

THE

FANTASY

COLLECTOR

VOLUME 1
NUMBER 1

EDITOR,
OSWALD TRAIN

EDITORIAL

This is more of an explanation and an apology than an editorial. About a year ago I learned that there were vacancies in the ranks of the FAPA, and I was interested in rejoining. I had been one of the charter members years ago, and after about three years of membership I was dropped out for not doing anything. I suppose I was just a lazy bum and I blame no one but myself. For years I watched from the sidelines, groaning at some of the atrocities that passed for fan magazines, or amateur journals, cheering (silently) when something noteworthy appeared, and wishing I could bang together the heads of certain individuals who were literally raising hell. Then, as I have already said, I heard about the vacancies, sent my buck to Art Widner along with my credentials, and after a time was notified I was in once more.

I made elaborate plans for a regular publication, to appear in every mailing. I even typed out about six pages of rough copy that never reached the stencil stage. But that was as far as my efforts went. I am a putter-offer by nature, I suppose, but during the past year I have really been a very busy guy. First of all, I work. Yup, hold down a regular job. That alone is enough to keep many would-be fans out of any activity. But I was also a partner (and still am, of course) in the pride and joy of Philly; The Prime Press. I am a sort of book seller, after a fashion, another thing that takes up a lot of time. Besides all that, I was president of that finest of all fantasy clubs, the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society--I wanted to retire from that, and got elected secretary, damn it. Under each of these major headings many smaller ones can be listed, but I won't bother.

That is the explanation as to the whys and wherefores.

I supposed I could have whipped together something, but my conscience would have bothered me. It does with this effort, anyway. But why should I sit down and use up stencils and paper for something no one will read? For instance, if I made up a paper all about my opinions of the mailings, and reviewing all those fanzines that review other fanzines--would you read it? You knowed blasted well you wouldn't. That I would consider cheating. Too many of the FAPA editors take the easy way out with that. I never read them myself, for they are a waste of my time, the editor's time, a waste of good stencils and paper, and money. Maybe no one will read this effort of mine, I don't know. But at least it is coming the hard way.

I apologize to each and every member of the FAPA for not having anything in any of the mailings for the past year. In the last mailing there was a notice after my name that said a buck this mailing and eight pages--or else. The FAPA is a wonderful idea and a wonderful organization. I feel honored to be a member. I want to do my share, and I want to continue to be a member. Therefore, witness the first issue of my paper, THE FANTASY COLLECTOR.

--Oswald Train



VOLUME I

NUMBER 1.

THIS PUBLICATION IS DISTRIBUTED
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AN OPINION

I have had something on my mind now for a long time. Maybe some of you have been thinking about it too. That something is communism.

I hate communism. I hate it just as much as I hated Nazism and Fascism. I consider it a cancer that is gnawing at our very civilization. Maybe it sounds melodramatic, but there is only one ism I am for, and that is Americanism. Sure, you saw those very words a hundred times and more. So did I. Sure, they're trite. But I mean it. To make sure that no one misunderstands me, I'll repeat: I hate communism. And I am against it all the way down the line.

You may ask, why all this in an FAPA publication. Well, I am rather tired of reading so-called fan magazines that wave a little red flag with a hammer and sickle. Sure, most of them are veiled, they are the birds who hide under the words "I am not a communist but--" then go on and on defending that very thing they say they are against. I believe in freedom of the press. Yes, let those guys have their little say. But what's the matter with the rest of you, that you sit on your fannies and don't answer them back?

A liberal minded person I respect. I respect the opinions of another, whether they differ with mine or agree with mine. Changes are always needed, changes are good. Progress is change. That isn't what I am barking at, though. I am barking at those birds who hide under the cloak of liberalism, or socialism, and try to undermine everything we stand for. There are plenty of them. Yes, we have reds and commies in the FAPA. They won't

admit it if you ask them, but they are.

Science fiction and fantasy is supposed to be a hobby. The name of this organization is Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Why can't these fan publishers stick to their hobby? Why don't they publish a science fiction or fantasy fiction fan magazine, instead of spouting off endless pages of their political beliefs? And when they do come up with their drivel, why don't more of the others put up a squawk about it?

