F A N T A S Y C O M M E N T A T O R

...covering the field of imaginative literature...

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editor and publisher

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Vol. I, No. 8 ---oOo--- Fall 1945

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Fantasy Commentator is an amateur non-profit magazine of limited circulation appearing at quarterly intervals; subscription rates: 20¢ per copy, six issues for $1. This magazine does not accept advertising, nor does it exchange subscriptions with other amateur periodicals. All opinions expressed herein are the writers' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff members. Though no fiction is used, we welcome descriptive and critical manuscripts dealing with any phase of imaginative literature or fantasy fandom from all readers. Please send all communications to the editor at 19 East 235th Street, New York 66, N.Y.

This-'n'-That

After a bit of cynical reflection we have come to the conclusion that atomic energy is an actuality and is with us to stay. The clinching argument in the matter was not the destruction wrought by a few grams of detonated matter half way across the globe---no, that was impressive, but there's been so much talk of secret weapons in the last few years that we've become case-hardened to that sort of stuff. However, after encountering atomic energy in cereal advertisements, cartoon magazines, radio commercials, comic strips and on the cinema screen for a couple of months steadily we've succumbed. It must be real.

We can't help wondering, incidentally, how it will affect some people we know of. Take that chap Superman, for instance. Even though we've seen bullets bounce off his finger-tips and ten-inch shells explode harmlessly next to his abdomen we rather doubt that he could survive, say, about a pound of plutonium set off just behind him. It might blow him to smithereens. Personally, we think it's worth trying. And then there's that Pennsylvania fellow who hears voices and knows about a lot of underground caves and writes for Amazing Stories. We have a pet theory that plutonium produces amnesia, and would love to see it tested. Suppose we were to detonate a little of it near him---far enough away, of course, so as not to be dangerous; fifty feet distant would be about right---what would happen? Would Sharpshaver forget Lemuria then? We think that's worth trying, too....

However all that may be, you may read a reliable and authentic account of the subject, if you're interested, by purchasing Dr. Henry De Wolf Smythe's Atomic Energy for Military Purposes (Princeton, $1\frac{1}{4}$ in paper, $2 in cloth).

Since last editorializing, several new fantasy novels have crossed our path. First there was Marc Brandel's Rain Before Seven (Harper, $2). If you can figure it out, you've done us one better; it seems to off-center about a fey character who causes death in some mysterious psychic fashion to those around him, but we couldn't get much more than that out of it. Equally zany, but far more entertaining in The White Deer of James Thurber (Harcourt-Brace, $2\frac{1}{2}$) which is illustrated by the author and Don Freeman in a way that only such a wild fairy tale could be. The pseudonymous R. A. Dick's Ghost and Mrs. Muir tells of an earthy spectre's attempts to oust a tenant from his former home; it is diluted Thorne Smith, but fairly good nevertheless. Rounding out this humorous quartet is Mr. Wilmer by Robert Lawson (Little-Brown, $2) whose leading character suddenly discovers one day that he can understand and talk in the speech of animals.

Dana Burnet's The Pool (Knopf, $1) is a brief tale which has immortality as its theme. If a psychological Freudian horror-tale appeals to you, try Berton Rouché's Black Weather (Reynal & Hitchcock, $2\frac{1}{2}$). A pessimistic forecast of life in Britain a year hence is to be found in Home Fires Burning by Robert D. Q. Henriques, a book released in England under the title Journey Home (Heinemann, 8/6; Viking, $2\frac{1}{2}$). A somewhat muddled fantasy of a man's life being altered through his being granted five wishes is Mr. Allenby Loses the Way by Frank Baker (Coward-McCann, $2\frac{3}{4}$). Familiar to some through its publication some time ago in England under the title The Golden Fleece is Robert Graves' Hercules, My Shipmate (Creative Age Press, $3); this is a virile and swashbuckling version of the well-known ballad-cycle, and is warmly recommended.

In the realm of reprints, we find four full-length novels collected in The Portable Novels of Science which appears under the editorship of Donald A. Wollheim (Viking, $2), a bargain not to be missed. In the same format, too, is The Portable Poe, edited by Philip Van Doren Stern (Viking, $2). Most important of all, however, is the news from England that all novels of Olaf Stapledon are to be brought back into print gradually by Methuen, which has already republished his Last and First Men. These should be available to fantasy readers by early 1946....

---A.L.S.

The Immortal Storm

A History of Science-Fiction Fandom

by
Sam Moskowitz

(Editor's note: For some reason unknown to this writer, it is usually customary to preface a work of this length and scope with a tedious editorial discussion of its intrinsic importance and the qualifications of its author. To me, it seems unnecessarily redundant to indulge in a symposium concerning either. Like any other historical document, "The Immortal Storm" will be judged on its own merits and on these also will the reputation of its writer rest; they and they alone are the criteria. Lest this give the impression that I purposely refrain from giving a positive opinion in advance, however, let it be positively stated that I believe this to be one of the most important works ever to have sprung from the ranks of fantasy fandom---and did I not consider it outstanding you would not now find it in these pages. More need not be said; for, as Johnson once remarked, those of the reading public are the ultimate judges: if they are pleased, all is well; if they are not, there is no point in telling them why they should have been. ---A.L.S.)

I
Introduction

Followers and glorifiers of the fantastic tale like to think that they are different, that they represent something new on the face of the earth; mutants born with an intelligence and a sense of farseeing appreciation just a bit higher than the norm. They like to believe that their counterpart has never before existed, that they have no predecessors. "No one," they say, "has ever seen our visions, dreamed our dreams. Never before has man's brain reached out so far into the limitless stretches of the cosmos about him."

But facts belie this assertion of newness. Since the dawn of time man has woven his fantasies, fabricated his gods and their imaginative origins, told tales of things beyond the range of his senses. The Old Testament contains not only the fantasy of Adam and Eve, but more than one out-and-out ghost story as well. The Iliad and The Odyssey, two of the greatest of ancient works, are forthright unblushing fantasies. So is Beowulf, the oldest written saga in English.

For ages man lived in a world where he was a slave to the elements. His own achievements were by comparison crude and immature; his every living moment was subject to the blind caprices of fate. Not unnaturally, he dreamt of greater things. At first his achievements were limited to dreams, and to dreams only. And in fantasy he created wonder-lands of magic carpets, healing potions, and all the other requirements of a luxurious existence. He held little hope of ever encountering such a life, but in these visions he found escape from his mean, primitive world. It was not until man found himself capable of transforming dreams into prophecy that he wrote science-fiction. For science-fiction was prophecy. And, being based on extrapolations of known theories, its possibilities were subject only to the degrees of factuality in its groundwork. The only difference between the science-fiction fan of today and the Homer of yesteryear is that the fan of today knows there is a sufficiently large kernel of truth in his dreams to make them possible of realization---that the fantastic fiction of today may well become the fact of tomorrow.

When one sees his sketches of flying machines, parachutes, submarines, tanks and guns, and realizes that he knew the distant stars to be suns and postulated the existence of other earths, it is difficult to believe that Leonardo

da Vinci was not a science-fiction fan. Nor is one inclined to doubt that Galileo, constructor of the first astronomical telescope and promulgator of the heliocentric principle, was also a devoted follower of extrapolated science. For then, as now, every great new discovery posed a hundred more unanswered riddles. And there came the day when not only scientists, but writers of fiction suggested possible explanations. Some of these read like fantasies---yet at the core they were but extrapolations from a basis of fact. They were science-fiction.

