of a woman. Freder's delirium comes to an end as he sees statues of the 7 Deadly Sins come to life. As death approaches him, playing on a bone as upon a flute, he wakes.

The picture's climax is approaching. The robot-Maria has returned to the catacombs to stir up revolt among the workers. She spurs them to the destruction of the machines, heedless of the fact that in doing so they will endanger their subterranean city. In these scenes I thought Maria superb. Maria was played by Brigitte Helm, who I understand was only 16 at the time. She later appeared in a number of films of a fantastic theme. Her acting as the machine controlled by the mad inventor was both evil and robotic. This is not to say that she walked like a sleepwalker, jerkily or mechanically; on the contrary she was intensely active and supple; but somehow --- inhuman. Like Catherine Moore's later Deidre, "---the taint of metal was upon her---"

As electricity plays all over the screen and the great dynamos and other mechanisms explode, it is nite-time above and the lighting of Metropolis begins to assume crazy flashing patterns. The Master is alarmed. He is called to his televisior by the superintendant of the machines, who informs him that the workers have gone mad.

A further consequence

of the worker's mad actions is that the water mains burst and begin to flood the subterranean city. All the children's lives are endangered. The real Maria escapes, makes her way to the underground city to rescue the children. Freder finds her there. Together they direct the exodus from the doomed worker's world, which is rapidly flooding.

After being driven by the robot to destroy the machines, the workers are suddenly brought to realize the result of their rash action. Where are the children? Drowned, no doubt! And who is responsible? Maria! "Death to the witch!"

The robot (believed by all to be a real woman) is dragged to a city square. A number of autos are piled up and the "witch" tied to a stake atop them. The cars are set afire. Rowtang watches from a hidden corner of a cathedral. Suddenly he spies Maria. If the crowd sees two of them, he believes, they will realize the deception, turn on him. He attempts to capture her. She flees to the top of the church.

As the flames mount about the robot-Maria, the synthetic flesh burns away to reveal the metallic body. The crowd draws away in fright. Suddenly attention is attracted to the top of the church, where the real Maria is menaced by the inventor. John Fredersen is now in the crowd, watching all. His son runs to the rescue. A breathless fight high above, and Rowtang is at last flung to the streets far below.

Last scene of all: Freder acts as the "heart" between his father - the

"head" - and the machine suprintendant - "The Hands" - in a scene symbolic of the new understanding that has been born between the workers and rulers of Metropolis.

---

REPRINTED FROM THE ALCHEMIST  
Vol. 2, No. 2; edited and  
published by Charles Ford  
Hanson at 1501 Ogden Street  
in Denver 3, Colorado

---

CONTINUED From Page 10

## THE STAR OF LIFE

By Thomas S. Gardner

From FAN-TOPE #16

---

visions is a farce from beginning to end. It is stated that the normal human population of the galaxy would refuse to accept immortality because their children would be the Third Men. But under the condition obtaining in the story such a reason is entirely invalid! Since to attain immortality the people had to journey to the Star Of Life to be exposed to its radiations, there is no reason at all to deter the billions of normal men on other planets from first marrying and having their children of normal, first men, genetic make-up, and then, after this period of reproduction, making the pilgrimage to the Star Of Life. Instead of this turn of the plot, the one Hamilton offers is simply that of having the entire galaxy renounce the Star Of Life. This is very much a let-down, since it is so needless. It does, in a way, parallel the story of Kirk Hammond, who loves and loses a girl of the Second Men. The one story is sym-bolical of the other.

Before we go any farther, though, I'd like to enter another, more general, dissent to the immortality theme, as typified by this story. Nearly all the authors of Astounding, Startling, etc., who write of longevity, assume physical methods of attaining it, such as X-ray radiations, radioactive salts, and the like. Now we are beginning to see our way out of the woods, or at least can perceive some glimmerings of light, in the biological field, and the mass of information now at hand on longevity indicates that ageing is primarily a chemical process, the rate of which can be affected and controlled by chemical means. The only piece of work on radiation on this field is that young cells emit ultraviolet light in greater degree than do the old cells, and this is probably an effect rather than a cause. SF writers are getting behind the times; they ought at least to bring the basis of their speculations up to date.