Why not leave out all these politics? Let's have an organization devoted to fantasy, science fiction and science. Who the hell cares about the political beliefs of Joe Blow? I know I have tread on a few toes--some of the toes stepped on belong to some of my friends. I know all this I have just said isn't presented in orderly fashion, I know it short and blunt. I am not a glib writer, and I don't care to go on for page after page of this, repeating myself over and over. It would be defeating my own purpose if I made it lengthy--and that purpose is to keep politics out.

If we want to know what is wrong with our form of government or with the capitalistic system, or what is wrong with the world in general, or what is wrong with communism and the Soviet Union, we can read it in the papers and form our own opinions. We don't have to read about it all here in the FAPA.

I don't know how the rest of you feel about it, but at least I have told you all what I think about the whole thing.

O.T.

FLIGHTS OF FANCY

by

James A. Williams

(From a speech delivered to the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society March 14, 1948.)

First of all a word or two about my talk here tonight. I had planned to speak around the title "Man's Fight To Fly," but in working up my notes something a bit different evolved. I find I am not so much concerned with man's attempt to fly and his final success, but with his dreams of flying, his passionate desire to emulate the birds. Such a passion probably began with the first thinking man who saw with what great ease and effortless beauty the birds got themselves from place to place, whereas he, man, the ruler of the earth, lord of creation, God's image, had to slug his way through dangerous and deadly swamps, over rivers, around lakes and across mountains, all with tremendous labor.

It is no wonder that man's thoughts should be directed towards devising a method of avoiding the labor and drudgery of getting from place to place. Parenthetically, the final solution of the problem of flight is only another example of man's progress and development stemming from his inherent laziness. Practically all of the great discoveries and advancements of civilization came about to save man work and trouble. The development of this theme would make another talk or series of talks.

To get back to what I want to say here tonight, I want to tell you something about the books that record man's dream and his struggle to conquer the air.

Probably the earliest reference to man flying is in the Old Testament in the Book of Kings, where Elijah was taken to Heaven in a chariot of fire. Using this reference as a take-off point, an opportunist in the science fiction field postulated a theory that Elijah was a visitor from another planet who landed among the Hebrews from a space ship and remained among these people for a period of seven years. Because of his extra-world knowledge, he was hailed as a prophet and was later rescued by another space ship, the take-off of which was described as rising to Heaven in a chariot of fire --rockets, perhaps.

Also in the Old Testament Moses makes reference to flying. This is in the 18th psalm and I quote: "He rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea he did fly upon the wings of the wind."

Another famous and much neglected science fiction fantasy--if I may use the double term--is Paradise Lost. Milton has many references to early flights and even battles.

I have deliberately ignored the whole field of mythology. All of us are familiar with the legends of Icarus with his waxen wings, his father Daedalus and as an example of many other Sinbad's famous voyage by one bird power recorded in the Arabian Nights. Pliny, in his Natural History, dreamed up a notion of flying people, solemnly put forth as fact.

An interesting point of the reference to flying in the air before written history is that the myths of all nations include practically the same stories. This is true with one rather peculiar exception. I do not find any legends of the American Indian which show man's great effort to imitate the birds. There are admiring songs of the birds in free flight, but nothing really relating to early aerial navigation. But perhaps my researches into early American aboriginal lore have not been extended enough to bring this light to fact.

Getting back to the field of written references, it is obviously impossible to refer to or even list all of the early romances mentioning flight. I am going to skip around a bit and describe a few of the more important books. One of them is Dr. Samuel Johnson's only novel, originally published as "The Prince of Abyssinia, better known as "Rasselas." This was issued in 1759 and in it he ridicules the whole idea of the possibility of man's flight. It is interesting to note that Johnson lived to see man ascend into the heavens. This was, of course, in 1782 when Pelatrae de Rozier went up in one of the brothers Montgolfier's balloons.

Much earlier the Marquis of Worcester in his "Century of the Names and Scantlings of Such Inventions as at Present I can Call to Mind to Have Tried and Perfected, etc." (this was issued in 1663) told how he could make a boy fly from one end of a barn to another. I have not read the book or even looked at a copy so I can't tell you how he did it. It is my solemn belief that he didn't.

Skipping back further, the Chinese from the very earliest times developed the art of kite flying to a very finished state.

They were probably the first nation to make observations of the upper air and predict the weather (they can be said to be the founders of the science of meteorology, though how it was done and what instruments were used is not known today).