Collectors of fantasy books point proudly to thin, battered volumes in archaic type dealing with such plots as imaginary voyages to the moon. The earliest use of this theme that we know of dates back two thousand years---but who can say with certainty that Lucian of Samasota was the first to write of it? And since his day many hundreds of books, now old, have seen the light of day---fantastic flights of fiction now all but forgotten, many, possibly, recorded in no bibliographical list. What numbers have been ground up in the passage of time? Somebody must have read them, collected them even---followers of science-fiction you and I will never know.

Great authors could no more help being impressed by the forward rush of science than could the man in the street. Science-fiction and fantasy are liberally sprinkled through their works, and scarcely a single comprehensive anthology of short stories will be found to lack one having such a theme. Notables of no less a stature than Edgar Allan Poe, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Washington Irving, Mark Twain, Fitz-James O'Brien, Guy de Maupassant, Stephen Vincent Benet and Nathaniel Hawthorne have found this medium far from unsatisfying, nor have their readers been overly critical of their writings in this vein.

And yet today, with many of the past's basic story-conjectures being realized, it is feared that there will soon be nothing left to write about. This is the creed of hide-bound, conservative hack-worshippers. Many science-fiction publications have fostered such a belief by sacrificing their product on an altar of sensational commercialism. They have banned all but the stereotyped plots, they reject every new idea and novel twist as too radical. The fantastic complaints they utter would never have been voiced in the "new policy" days of Wonder Stories or in the heyday of Astounding's "thought-variant" issues. In those times the trouble was not in obtaining enough new ideas, but in choosing the best from those which were submitted for publication. When man can no longer think ahead, when he has reached the limits of his imagination, he is through. Yet since each new discovery opens up greater vistas for science to explore, and since each new discovery is the springboard from which more, not less, science-fiction is launched, we reach the obvious conclusion that the end is nowhere in sight.

Another delusion that many apparantly suffer from is that science-fiction is the virtual monopoly of America and England---that the people of no other country have ever cared for such reading matter. But again the facts easily disprove such an allegation. Books of science-fiction have appeared in every nation where a publishing industry exists, and have evr found a wide and appreciative audience. Germany has produced literally thousands of them. Japan has reprinted many of the tales of the popular fantasy author Ray Cummings. Science-fiction magazines printed in Spanish have come into the hands of collectors. Willy Ley has spoken of a Russian science-fiction magazine that originated in 1907, which is supposedly still in existence. This, if substantiated, would show a twelve-year precedence over the first all-fantasy periodical issued in this hemisphere. The popularity of A. Merritt's writings is an excellent example of fantasy's international appeal: they have been translated into French, Spanish, German, Norwegian and Russian, always meeting with enthusiastic response. Indeed, there is no questioning science-fiction's universal popularity.

The middle and late Nineteenth Century saw fiction of this type appear with ever increasing frequency. Harper's Magazine, The Atlantic Monthly, Godey's

Ladies' Book and other magazines featured it consistently, and Jules Verne wrote many novels having fantastic themes---some of which, at the present time, have already become realized prophecies. H. G. Wells capitalized on the taste which had been thus created with a long series of excellent science-fiction novels beginning with the popular Time Machine (1895). From then on these tales followed on one another's heels with amazing rapidity. The number of periodicals printing them during the following quarter of a century was startlingly high. In America alone Argosy, All-Story, Munsey's, The Cavalier, Modern Electrics, Popular, The Black Cat, Everybody's, The Blue Book, People's Favorite, MacClure's, Living Age, Cosmopolitan, Pearson's, and numerous others presented such fiction with the utmost regularity.

Just how much science-fiction fans shaped the policies of these magazines is problematical; possibly their influence was greater than has been realized. However that may be, it is certain that the demand for their specialized product caused Street and Smith to issue The Thrill Book magazine---the first to be devoted in entirety to the fantastic---early in 1919. Under the editorship of Harold Hersey and Eugene A. Clancy it ran for sixteen issues. Nevertheless, it seemingly produced but a negligible effect on the trend of science-fiction; but as an initial ground-breaker in this country it is undeniably of interest and importance.

Of far more importance, however, was the advent of Weird Tales magazine in March, 1923. Despite the fact that its early days were rocky and hazardous it was a real crucible of fantasy. Never before, and possibly never again were so many Simon-pure fantasy addicts united in a single reader-audience. Weird catered to them all: the supernatural, fantasy and science-fiction tale each was there. But the task of satisfying everyone was no easy one. From its earliest days those who wanted it to be predominately supernatural and those who would have it mainly scientific waged a bitter struggle for supremacy. It is perhaps fortunate that the former clique, supporting the more literate school of writers including H. P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith, eventually won out. But the win was by a fluke: having committed itself to the title Weird Tales, little else was possible; to adopt a 100% science-fiction policy in this guise would have been sheer suicide. So voluminous were the ranks of the latter, however, that a concession had to be made them---and thus it came about that in addition to the few (but regularly-appearing) out-and-out science-fiction tales, there appeared in those pages that fiction blending the supernatural with the scientific---the combination so well mastered by the late H. P. Lovecraft and used to a lesser extent by Clark Ashton Smith and Nictzin Dyalhis. Such stories as "When the Green Star Waned" and "The Dunwich Horror"---representing this school---came closest to satisfying all factions.

In the early 1920's, then, simply the reading of a magazine like Weird Tales was sufficient to characterize a man as a fantasy fan, a rule which held true until at least 1930.

II

Gernsback and the First All-Science-Fiction Publication

Since the turn of the century Hugo Gernsback had featured science-fiction in all his published magazines. He was, moreover, the leading advocate of science-fiction with the accent on science. Not scientific romances, fantasies, or "different" stories, but science-fiction. From the time of his earliest periodical, Modern Electrics, through the Electrical Experimenter, into the days of Science and Invention he featured his own favorite brand, and won a following for it. He even introduced this type of fiction into such of his lesser lights as Radio News.

Hugo Gernsback did something for the science-fiction fan that had never been attempted before: he gave them self-respect. He preached that those who followed this sort of reading-matter avidly were not possessed of a queer taste, but actually represented a higher type of intellect. And he tried to lay down rules for science-fiction. Primary among these was plausibility: nothing was to appear in the stories he published that could not be given a logical, scientific explanation. To bolster this, ingeneous photographs and related newspaper columns surrounded the tales, until after a time it became difficult to differentiate between the fact and the fiction in Science and Invention.

One number of this magazine was boldly labelled "Scientifiction Issue", and featured half a dozen of these tales. The results of this experiment must have been gratifying, for Gernsback soon after circularized his readers with an announcement forcasting the appearance of a magazine entitled Scientifiction --- wherein stories of the type popularized by his other publications were to appear. But the response was evidently not strong enough to warrant going through with the venture, and it was temporarily abandoned. A year later, however, deciding that his coined title had frightened many likely prospects away, Gernsback took a chance and brought out Amazing Stories.

The magazine skyrocketed to success overnight. The reasons for this have never been adequately explained, but what seems most plausible is that Gernsback had been carefully building up an audience for his venture, one which, on recognizing a 100% science-fiction periodical for what it was, eagerly flocked to its support.