But to return to Hamilton; the two fallacies of major importance that we have just brought out would seem to put his story behind the eight ball. Does it though? Now that I have cussed the story out so thoroughly, am I being paradoxical when I say that I enjoyed it very much? I think not. The action of the story is well plotted, the characters are well drawn, and the plot is basically good, even though wacky from the logical and scientific viewpoints. Except for the introduction which is really not an essential element in the main

plot, the story is no rehashing of any cut and dried formula. There is an excellent surprise twist to the plot; the story tells of an uprising engineered by a group of normal men against the tyranny of the Second Men who have refused to permit the gift of immortality to be conferred on the normal population while reserving it for themselves. Yet we discover at the end that the Second Men are really not such a villainous tribe, and that their seemingly harsh dictum is actually for the good of the normal species. For if immortality were to be universally permitted, this would lead to the eventual doom of mankind at the hands of its children, who would be the genuinely evil Third Men. The Third Men are pictured as brilliant, but unstable, paranoids; whose ascendancy would bring strife and misery to the galaxy. Hamilton disposes of them very cleverly by introducing a weapon which strikes at their unstable minds and converts them to impotent schizophrenics. The Fourth Men turn out to be no menace, once the conflict among the preceding species is resolved. They are completely beyond human motivations and prefer to withdraw entirely from the galactic scene to go on to ends which only they can envision.

So there is still enough meat in the story to permit one to enjoy it despite its failings. I believe that it will rate easily among the first dozen best novels published in Startling since its inception. Hamilton is perhaps better remembered for the

vast amount of backwork he has perpetrated; that, however, has not prevented him from occupying a place among the best scientific fiction writers of yesterday and today, for he has shown that he can turn out good stuff when he tries. This time he almost produced a classic, but missed the chance because of the glaring faluts we have discussed.

REPRINTED FROM FAN-TODS #16  
Edited and published by Norm Stanley at 45A Broad Street Rockland, Maine for distribution through the FAPA

CONTINUED From Page 8

## CRITICS.

by BOB TUCKER

From FAN-TODS #16

ies, let me add the following.

Several weeks after my volume was published I purchased a comprehensive and critical volume on the technique of the mystery story, to find out what I was missing. What I discovered in that volume amazed me. The book included many sets of rules and regulations for the plotting and writing of mysteries, rules laid down by all sorts of well known names in the field, including Chesterton, Gardner, Van Dine, andoucher. It didn't take me long to discover that I had ignorantly broken about 50% of those rules. Ignorantly, because I simply had not known such fantastic rules existed.

My breaking them caused no ill-effects other than a reviewer here and there complaining that I was unconventional, which I suppose is a crime in itself.

Rather than adopt a smug, "I got away with it" attitude, I submit that these rules by these so-called "masters" are so much poppycock, dashed off by that particular "master" who likes to think that the mystery story should be surrounded by rules. Following are the "rules" I unknowingly broke: judge for your self.

(1) No mystery may employ a Chinaman. (2) No mystery may embody a love interest. (3) No mystery may be told in the form of letters. (4) No mystery may allow an even-remotely sympathetic character to be the culprit. (5) All killings must be the work of one individual. (6) The mystery may not be less than 60,000 words in length. And other idiotic regulations which escape me at the moment. To me, these rules simply lack reason. Even the time-honored plot of the killer being exposed in the last chapter has gone overboard; a new mystery now on sale names the killer on the second page but you don't find out who was killed until the last page.

Review #6: "The Chinese Coll'....is a bit on the hardboiled side but with a cleverly twisted plot that packs a terrific final wallop, and several others along the way. I especially liked this one and it's a first novel. Its author is a Director of the Fantasy Foundation---so being a fantasy fan myself, as well as a writer of Weird Tales, I found the notes about Mr. Tucker most intriguing, and shall be watching out for his next with interest." --syndicated column by Dorothy Quick

In eastern papers.

Ackerman hesitates, looks at his stack of Weird Tales, and is lost. Dorothy Quick can't be wrong, can she? So he keeps two copies. Besides, look at the nice plug for the Foundation. Yes, two copies.

Review #7: "Like mysteries that demand sharp wits? This is your meat if it is." Mr. Tucker has worked out a unique problem with the clues there for you to see--if you can penetrate their various guises. It is written in the form of letters, but don't let that stop you." ---Omaha World-Herald.