Most of the methods of propulsion of the early writers was either by means of artificially growing wings or mechanically attached wings to the actual body of the person, or by bird power. I mentioned Sinbad's voyage in the talons of the roc and Samuel Brunt in 1727 published "An Imaginary Voyage to Cacklogallania" which pictures the author being carried to that country in a flying machine powered by cocks.

One of the best and this day most neglected of the early romances is Robert Paltock's "Peter Wilkins." This is a story of a Cornishman who was shipwrecked on a desert isle which he found inhabited by a race of flying men and women. He lives among them, married one of the women, built a flying craft -- actually a raft -- and freely navigated the air.

Father Lana, a Jesuit priest, designed a flying machine which was lifted in the air by means of copper spheres from which the air had all been pumped. These spheres were attached to an object resembling a rowboat. This never got past the drafting stage. Earlier one of the world's greatest minds, Leonardo da Vinci, designed a heavier than air flying machine. His achievements in the fields of art and science are so well known that a passing reference is all that is pertinent here.

In checking over these old

and practically forgotten books, I find the first reference to a parachute in Faustus Veranzio's "Machinae Novae Fausti Veranti Siceni." This was issued in Venice about 1595. With this suggestion on record, it is a terrific indictment of man's stupidity that after he developed the balloon and heavier than air craft, it was not until after World War I that the parachute became standard equipment. Many hundreds of lives could have been saved if Veranzio's imaginary device had been thought of a second time.

This mention of a few books does hardly more than scratch the surface of the early works, both serious and romantic, that show man's tremendous desire to leave the earth. There are literally hundreds of others--Cyrano de Bergerac dreamt of a rocket ship; he also thought it was possible to capture dew and by the means of the evaporation of dew be lifted toward the sun. Farea Gismao invented a flying boat early in the 18th century. Francis Godwin wrote of a flight to earth of the man in the moon in the middle 17th century, around 1650 or 1660.

No such thing as a complete bibliography of man's flying dream before Montgolfier devised a practical method of ascending into the air has ever been compiled. There were several large works in German, Italian and French, which attempted the task but never succeeded in being complete. The history of flight from 1782 to Kitty Hawk is a period of constant struggle, vicious attacks pro and con on the possibility of heavier than air flying and is appropriately not a part of my theme tonight.

MIRACLE, SCIENCE, AND FANTASY STORIES

One of the most prized items in a collection of science fiction magazines is a complete set of the short lived Miracle, Science, and Fantasy Stories. There were only two issues.

This publication saw the light of day back in 1931, and was published by the famous pulp publisher and editor, Harold Hersey. It was published bimonthly and the two issues were dated April-May, June-July. A third issue was announced with the notice "Watch for big surprise novel, book length and complete." But that issue never did appear and no one ever knew what the big surprise novel was supposed to be.

Miracle Stories, to shorten the title, did not publish any really great stories, yet it was noteworthy in several respects. The artist Elliott Dold did practically all of the art work in the magazine, the first time that he was brought before the science fiction public. The first issue featured a novel by his brother, the famous explorer Douglas M. Dold, while the second issue featured the only novel ever written by Elliot Dold--until the appearance of the versatile Hannes Bok he was the only artist-author combination. Famous fantasy author Victor Rousseau was featured in both issues, and copped both covers. It is a shame that this magazine did not have a longer life. It is interesting to speculate on what might have been. But the depression was in full swing, and it went the way of many magazines.

For those of you who are interested we are here listing the contents of both issues of this magazine.

April-May, 1931. Vol. I No. 1.

VALLEY OF SIN.....Douglas M. Dold
OUTLAWS OF THE SUN...Victor Rousseau
MAD MARIONETTES....Arthur J. Burke

June-July, 1931. Vol. I No. 2.

THE BOWL OF DEATH....Elliott Dold
Revolt ON INFERNO....Victor Rousseau
FISH-MEN OF ARCTICA..John Miller
Gregory

An unusual feature of each issue was the inclusion of a full page frontispiece, not related to any of the stories, but showing the city of the distant future as imagined by Elliott Dold.



A NOTE ABOUT PRIME PRESS

The Prime Press is now a little more than a year old, and it is felt that at this time a short discussion of its accomplishments and plans for the future would not be out of place.