Had the science-fiction fan of 1926 been less greedy Weird Tales might have been seriously hampered by this turn of events. Many read it solely for the occasional science-fiction it printed and nothing else. But because of their insatiable appetite they did not desert Weird Tales, but rather began a strenuous effort to swing its policy away from the supernatural. And although as a result the magazine did veer in the science-fiction direction during the next year, the change was only a temporary one. The appearance of Amazing Stories, however, had driven a wedge very deeply between the fantasy and science-fiction lovers. Heretofore, though differences had existed, both groups had pretty much occupied the same boat. But now each had its own magazine. And the fact that the latter clique was by far the most powerful was shown by comparison of the two periodicals' circulations.

The appearance of readers' letters in the "Discussions" column of Amazing Stories marked the beginning of science-fiction fandom as we know it today. The volume and quality of mail received by the average science-fiction magazine (both then and now) has always been a source of wonder, especially to those outside the field. And in the old Amazing fans were ready and willing to discuss anything. The eagerness with which they prattled scientific talk was directly traceable to some scientific fact which had aroused their interest in its extrapolated counterpart in fiction. Be it astronomy, biology, physics or chemistry, they broached some query which coeval science could not answer, but which science-fiction tried to. And the readers expressed their opinions on how logically it had been answered.

Nowadays, of course, fans are more interested in discussing trends in past fiction. But in those days, since a common background of reading was the exception rather than the rule, this was out of the question. They had no magazines, authors, traditions and fanwide happenings to talk about. If two fans had read a dozen of the same tales before becoming acquainted through correspondence brought about through "Discussions," it was highly unusual, and something to comment on with surprise. And thus having little ground for an exchange of likes and dislikes, fans of that decade naturally reverted to scientific discussions as a matter of course.

Amazing Stories' editor was Hugo Gernsback himself, if anything a more avid and widely-read fan than the majority of his readers. He constantly introduced into the magazine features dealing with his readers themselves, or those in which they might take part---pictures of the oldest and youngest readers, a prize story contest, slogan and scientifiction emblem awards. Most important of all from a historical standpoint was the regular appearance of the already-mentioned "Discussions" column; since readers' letters to the editor were accompanied by the writers' full addresses, communication between interested fans was greatly facilitated.

It was in this manner that Jerome Siegel and Joseph Schuster, now famed as the originators of the character "superman" became acquainted. Enthused by Amazing Stories, they presently produced Cosmic Tales and Cosmic Tales Quarterly, amateur, carbon-copied publications; these are the earliest---and rarest--- fan-published "magazines". Such later-active fans as Raymond A. Palmer and Jack Williamson (to cite two other examples) also contacted one another through this same medium.

Then occurred an event whose details are shrouded in mystery. One day Gernsback was prosperous. The next he had lost completely his magazine chain and his radio station, and found himself in receivership. Though many have speculated on the causes of his financial crisis, naming frozen assets, family hardships and dishonest employees as the core of the trouble, the complete story has never been made clear. But everyone knew the man was not a failure. Their confidence was justified, for it did not take him long to regain a sound financial footing. Gernsback did so by one of the most remarkable stunts seen in the publishing game---an authentic example of a man pulling himself up by his own bootstraps. Early in 1929, then, he mailed circulars to readers, informing them of his intention to publish a magazine along the lines of the now-defunct Science and Invention to be titled Everyday Mechanics. Advance subscriptions were asked for. And so fine was Gernsback's reputation at that time as a producer of excellent scientific journals that 20,000 two-dollar subscriptions poured in. With this intake, then, Hugo Gernsback again set himself up in business.

A spate of science-fiction magazines followed. Amazing Stories, which had been taken over by Teck Publications in this interim, found itself competing with Gernsback's newly-founded Science Wonder Stories, Air Wonder Stories and Scientific Detective Stories. Amazing and Science Wonder issued quarterlies in addition to their regular monthly numbers. Clayton Publications followed with Astounding Stories late in the same year. And to add to the flood Gernsback issued a series of paper-bound pamphlets of the same fiction. For the first time science-fiction fans were surfeited!

It did not take long for equilibrium to establish itself. Scientific Detective Stories soon ceased publication, and Air Wonder combined with Science Wonder under the latter title. Astounding, favoring a blood-and-thunder action policy as opposed to the more sedate offerings of her older competitors, appealed to a new class of readers and managed to hang on.

Most interesting was the effect of these events on Weird Tales. Never independant of those readers who bought the magazine solely for the few science-fiction tales it published, the sudden influx of new periodicals all but ruined her. Surfeited elsewhere, readers deserted in droves, and by 1931 the diminishing circulation had forced a bi-monthly schedule of appearance into effect. In casting about for some means to avert disaster, Editor Farnsworth Wright hit upon the plan of advertising current science-fiction of Weird Tales in Science Wonder and Amazing Stories. Tales having an interplanetary theme were very popular in those times, and by procuring as many of these as possible, and by printing the work of popular authors, Weird Tales managed to return to its monthly schedule once more. It should be borne in mind that a science-fiction fan of that time

was primarily concerned with scientific plausibility, and had little or no penchant for stories dealing with ghosts and werewolves. This is shown today by the great rarity of complete copies of early Weird Tales numbers---while sets of excerpted and bound science-fiction stories from these same numbers are far more common. Having once removed the stories that interested them, science-fiction fans of that time threw the remainder of the magazine away, as it held no interest for them.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the early followers of the fantastic were called science-fiction fans. Organization of the fans was an outgrowth of the professional publications they followed, and these were predominately of the science-fiction variety. It is quite true that followers of the weird were also in evidence; but, perhaps because of personal inclination as well as their smaller numbers, they never organized themselves into any official or unofficial body. Indeed, they remain both unorganized and in the minority to this day. Yet because they and their media have much in common with that of the majority they may be considered as a part of a larger organic whole. This group will henceforth be referred to in toto in this work as "science-fiction fandom"---or, more simply, "fandom"; and it should be understood to include within its ranks followers of supernatural and fantasy fiction generally as well as those who insist that every story be "scientifically plausible."

III
The Beginning of Organized Fandom

Let it again be stressed that the very first organized groups consisted of science-fiction fans. They were one in mind with Hugo Gernsback in believing that every one of their number was a potential scientist, and that the aim of every fan should not be a collection of fantastic fiction, but a home laboratory where fictional dreams might attain reality. Such a frame of mind laid the basis for the Science Correspondence Club, an organization which later evolved into the International Scientific Association (ISA). Such fans as Raymond A. Palmer (the present editor of Amazing Stories), P. Schuyler Miller (well-known author), Frank B. Eason, Aubrey McDermott, Robert A. Wait and others had struck up a mutual correspondence. This prompted Palmer to suggest the encouragement of such correspondence among fans on a larger scale. Thus was the Science Correspondence Club organized. The members issued a club organ called The Comet, the first number of which was dated May, 1930; later numbers bore the title Cosmology. The club declared itself to be devoted to "the furtherance of science and its dissemination among the laymen of the world and the final betterment of humanity"; and the third issue of The Comet stated the organ's purpose: "This issue is dedicated to the furtherance of science through scientific articles printed in its pages and contributed by its more learned members." The Science Correspondence Club's president was Frank B. Eason; Raymond A. Palmer was editor of its publication, and Roy C. Palmer the assistant editor and distributor. Honorary members included such notables as Dr. T. O'Conor Sloane, Hugo Gernsback, Dr. Miles J. Breuer, H. V. Schoepflin, David Lasser, Jack Williamson, Ed Earl Repp, Harry Bates, Dr. Clyde Fisher, and others.