Now consider poor Ackerman's plight. By this time he is as befuddled as the author. And then he picks up, purely by chance again, the December 28th issue of the Saturday Review and reads that the "Doll" was the second-cleverest mystery of the year. He's lost, I'm lost, and let's all buy a half dozen copies just to be on the safe side and make me a batful of dirty currency.

The gist of the matter can be summed up thusly: Critics aren't worth the money paid them nor the publicity heaped upon them because their views and values differ so radically that a reader who subscribes to more than one publication in which such reviews appear can wind up only being confused, not knowing which to believe. The metropolitan reviewer is an over-slick sophisticate who sits in his tower and pretends to know the reading tastes of the entire nation, possibly not realizing that his own taste is jaded beyond redemption because of an over-

consumption of the commodity he reviews. The Small Town reviewer on the other hand maybe reads one or two books per week and a no-better-than-average novel employing a radical new trick will sweep him off his feet.

Okay, Warner, I'm at the end of my not-too-subtle blast of publicity and ego-bo. Let's have the nasty remark.

---

REPRINTED FROM FAN-TODS #16  
Edited and published by Norm Stanley at 43A Broad Street Rockland, Maine for distribution through the FAPA

---

Cont from page 16

## COLLECTING

By H. Cheney, Jr.  
From HAROLD CHENEY, JR.

us careless, we'd hop in our jalopy and ride off to the prey. Upon arriving and being admitted to a musty attic, we would see a bunch of worthless junk. Careful search would disclose that there were perhaps 3 or 4 valuable books in the lot. We would reassemble the pile and assume a critical air. Finally, after much chin-pulling and brow-wrinkling, we would offer them from 25¢ to \$2.00 for the bunch. You'd be surprised how fast some old widow with orphans would accept. (heh) When we got them home we'd pick out the valuable ones and maybe get about \$10 for them from interested collectors. The rest, except for a few interesting ones we kept for our personal collection, we burned.

Are you with me? Well now it wouldn't be too hard to adjust that to stf mags,

would it? Though ads in the classified would receive perhaps less attention, they would be less bother than the fire alarm cards. An ad something like this:

WANTED: Cash for your old Pulp magazines. Argosy, All-Story, Amazing, Weird, and Fantastic. No Love Detective or Western, please.

might do the trick. I won't estimate on how much response you will get, but you should get some. Answer every reply. You'll probably see a varied assortment of junk, but the

laws of averages will help you. When you do locate some offers among some others, casually offer 25¢ for the bunch. After all, you are just carting away some junk they were planning on throwing away. Keep at it too. As you acquire a reputation for buying mags, people all over the county will be phoning you about looking over bunches of magazines in their attic. You may yet get that complete file for \$25.

---

Reprinted from HAROLD CHENEY JR. published at this address for the FAPA and SAPS

---

FROM BLITHERINGS

by Chandler Davis

## SYNTHESIS

Is it to tramp in step with tramping pines  
Up patient Hill's long slanting mystery,  
To feel the loving hand of summer rain  
Upon our foreheads? Is it to gaze from hilltop,  
In wide bright wonder, at the purple grass  
Far woven on the acquiescent loom  
Of brook-lined meadows? Is it to sit on high,  
Among leaf-shadowed branches of a tree,  
A beech so coolly dim we can pretend,  
At noon, that twilight lies upon our eyes?

Or is it to prod delicately  
With febrile fleshless fingers  
The intricate unknown  
To build the cold hard universe of mind  
On structure of eye and ear  
(Structure dubious  
Dark cornered)  
(World that changes  
Destroying)  
(Mind that flies  
Space airless and unbounded)  
To intergate  
From zero to infinity?  
Is it that?

Which is first? What is good?

Is it perhaps to tread with feet of men  
Old childhood's ancient and ensorcelled mountains?  
Is it perhaps to gaze with wiser eyes  
Upon the child-faced meadow? Is it perhaps  
To relish leaf-stirred breeze upon our cheeks,  
To relish it the more now, knowing?  
To see the settling evening mist as vapor  
Yielding its spirithood into the cold,  
To hear the bullfrog's distant song as poly-  
Chromatic radiance of sphere-spread sound,  
To relish it the more now, knowing?

---

REPRINTED FROM BLITHERINGS #7 Published by Chandler Davis at  
16 Highland St., Cambridge 38, Mass for the FAPA and VAPA

# LETTERS



From John Cockroft, 4 Winship Ave., San Anselmo, Calif.