"The Mislaid Charm," which was the first book to bear the imprint, was published in June, 1947. This was an experiment in the lower priced field, for the book sold at \$1.75, was well bound and illustrated, and was printed on an excellent grade of paper. Undoubtedly full value was given for the money--lack of quantity was made up with quality. And the story was a good one, too. It was hoped that "Venus Equilateral," by the popular George O. Smith, would be ready in time for

the Philcon, but it turned out that only a few copies were available for display purposes. This book also offered a great deal for the price asked, for it consisted of a series of ten long novelettes, one of which was new, covering not less than 455 pages. Look around and you will see that most books published by the small publishers sell at the same price and offer half or even less pages. The book was illustrated, also.

The third book was another experiment, a plunge into a field that was almost entirely new. For it was the first reprint of a rare and obscure Utopian book. "Equality, or A History Of Lithconia" is the earliest American Utopian novel that has been traced to date, for it goes back to 1802. A bibliographical introduction to this new and limited edition was written by Alfred C. Prime. This book saw the light of day in October of 1947. And that completed the list of Prime Press books for 1947.

Late in March of this year came the first copies of a sensational book of short stories -- "...And Some Were Human" by Lester del Rey. Del Rey had long been a favorite writer in the pages of UNKNOWN and ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, and this was his first book. It contained twelve stories, including the deservedly popular "Nerves," and each story was headed by a half page illustration. Like the other books, it was well bound, well printed, and the paper was of a very good grade.

Following closely upon the heels of "...And Some Were Human" was "The Torch," by Jack Bechdolt. It came so close that publication nearly became simultaneous. This

novel was first published in the Argosy, way back in 1920, and was one of the most popular serials of the time. Somehow the story slid into an undeserved obscurity, no doubt due to the fact that the greater part of the fantastic stories published by Munsey were printed in the Argosy's sister magazine, The All Story. Fortunately Prime Press was able to locate the author and secure the rights to this great story and publish it in a more permanent form. The decision to publish this story was a happy one, for even at this early date letters are pouring in acclaiming it.

Those five books, all published in the short space of ten months, are the accomplishments of The Prime Press. What about our present status and plans for the future?

First of all, there have been changes in the organization. Two of our partners, Alfred C. Prime and Armand E. Waldo, are no longer connected with the Press. They had to withdraw from the partnership because of other work--Prime is a book seller, and Waldo is attending college preparatory to entering upon a medical career. That leaves James A. Williams and Oswald Train, who will carry on.

The next book to go to the printer's, and this depends on the settlement of the printers' strike which is tying up the city, will be "Without Sorcery," by Theodore Sturgeon. This book will contain thirteen of Sturgeon's incomparable short stories, and each story will be illustrated. This book is being delayed by the aforementioned strike but it should be out by mid-summer.

And here is an announcement that most of you will be seeing for the first time. Remember that great story from "UNKNOWN," "Lest Darkness

Fall" by L. Sprague de Camp? It was published in book form by Henry Holt in 1940, and quickly disappeared. Collectors have sought for it without luck for some time, and it has brought quite high prices--sometimes it has been quoted as high as ten and twelve dollars a copy. Well, Prime Press will soon bring it out in a new and attractive edition, selling at three dollars a copy. This book will probably appear at about the same time as the Sturgeon book.

"Nomad," by George O. Smith will be that popular author's second book. This story was published in Astounding under his pen name of Wesley Long, and it is a full length, 80,000 word novel.

Just a few years ago Fando Binder was a familiar name in the science fiction magazines. You could pick almost any issue of any magazine, and his name would be on the cover or the contents page. His finest story, "Lords Of Creation," was published in Argosy, and it will be published by us in book form, the date to be announced later. R. F. Starzl was another name that was popular in the early 1930's. What fan who has read any of his stories hasn't thrilled to his accounts of the Interplanetary Flying Police? We will publish Starzl's first book, a volume of short stories at an early date. An anthology is being planned. And many more books are on the way.

Artists? We have introduced Herschel Levit, Sol Levin and L. Robert Tschirky. You will see them again in other books. Tschirky is illustrating "Without Sorcery" and will do all of our jackets from now on.

Keep your eye on Prime Press!

JUST OUT!

JUST OUT!

JUST OUT!

JUST OUT!

JUST OUT!

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