Love of science-fiction was the basic bond that united these fans. Yet discussions in The Comet were a far cry to discussions of fiction---articles such as "The Psychology of Anger," "Chemistry and the Atomic Theory," "Recent Advances in Television," "What Can Be Observed with a Small Telescope" and "Psychoanalysis" abounded. As time passed, however, the non-scientific note increased in volume somewhat. Articles based on science-fiction stories appeared occasionally. Professionally known authors such as P. Schuyler Miller and A. W. Bernal contributed fiction. Accurate information on German rocketry was printed under

the name of Willy Ley. Such luminaries as Miles J. Breuer, Jack Williamson, R. F. Starzl and Lilith Lorraine were also represented.

But after a dozen issues had appeared at regular monthly intervals the magazine came out more and more infrequently. At about this same time, too, a series of frantic appeals to members asked for stronger support in the form of regular payment of dues, contribution of more material and campaigning to introduce Cosmology to friends. In January, 1932 Palmer turned his editorial post over to Aubrey McDermott and Clifton Amsbury. They in turn attempted to inject new life into the publication. The news that P. Schuyler Miller had purchased a life membership in the club for $17.50 was offered as bait to those who hesitated to renew their memberships or who believed the organization to be shaky. Despite all these efforts, however, the club drifted into a period of greater and greater lethargy, until finally publication of the official organ was discontinued altogether.

Heretofore, Cosmology had been a mimeographed publication. In 1933, as a last effort at revival, the seventeenth (and last) issue was printed. Coincidentally, the club was thoroughly reorganized. Raymond A. Palmer occupied the president's and treasurer's posts, Clifton Amsbury became secretary, and McDermott remained as Cosmology's editor. A few "name" positions were also assigned: Willy Ley became director of rocketry, Philip G. Ackerman, director of theoretical chemistry, and Clifton Amsbury, director of anthropology. A new constitution was published, and the magazine was packed with scientific articles. Once lost, however, interest could not be brought back; and within a short time the club passed quietly away into oblivion. A few years later many fans had forgotten it completely.

Yet by science-fictional standards the organization was far from being a failure. Its three-year life had set a mark in club longevity, and its seventeen consecutive issues of Cosmology would be considered a fine record even today. Its membership was said to have neared 150---nearly tops, as fan organizations go. By every standard we have for comparison today the Science Correspondence Club was an eminently successful group that died a natural death when its members grew tired of it.

The reason for their tiring of it is not hard to discern. Midway in its life a new group of fans had arisen and entered the amateur publishing field with their Time Traveller and Science-Fiction Digest. These publications talked about science-fiction itself rather than the minute details of science involved in it. And these, apparently, won the fans' preference. Nevertheless, interest did not shift either completely or immediately in this direction: it was a gradual change, and those who preferred to discuss science still remained. Indeed, several years later there were enough of them to reaffirm their views by forming the International Scientific Association. But more of this in coming chapters.

Almost concurrently with the Science Correspondence Club there existed an organization known as The Scienceers, and it is this group to which we must give credit for forming the first true science-fiction club and publishing the first true science-fiction fan magazine.

In New York, the world's greatest city, fans flourished in such abundance that it was inevitable that personal contact among them be sooner or later made through the media of magazines' readers' columns and chance acquaintances. And so, learning of one another's existence, this new group sprang up. At that point, too, there was evidenced for the first time that strange camaradie which binds those interested in this hobby. For some odd reason they seem friends before they ever have met. By some strange chemistry their mutual interest in fantasy binds them together as kindred souls. This oneness of mind has been the topic of much speculation ever since. Events have destroyed the allegation that

science-fiction followers are superior to other men, showing them to be well represented in the congress of human faults and failings, but their severest critics have been forced to recognize this mental similarity, as well as grudgingly admit the group to possess at least the normal quota of intelligence and literary ability.

Like the Science Correspondence Club, the excuse given by the Scienceers for forming their club was the intelligent discussion of the science arising from science-fiction. Unlike the former organization, however, this turned out to be patent camouflage---for all the science they extrapolated upon in their rocky three-year existence would make an exceedingly slim volume indeed. Science-fiction was their forte, and they not only talked about it but wrote and published it as well as obtaining lectures for it.

The first president of the club was a colored fan whose hobby was rocketry, and the Scienceers met at his Harlem home. The willingness of the other members to accede to his leadership, regardless of racial difference, has never had an opportunity for duplication, for James Fitzgerald was the first and last colored man ever actively to engage in the activities of science-fiction's fandom. It is an established fact that colored science-fiction readers number in the thousands, but with the exception of Fitzgerald and the lone negro who attended the first national science-fcition convention in 1938 they play no part in this history.

Members of the original Scienceers included Allen Glasser, the club's librarian, a leading fan and a beginning author of that period; Maurice Z. Ingber, soon to become editor of the now-legendary Science-Fiction Digest; Julius Unger, the well-known fan and dealer of today; Nathan Greenfeld, staff member of The Time Traveller; and Mort Weisenger and Julius Schwartz, both of whom were to make their professions in the field.

The idea for publishing The Planet, the club's organ, probably stemmed from the mimeographing of its membership list. The choice for editor was almost uncontested: Allen Glasser was the fan of the day. His letters had been published in virtually every fantasy magazine. He had sold stories professionally. He was regarded, consequently, as "the writer" of the group; and he was generally looked up to as having opinions that merited respect. His accession to editorship was therefore the most natural thing in the world. And so, with Glasser at the helm, the first issue of The Planet appeared in July, 1930. In content it presaged the balanced generality that was to characterize the later Time Traveller---reviews of current professionally-published fantastic fiction in both magazines and books, reviews of fantasy films, and miscellaneous chatter and news about the fans themselves. This policy, too, remained for the most part unchanged during the remaining five monthly numbers of the magazine that appeared.

At about this time Hugo Gernsback ran a contest in Wonder Stories, offering prizes for the best reports on the question "What am I doing to popularize science-fiction?". A prize-winning entry by Allen Glasser mentioned his work in the Scienceers, and, impressed by the concept of enthusiasts forming clubs, Gernsback requested that the organization send a representative to visit him. For obvious reasons Glasser was chosen to act in this capacity, and he returned with the startling news that Gernsback had arranged for a group of authors to address the club at New York City's Museum of Natural History, all expenses paid.

When the day arrived no less than thirty-five members had mustered out for the occasion. When one reflects on the facts that fandom was not then well knit on a national scale, and that years later the same number was considered a good showing at the Philadelphia Conference, thirty-five seems a copious attendance indeed. Gernsback himself was unable to attend, but he had sent in his

(continued on page 197)

Rohmer, Sax, pseud. (Ward, Arthur Sarsfield, 1883-)

The Haunting of Low Fennel

London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1920. 252pp. 18 cm. 2/-.
London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1921. 252pp. 18 cm. 2/-.
London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1924. 252pp. 19 cm. 2/6.
London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd., 1935. 252pp. 19 cm. 2/6.

Synoptic review: Posterity will, I suppose, remember Sax Rohmer mainly for his creation of that ubiquitous and insidious devil-fiend, Dr. Fu Manchu, the evil villain who has passed through innumerable stages of knavery both in the pages of his creator and on the screens of our cinema palaces. To more discriminating readers who may have experienced some irritation at the often lurid and hasty journalism of these efforts it may come as a surprise to hear that a generation ago this author published a collection of seven tales, several of which are refreshingly uncharacteristic. A couple of them remind us strongly of the early weird stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and two others savor not a little of the technique of the immortal Sherlock Holmes tales themselves. One stands by itself; perhaps only the final pair will be recognized as definitely Rohmerian in flavor.