Dear Harold:

Well I finally recieved FANTASY ASPECTS a couple of days ago and was quite pleased. It is indeed a pub worthy of the Cheney name.

Say that cover foremat is really hot! I only wish that I thot of it first. Stell would be improved 100% with a cover like that. --The double columning in the front of the ish is also most commendable. It would be nice to see the whole mag that way, but far be it from me to wish all that work on you ((your wish is our command. Ed.))

All of the material was good and definitely worth re-printing. But why did you run that prozine index? It seems superflous when one considers the fact that Fantasy Founda-tion has issued one that is vastly more complete and a lot more informative.

A reprint zine has a very high standard to live up to. There is no excuse for you not having the highest quality zine in fandom!! You have the pick of every crop. This is where editing shows up.

Sincerely

From A. Langley Searles, L9 E. 235th St. New York City 66

Dear H. C.

This is a rather belated comment on the first issue of Fantasy Aspects, which arrived some time ago.

You've really got something there! I thought that the idea of a fan magazine reprinting the best material from punlications in the field was a good one before Fantasy As-pects appeared---and now I'm sure of it. This NFFF periodical is definitely worthwhile, and probably comes nearest to replacing the late lamented Vampire.

Especially valuable was John Nitka's volume index of s-f pros. The other articles were entertaining, varing in quality from readability to excellence.

Sincerely,

From Bob Stein, 514 W. Vienna Ave., Milwaukee 12, Wis.

Hello Harry;

---The zine is a good idea, except that many fans will be reading material for the second time.---

From Harry Warner, Jr., 303 Bryan Pl. Hagerstown, Md.

Dear Harold:

---I thought you did an excellent job on the first issue of the publication. It is something that has a definite place in the fan field--if the number of fanzines I receive continue to decline it may turn into the principal source of fan writings for me, if fact.---

Yours,

From Thyril L. Ladd of 33 Cuyler Ave., Albany 2, N. Y.

Dear Harold:

Today's mail brought me the copy of "Fantasy Aspects," #1 and I desire to hasten to salute you, for putting out an attractive and interesting magazine.

This issue is well worth the 15¢, if only for E. H. Price's fine article. I have his long article on Wright in "The Ghost" this is most excellent as coincidental to it.

The index of Fantasy magazines is a valuable item, as a checklist for those who go in for collecting Fantasy Magazines in their entirety. As you are aware, personally, I excerpt tales from them, and have them bound. If my count is correct, I have somewhere around 70 of these bound "mag" volumes, of varying thickness,-- and maybe 20 or 50 more away being bound. The last lot to arrive were 5 volumes of all "Weird Tales" material, which I believe gives me a dozen or better of stuff from that magazine alone - mostly older issues. I have one I'm especially interested in away, being bound, - an all "W.T." affair - called "ALMURIC and OTHERS" by Robt. E. Howard, a great favorite, with me. Some contend that "Almuric" is Howard's masterpiece. I think, myself, that Derleth erred in omitting this from "Skull-Face and Others" -- but A.D. always avoids action, as much as he can, preferring atmosphere and mood. ((Well, perhaps "Almuric" is a little more fantastic than Tarzen, but---- Ed.))

- 2 - Our thanks go out to the following who also wrote in swell letters telling what they didn't or did like about Fantasy Aspects. How about one from you?

Joe Kennedy  
Sam Moskowitz  
Norman Stanley  
Alastair Cameron  
Len J. Moffatt  
J.P. Guinon  
D. B. Thompson  
Joe Schaumburger  
Harley Sachs  
Art Rapp  
Ned McGeown  
F. B. Anderson  
Guerry Brown  
Don Bratten  
Lin Carter  
Walt Dunkelberger  
D. C. Richardson  
Rick Breary

Joe Kirschnick  
W. S. Houston  
Paul Spencer  
Tom Jewett  
M. Diner  
John E. Koestner  
R. R. Reed  
K. M. Carlson  
D. A. MacInnes  
Boff Perry  
L. Averbach  
Lloyd Alpaugh, Jr.  
Richard Frank  
Gerry Fordyce  
Delbert Grant  
L. Hudson  
Gee Peterzen  
Stanley Skarven