A surprising restraint is noticeable throughout; a calm and matter-of-fact narration in several that adds immeasurably to their effectiveness. The locale of these stories varies from the familiar English moorland to the steaming jungles of Burma and the ever-mysterious land of the pharaohs. If the whole series has any connecting thread it is that of fear: dread of the truly supernatural in two or three instances, and terror from the utterly strange and seemingly inexplicable in others. This dominating mood is seldom over-played, however, and therein lies the especial interest of the book.

The title story is undoubtedly the best for in this we meet---surprisingly enough---an investigator named Addison who is nothing short of a modern Carnacki. He uses psychic apparatus such as a special meter which registers the approach of supernatural entities, yet he maintains an attitude of scientific open-mindedness towards the final implications of the spectral world. How he matches wits with a fire elemental in an ancient British house makes most engrossing reading and reminds us not a little of Blackwood's famed "Nemesis of Fire" at times. In the end Addison must admit defeat, however, because the power haunting the barrow beneath the foundations of the house is, in his own words, "something older than the house, older perhaps than the very hills...as old as the root of all evil."

An appalling description of the pitiless Burma jungle opens "The Valley of the Just." What madness possessed Major Fayne to make him drag his sensitive and sheltered wife, Moreen, into this green Hell? The things that Fayne sought amid the Shan Hills in an ancient, ruined temple and his horrid fate when Moreen innocently loosed an eon-old vampire from its subterranean lair constitute an eerie and suspenseful tale.

"The Blue Monkey" and "The Riddle of Ragstaff" are purely stories of detection but with considerable weird atmosphere. This is particularly evidenced in the latter, which has to do with four lines of medieval doggerel on a time-blackened oak panel and a certain Captain Satan who long ago ravaged the Spanish Main.

Deep into the realms of black magic we go in "The Master of Hollow Grange." This tale suggests infinitely more than it relates, for to understand its implications fully we should be obliged to consult an obscure and unpublished work of Paracelsus written in its original monkish Latin. A knowledge of the

hideous pamphlet Practica D. Theophrasti Paracelsi published by the monstrous Von Hohenheim at Augsberg in 1529 would also aid considerably in clearing up our uncertainties. The reader is finally left wondering dimly just why it was so horrible for Dr. Kassimere, who had a face like Thoth, to have in addition a beautiful adopted daughter named Phyrné! This story narrowly misses being the best of the lot.

Saville Grainger, handsome as a Roman noble, who attracted all women yet hated them exquisitely next engages our attention in "The Curse of a Thousand Kisses." One night he was seen walking towards the Great Pyramid and thereafter was seen no more by mankind. Two years later, however, as we reckon time, his closest friend received a queer manuscript in Grainger's own handwriting upon a parchment which defied experts' analysis. One professor went so far as to hint that the material was definitely not of this earth. If the document did not lie, Grainger no longer lived on this planet but had entered a realm of terror and ineffable ecstasy. This is a tale within a story---which is in turn within yet another tale, and the involved construction reminds us not a little of the technique employed so brilliantly by the late, great H. P. Lovecraft. The final explanation of the secret curse of the ageless Scheherazade and how it was ultimately expiated by a present-day Englishman fittingly climaxes a truly weird and beautiful piece of writing.

We find ourselves on more familiar ground in the last story, "The Turquoise Necklace." Therein is related how Eileen Graham was fortunate enough to save from death beneath a carriage wheel the person of a welee, or Islamic man of God. The amulet he gave her in gratitude was directly responsible for saving Eileen from the hands of Arab abductors. The vision of her savior mistily skimming the moonlit desert on his snow-white camel brings the tale and the book to a close in a blaze of Oriental poetry and exotic color.

There are flashes of striking beauty in these stories; a mature Rohmer speaks. His hand is steady and sure; his enormous background of dark wisdom looms throughout. This is no more than we should expect, of course, from the man who in a serious work of non-fiction, The Romance of Sorcery, wrote so knowingly of such figures as Dr. Dee, Cagliostro and Madame Blavatsky. So many of his more familiar tales are drenched in Eastern lore---particularly those in that splendid collection Tales of Secret Egypt---that it is all the more striking to peruse certain of the unusual items found in The Haunting of Low Fennel. To many of us a newer and greater Rohmer appears; there are evidences of a philosophic depth which an acquaintance with his most widely-read novels alone would never have led us to suspect.

---oOo---

Marpessa

by
Stephen Phillips

Thy voice is like to music heard ere birth,
Some spirit lute touched on a spirit sea;
Thy face remembered is from other worlds.
It has been died for, though I know not when,
It has been sung of, though I know not where.
It has the strangeness of the luring West,
And of sad sea-horizons; beside thee
I am aware of other times and lands,
Of birth far back, of lives in many stars.

FANTASY COMMENTATOR

Fantasy in the Work of Rudyard Kipling

by

W. Robert Gibson

Kipling does not seem to be widely appreciated among lovers of fantasy and science-fiction. Mention the name and they say "Oh, him," or (if British), "'The Bard of the Empire'," and that ends the matter. He may have hymned the Empire at times---it was not considered disgraceful, and the man had very definite ideas about the duties of the planet's more favored races---but it was not by any means his sole work.

Kipling wrote adventure stories aplenty; he wrote such humorous stories that those who do not laugh at them must be strongly suspected of having paralyzed funny-bones; he wrote some deep stories and some very grim ones; and some supernatural stories, fantasies and science-fiction tales came from his pen as well. Among his weird tales are "The Phantom Rickshaw," "The Recrudescence of Imray," "The Wish House," "'They'," "A Madonna of the Trenches," "At the End of the Passage," "Swept and Garnished," "The House Doctor" and others. But it is not upon these that this article touches. Rather, I wish here to describe briefly Kipling's fantasy and science-fiction.

In The Day's Work are two stories of personalized machinery, "The Ship that Found Herself" and ".007," which deals with a locomotive. In this same collection is also to be found that long and pleasant fantasy "The Brushwood Boy."

Many Inventions contains "The Greatest Story in the World," which lay in the partial memory of the earlier reincarnations of a Cockney clerk. Tantalizing half-glimpses of a fragmentary past he reveals to an author-friend, glimpses of the life of a Greek galley-slave, of one of the crew of Leif the Lucky. But before threads enough to weave a complete story are gathered all are lost. Also in this volume is "A Matter of Fact," which deals with a sea-serpent. The story is based on a personal experience of the author---when a ship he was aboard collided with a whale---and tells of a sea-monster being driven by a submarine catastrophe to the ocean's surface, where it finally meets its death.

In Traffics and Discoveries are two tales of the genre. One is "The Army of a Dream," which portrays a Britain capable of self-defense at a moment's notice, where Home Guard exercises have become a national sport. The other deals with a mystery of the soul, wherein a tubercular chemist, under unusual stimuli, comes near to writing certain great poems. The story is pointed by experiments with the (then) primitive radio, and messages that could almost get through. The story's title, as you have probably guessed already, is "Wireless."

Debits and Credits includes "The Eye of Allah," which postulates the premature discovery of the microscope, and "On the Gate; a Tale of '16"; this tale takes place in Heaven during World War I, and tells of St. Peter's trials and worries in his efforts to insure that all shall enter.

Actions and Reactions contains "With the Night Mail," a story set in the future, in a world utopian and scientifically advanced. The narrator describes a transatlantic crossing by dirigible in an airborner world of tomorrow, a different one from ours, to be sure, but nevertheless interesting. Many of the scientific inventions Kipling postulated have since been seen in lesser tales of later vintage, such as "The Menace of the Little" (in Amazing Stories). His laws and mechanical advances, granting their initial premises, are very good. With the story, too, are news items, book reviews and official notices contemporary with its setting---all of which add to the aura of reality the author has produced. Not as well known as this tale is its sequel, "As Easy as A.B.C.," which may be found in A Diversity of Creatures. It tells of a state cutting itself out from the world traffic and being taken over by the A.B.C.---the Aerial Board of Control. It is good satire, and, like all of Kipling's science-fiction and fantasy, well-written.

Tarzan Books in Spanish

by
Darrell C. Richardson

For several years I had heard rumors to the effect that a number of Edgar Rice Burroughs' famous Tarzan stories which had never been published in English had appeared in Spanish. It was not until recently, however, that I was able to verify these. Then, an acquaintance brought back for me from his South American business trip a number of Tarzan novels printed in Spanish; on the fly-leaves of these appeared a list of other Tarzan stories available. This was puzling, for they numbered over four dozen, and to date only twenty-one Tarzan novels have been printed in the United States in book form; and besides, there are only three such tales of short novel length that have not appeared in hard covers. On translating these Spanish titles, they seemed completely unfamiliar.

Hoping to solve this riddle, I wrote to Ralph Rothmund, secretary of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.; he wrote, in reply: "Many novels are broken up in parts for foreign publication and printed under different titles. This is partly because American novels are longer than the average novel abroad and also because other countries cannot charge as much per book as we do in the United States."

This explanation seemed rather unsatisfying, so I decided to obtain several of these "new" Tarzan books and translate them. As a result of the research I discovered that many of the books were indeed entirely new, never having before appeared in English. A brief review of three of these follows:

Tarzan en el Reino de las Tinieblas

Rendered into English, this book's title would be 'Tarzan and the Kingdom of Darkness'; it is supposedly "translated" by one Alfonso Quintana, and is a part of the "third series of extraordinary adventures of the King of the Apes." Like the other two volumes it is paper-backed (though of novel-length), was published in Buenos Aires and sold for thirty centavos. Its release date is given as August 1, 1933.

Besides Tarzan, the story's leading character is Guy Tibbett, an American explorer and elephant-hunter. His leading lady is Norma Kay, who has come to Africa with her grandfather, Leo Kay. A certain Captain Crosby, who leads a band of Arab slave-traders, is the villian of the piece. Tibbett falls into a sort of jungle cave, and discovers a strange race of underground people. He escapes, and wins his way back to civilization, but is thought to be insane after telling his story. Crosby has meanwhile lured Norma Kay and her friends to capture, and sold them to the Arabs. They escape, however, and are unfortunate enough to become lost and to arrive in the underground kingdom. At this point Tarzan enters the scene. In his habitual fashion he rescues them and routs the villians; two or three love affairs turn out well, and everybody is happy.

Tarzan y el Bosque Siniestro

'Tarzan and the Sinister Forest" was released on January 17, 1933. Its main characters are Tarzan, Lady Greystoke, Korak, the son of Tarzan, Danny Key, (a flyer and one of the heroes), Alina Blane (a beautiful American girl whose father had been lost in the jungle many years before), Joe Hansen (a spy recently escaped from prison), Sarefu (an intelligent negro who acts as guide for Joe Hansen), an old white hermit of the forest (who turns out to be the missing Rudolph Blane, Alina's father), Vicola (Sarefu's beautiful mulatto wife) and Richard Larbes (a friend of Joe Hansen). As in the usual Burroughs thriller the plot is quite complicated, and the scene shifts from place to place very rapidly.

Tarzan helps Alina search for her father, and even enlists the aid of his ape-friends in this hunt. The action then shifts to a distant native village whose inhabitants practise annual human sacrifice to their gorilla god. On a nearby island, surrounded by crocodile-infested waters, lives a white hermit. While travelling in this region with Joe Hansen Vicola is captured by the natives, who prepare to use her in their barbaric sacrifice. In the nick of time Tarzan appears on the scene, and saves her.

Meanwhile Joe Hansen kidnaps Alina, and offers her to a band of Arabs in exchange for killing Tarzan. Fate, in the guise of a tribe of gorillas, intervenes; they attack the camp of Hansen and the Arabs, carrying off both Vicola and Alina. A gun is smuggled to Alina, however, and escapes after killing her gorilla guard; shortly after this Tarzan arrives to show his prowess by duelling triumphantly with the king-gorilla.

At about this time the hermit has left his island and met Alina, whom he immediately recognizes for his daughter. Events come to a head as Joe Hansen sets fire to the jungle and attempts to escape by water, Vicola being caught by an alligator in the process. This so angers Sarefu that he slays Hansen, blaming him for his wife's death, and when Larbes intervenes the two fight and eventually kill one another. Tarzan in the end leads his party to safety, escaping the flames by travelling downstream on a hastily-constructed raft.

Tarzan y la Diosa del Mar

This third title, 'Tarzan and the Goddess of the Sea,' was released on January 31, 1933, and is definitely fantastic in its approach. Its prologue tells of a ship-sinking that occurred many years before. The single life-boat which was successfully launched carried several women and sailors. After many days without food and water one of the party is killed and his flesh eaten by the others; this cannibalism continues until one intended victim, leaping overboard to save herself, overturns the lifeboat. Struggling in the water, the survivors find themselves drawn down into a queer illuminated opening on the sea floor. This turns out to be a series of air-filled caverns lit by luminous electrical plants, and here the people take up their existence. They intermarry and increase in numbers, still practising occasional cannibalism, and offering human sacrifice to a huge prehistoric monster which they call the dragon that occupies a small island on an undersea lake.

In a more modern day, a shipwrecked ship's party reaches this undersea kingdom and is captured by descendents of the original settlers. Tarzan, while swimming shoreward, notices the odd light beneath the waters, and is himself drawn into the caverns; making his way to the tribe, he finds himself hailed as a god. There follow the usual series of exciting events involving the tribal goddess and priests, a revolution, and a planned sacrifice of the captured party to the dragon-god, with Tarzan cast in his usual hero's role and saving the people from their horrible fate. In the end he leads their escape from the undersea land, and they are returned to civilization.

Although the possibility exists that Burroughs has written tales which his American readers know nothing about, and which will be given them gradually over the coming years, I seriously doubt it. It seems highly unlikely to me that he ever wrote these Spanish titles at all. Two explanations therefore present themselves: firstly, that the name of Tarzan has been sold to Latin American book companies outright, much as it has been to Hollywood moving picture concerns; or secondly---and the more probable of the two---that the name of this character has been unscrupulously plaigarized, much in the same manner as Sherlock Holmes has been rewritten into fiction not authored by Arthur Conan Doyle. It would not be the first case of trouble Burroughs has had, for recently a copy of Sovereign

Magazine came to light with an unauthorized reprint of an excerpt from Tarzan the Untamed titled "When Blood Told." Moreover, these tales seem hurriedly written, and in a style somewhat dissimilar to Burroughs'.

A list of these "new" titles, on which Latin America apparently has a monopoly, is given below. Among them will be found several which are authentic translations of known Tarzan novels; these may be differentiated from seemingly spurious titles by the symbol "e" which follows the latter. In each instance the title is given in the original Spanish, and is followed by its translation.