Paul A. Doerr  
Rickey Slavin  
John Nitke  
Raymond Isadore  
W.F. Smith  
D. Hutchison  
Richard Sair  
Don Ringler  
Lawrence Weller  
Phil Froeder  
Beak Taylor  
Gary Fordyce  
Ed Lavery  
A. F. Lopez  
David Miller  
H. Spelman III  
Charles Lucas  
Hugh F. Henry

MOORE, WADE

Greener Than You Think

New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1947. 358pp.  
\$3.50

Further Information: First Edition. Jacket design by Wolfgang Rolf. Speer Classification: 35.8 - 43.5

Review: Mr. Ward's book, as most hard cover fantasies are, is a novel first, fantasy second. This review, being read by fantasy enthusiasts, will deal more or less with this second aspect of the book.

The story consists of the written history of the "grass" as written by Albert Weener, the protagonist of the story. It starts with his answering of an advertisement for a salesman by Josephine S. Francis, an agrostological engineer,\* unhampered by degrees or diplomas, a seeker of the truth. She has developed a solution called "the Metamorphizer." This preparation enables a plant to mutate itself so as to adapt itself to any given environment, and make the most of that environment. It is Miss Francis' idea to apply this to grains so that they will grow anywhere, on rocks as well as soil, and grow better.

Weener's job is to sell the Metamorphizer to some farmers in order to raise some working capital. Weener can not see this grandiose plan, but envisions the money to be made in selling it as a lawn restorer. Though the Metamorphizer is not yet perfected



WARD MOORE

or understood thoroughly by its inventor, Weener takes a small sample and goes out to see what he can do. He immediately decides to follow his plan. He applies the Metamorphizer to a lawn and so unfolds the tale.

Weener's characterization is not difficult to see. As the one through whom the story is seen, he is made a small, weak man, so that the reader, comparing himself with Weener, as is natural, is gratified at the contrast, and able to say, "if I were in his place---."

The idea of plant life gone wild is by no means a novel idea to those who have pursued stfantasy to any lengths. The idea of providing the plant with the means of adapting itself to any environment is still

AGROSTOLOGY (agros tolos ji)  
The branch of systematic botany treating of the grasses

fairly fresh, however. (See The Adaptive Ultimate, by Stanley Weinbaum under the pseud. of J. Jessel.) The plot path, though old, is still one of the best for suspense; that is starting with an unimportant, trivial, incident that grows, grows inexorably until it ultimately destroys the world.

Moore's handling of an atmosphere of sinister-ness that develops unbeknownst to the characters is very nice. He shows a fair amount of imagination in the devices that his characters use in battling the grass. There are several methods I would have tried, such as cutting off the grass's supply of oxygen, or smothering it in its own waste matter; but as Moore shows in his story, by the time such methods would have achieved any recognition, it would have been too late to use them. All through the story, the air of "too little --- too late" runs. If we had but used this method that we are using now, earlier, it would have done the job. Several places in the story, one of the characters

will mention space travel as symbolizing the height of foolishness in speculation. If Mr. Moore had but asked any competent physicist or scientist, how would he have seen that space flight is not such a far-off dream of wide-eyed crack-pots. Indeed, interplanetary flight is one of the top research projects in the US Army's experiments with rocket missiles.

The ending of Greener Than You Think is good. Here Moore shows that he does not mean to compromise this story - no "Wake-up-and-find-it's-a-dream" ending, or such poppy-cock as is often inserted in hard-cover fantasy to make it "palatable" for the more mundane readers mars this story!

Taken as a pure fantasy, and compared to the other classics of this field, Greener Than You Think stands up well. We can give you no higher recommendation than to say without a doubt that eventually this story will be reprinted in FFM. Don't wait for this, however, for you'll be missing a great treat in the meantime.

---

SUPPORT THE N. F. F. F. BOOK PUBLISHING COMMITTEE!

Order Now The First N F F F Book ---

DAVID H. KELLER'S  
Gorgeous "Off-Trail" Novel

THE SIGN OF THE BURNING HEART

Cloth-bound -- Limited to 500 copies

Use of a special low-cost printing process, plus Dr. K. Keller's kindness in waiving payment, enables the NFFF to offer this choice collector's item for only

\$1.50 to NFFF Members

\$2.00 to nonmembers

Be sure of obtaining your copy - get your advance order in NOW! Rush check or Money order to

K. MARTIN CARLSON, 1028 THIRD AVE. SO., MOORHEAD, MINN.

---