Tarzan de los Monos: Tarzan of the Apes
El Regresco de Tarzan: The Return of Tarzan
Las Fieras de Tarzan: The Beasts of Tarzan
El Hijo de Tarzan: The Son of Tarzan
El Tesoro de Tarzan: The Treasure of Tarzan e
Tarzan en la selva: Tarzan in the Jungle (The Jungle Tales of Tarzan?)
Tarzan el Indomito: Tarzan the Untamed
Tarzan el Terrible: Tarzan the Terrible
Tarzan y el Leon Dorado and Tarzan y el Leon de Oro: Tarzan and the Golden Lion
Tarzan y los Hormigas: Tarzan and the Ant Men
Tarzan, Senor de la Jungla: Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle
Tarzan y el Imperio Perdido: Tarzan and the Lost Empire
Tarzan Triumfante: Tarzan Triumphant
Tarzan en el valle de la Muete: Tarzan in the Valley of Death e
Tarzan el Vengador: Tarzan the Avenger e
Tarzan en el Bosque Siniestro: Tarzan in the Sinister Forest e
Las Huestes de Tarzan: The Allies of Tarzan e
Tarzan y la Diosa del Mar: Tarzan and the Goddess of the Sea e
Tarzan y los Piratas: Tarzan and the Pirates e
Tarzan el Magnanimo: Tarzan the Magnificent
La Muetra de Tarzan: The Death of Tarzan e
La Resurrection de Tarzan: The Resurrection of Tarzan e
Tarzan el Justiciero: Tarzan Makes Justice e
Tarzan y la Esfinga: Tarzan and the Sphinx e
La Lealtad de Tarzan: Tarzan's Loyalty e
El Secreto de Tarzan: Tarzan's Secret e
Tarzan y el Buda de Plata: Tarzan and the Silver Idol, or Tarzan and the God of Money e
La Huella de Tarzan: The Trail of Tarzan e
Tarzan y el Profeta Negro: Tarzan and the Negro Prophet e
La Odisea de Tarzan: Tarzan's God e
Tarzan y el Elefante Blanco: Tarzan and the White Elephant e
La Justicia de Tarzan: The Justice of Tarzan e
Tarzan y el Largo de Fuego: Tarzan and the Lake of Fire e
El Nieto de Tarzan: Tarzan's Grandson e
Tarzan el Implacable: Tarzan the Unconquerable e
El Rescate de Tarzan: Tarzan's Rescue, or The Ransom of Tarzan e
Tarzan y la Luna Rojo: Tarzan and the Red Moon e
El Secuestro de Tarzan: The Capture of Tarzan e
La Venganza de Tarzan: Tarzan's Vengeance e
Tarzan en el Reino de las Tinieblas: Tarzan in the Kingdom of Darkness e
Tarzan y el Velo de Tanit: Tarzan and the Veil of Tanit e
Tarzan entre Pigmeos: Tarzan Among the Pigmies e
Tarzan y las Joyas de Opar: Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar
Tarzan el Invincible: Tarzan the Invincible
Tarzan el Gran Jeque: Tarzan the Great Leader e
Tarzan contra el Invasor: Tarzan Against the Invader e

Tips on Tales

by
Thyril L. Ladd

Margaret Potter's Istar of Babylon (1902): Curious to learn what life among the human race is like, the goddess Istar desires to descend to earth to live for a time. This the council of deities permits, but warns her that if she does so she must accept the human burden of pain, sorrow and fear. Consenting, she descends to ancient Babylon. There she is recognized as a divinity---for about her gleams an ever-shining aura---and is immediately set above the priesthood, whose members are jealously vengeful because of their loss of prestige. Istar and Belshazzar, the royal prince of the realm, fall in love; she bears him a child, and is deprived of her godly aura as a result. Using this as an excuse to instil in the people's minds doubts as to her divinity, the priests lead them against her; and she suffers almost every human agony of mind and body before vanishing in a blaze of light as the council of dieties returns her to her place in high heaven. A charming auxiliary love motif parallels the main theme, and the action of the novel is strikingly set against the romantic and luxuriant backdrop of ancient Babylon at the height of its power and glory.

W. Somerset Maugham's Magician (1908): The character which gives this remarkable and unusual book its name is a fat, unpleasant creature who has been able to discover and gather unto himself much lost magic of the dusty ages. He can commune with beings our modern world has forgotten, and his greatest ambition is to create homunculi---to do which he needs, among other noisome things, the blood of a virgin. The book starts out slowly in the typical Maugham manner, horror being instilled by slow degrees. A gruesome and thrilling climax is reached in the final chapter when the enraged young physician dashes about the Magician's attic-laboratory, smashing the great glass containers in which mew and gibber living monstrosities.

W. Olaf Stapledon's Sirius (1944): When I say that this is the story of a sheepdog endowed with human intelligence your first reaction may be---"What a trite idea!" But the tale is handled cleverly and with sympathy, and is intensely interesting throughout. Though I have been awed at the vast scope of the author's Starmaker and Last and First Men I have nevertheless found this book more enjoyable than any of his others. The adventures of Sirius are maturely recounted in Stapledon's usual capable style from puppyhood onward; his observations on humanity, his sojourn at Oxford in its research laboratories, his search for self-expression and spiritual companionship---all these are knit into powerful, realistic drama. Unquestionably this novel is deserving of high prominence among those in its genre, and it would be surprising if it did not attain this.

Talbot Mundy's Full Moon (1935): Very pleasing in its modern, sprightly manner is this fine story of a young officer in India, sent out to locate a missing archaeologist. This purpose is not aided by the appearance in the wild northern hills of his daughter, also in search of her father---and with whom, not so long ago, the young officer was in love. A weirdly fantastic journey through a series of underground caverns and an ancient, crumbling mountain citadel is climaxed by the discovery, in a hidden cleft, of a nine-foot-tall woman enclosed within a massive crystal block---the last trace of some great race that dominated the planet in its younger days. From there the novel dips into the fourth dimension and becomes more enthralling than ever. Like most of Talbot Mundy's work it is well written, and its theme adeptly developed; in short, Full Moon is well worth the attention of any fantasy lover.

The Time Stream

by
Richard Witter

I

During the last few years much consideration has been given the various masters of weird fiction, both in books and fan publications. Starting at the turn of the 'forties the market has been deluged with collections and anthologies of supernatural fiction in all sizes, shapes and forms---the work of Merritt, Lovecraft, Smith, Whitehead and many others has been printed and reprinted, gaining for its authors a degree of public attention never previously enjoyed. But in the same period little or nothing has been taken from the vastly larger store of science-fiction available. Indeed, a few notorious critics---notably Phil Stong and August Derleth---have gone so far as to indulge in sarcastic remarks at the expense of the entire field. Even Olaf Stapledon and John Taine, whose efforts impress many as being greater than most of Lovecraft's, have fallen victim to this tide of neglect.

Consider the small number of first-rate science-fiction books published in this country during the past decade. What are the reasons for this scarcity of literate material? True, the shortages attendant on war have been responsible for a great loss in quantity in the last few years---but should they also be held responsible for an almost total loss of quality at the same time? (One needs glance at only a few issues of the current pulp magazines to perceive the level to which the genre has fallen in its most prolific vehicle.) Certainly the field is by no means unfertile; therefore the fault must lie with publishers for printing inferior material and with the readers for supporting it. Publishers seem primarily interested in flooding the market with trivial banalities---in many cases reprints---to make the most profit. More, one suspects that this refusal to pay a sufficient compensation for authors' efforts is not all---that the trouble is even more deeply rooted, involving an unwillingness even to print better stories when they are offered. Each periodical caters slavishly to its own circle of readers. Thrilling Wonder Stories has cornered a frankly juvenile clientele. Amazing Stories shows promise of becoming a haven for lost Rosicrucianists. Astounding Science-Fiction and Famous Fantastic Mysteries alone have made attempts to progress, though fiction in the former has degenerated into a sort of Campbellized gadgetry that is all but completely stereotyped. And yet none of these magazines is willing to change its policy for fear of losing the following it has "educated" to like its own particular kind of tripe. Science-fiction, consequently, is fast approaching the nadir.

That science-fiction has a wider appeal than weird fiction has been demonstrated innumerable times. Consider, for example, the various periodicals devoted to supernatural fiction when fantasy as a whole was at its prime---only Weird Tales survived, and that at a bare subsistence profit to its owners. Indeed, editor Farnsworth Wright admitted that the small quantity of science-fiction printed in it was a sine qua non of the magazine's existence. (Followers of weird fiction were and still are all but incapable of supporting a single magazine, for Weird Tales is today an invertebrate conglomeration of tales attempting to cover all types of fantastic fiction. Even Unknown Worlds has fallen by the wayside, not because of paper-shortage---which provided a convenient excuse ---but because it could not be sold in sufficient quantities to clear a substantial profit; its editor has declared that it would not be revived.) Why should this decadence continue? At a time when magazines and books should be reaping the fruits of science-fiction's popularity we are instead faced with the unpleasant necessity of initiating a prompt revival if it is to continue at all!

II

But now let us descend the time stream to the days when a pulp science fiction magazine was little more than Gernsback's dream and Ray Cummings was the idol of the fans. 1924 saw the appearance of one of the greatest authors that the field was ever to know, for in that year was published The Purple Sapphire John Taine's first novel. Out of the depths of Tibet came strange purple jewels, of startling value and great beauty, and, somehow, menacingly---alive. Into the heart of this unknown land go two men and a woman in search of fabulous wealth and a vanished girl, and to their lot falls some of the strangest adventures ever experienced by human beings. After crossing the menacing Purple Sea of sand they discover the decadent remnants of a great race that once knew the secrets of the creation and dissolution of matter, to which processes the purple sapphires are a key. Destroying these remnants and the evil stones that had annihilated their forbears the trio flees back to civilization.

Three years pass, and in 1927 John Taine puts out two more novels, as different from each other as are they from their predecessor; these are Quayle's Invention and The Gold Tooth.

Left to die on a sun-scorched island as a menace to civilization, with superhuman courage David Quayle struggles against pitiless nature and finally returns, a bitter, disillusioned and spiteful man after his years of desert isolation. Hounded and harried unmercifully by every nation on the globe after it is found out that he and the knowledge of his discovery still are at large, Quayle eventually destroys every vestige of his invention and at last attains a measure of human happiness. What is this invention? To tell that would be to reveal the author's secret, but be assured it is well worth waiting for!

Ancient Korean scrolls, a mysterious white-gold tooth, and the strange book of the monks, De Re Metallica, lead two explorers---an American and a Korean ---into unexplored deserts and mountain ranges of the Chosen peninsula. High on an almost inaccessible plateau the two discover a forgotten people, and deep under that plateau the secret of transmutation of the elements. To save the world from its own greed the Korean destroys the entire plateau with its beautiful civilization, the American alone escaping to tell the story.

1928 saw the printing of the magnificent Green Fire, in which two gigantic intelligences battle for control of the planet. Seeking untold power, one initiates atomic disintegration and is then unable to control the forces he has unleashed. Gradually the green fire of destruction eats its way through the universe, to be stopped only at the last moment as it sweeps toward Earth.

In 1929, which saw the publication of a score of fine science-fiction volumes, appeared Taine's Greatest Adventure. Evolution unleashed haphazardly by an ancient race which discovered the secret of life but found themselves unable to harness it is the theme of this novel. An island in the Antarctic regions is discovered by a party of scientists, and here are gigantic monstrosities such as have never been seen by human eyes. In a last attempt to save the world the ancient race surrounded the place with a wall of concrete a hundred feet thick; but all civilization's work is perishable---and after milleniums of battering by the elements the wall has crumbled and rampant nature is free once more. But after many trials and tribulations the party eliminates the menace by firing the great oil supplies that have gathered on the islet.

The author's sixth novel was issued in the following year, which also proved a banner one for science-fiction generally. The Iron Star tells of three scientists setting forth for darkest Africa, whence emanates that dread disease that is beginning to sweep the globe---devolution. Led by a gigantic gray guide, an ape that had once been a man, they penetrate to the heart of the continent. There is discovered the source of the plague, a meteor containing asterium, a mysterious element which reverses evolution, and which is a drug stronger than

human will-power. They set up a gradual disintegration of the gigantic meteor with a concentration of radioactive rays.

Until 1929 all of Taine's novels had appeared in book form only, but late in that year appeared his first magazine contribution as Amazing Stories Quarterly published "The White Lily." Here, a war of silicon life upon carbon life is accidentally started. Taking root in Manchuria, it sweeps down unchecked upon civilization until at last the method is discovered for stopping the advance and wiping out the invader.

In the same periodical in 1931 was printed "Seeds of Life," one of the author's greatest efforts. Made a superman by sudden exposure to an X-ray tube discharge, its hero becomes responsible for tremendous scientific advances. But during his researches into the nature of life itself he is again exposed to the same rays, and suffers a loss in mental power. His intellect no longer perfect, and unable to control the forces his experiments have sought to harness, he is destroyed by them.

Taine climaxed this brilliant crescendo with "The Time Stream," a four-part serial which appeared in Wonder Stories beginning with the December 1931 issue. This is a tale so complex in conception that its pattern is difficult to grasp in a single reading, and to attempt a resume would be equivalent to describing the movements of the heavens. From its beginning, in a description of a scientific experiment designed to send its participants back through the stream of time to a previous existence of the human race on another solar system before it came to Earth, Taine unfolds marvel after marvel as the reader is led to and fro across the eons and told of Eos, the world of the five suns.

The simplicity of Before the Dawn (1934) provides an interesting contrast to the writer's earlier works, where complexity of plot was a rule rather than the exception. A trio of scientists discover the secret of reproducing the history of inanimate objects by unlocking the images cast upon them by the light rays of the past. By this means are they able to view the prehistoric days of the dinosaurs and see Belshazzar, the last giant king of these titans. His heroic life and struggles against against an envirionment no longer favorable to his species make a tremendously exciting story which ends in his death.

"1287," which ran as a serial in Astounding Stories during 1935, seems to be actually of earlier vintage or else an attempt to return to the author's former style. While not a total failure as a novel, it nevertheless strikes one as decadent and inferior when compared to more recent efforts.

Four years were to pass before fiction of the master was again to appear. With 1939, however, came a novel "Tomorrow" (published in the May number of Marvel Science Stories) and "The Ultimate Catalyst" (which appeared in the June issue of Thrilling Wonder Stories), and which is of short story length. "Tomorrow" concerns a frightful plague that swept through the world, turning animal cells into plant cells. Thousands died in agony as their brains metamorphosed into fungoid growths before the World Scientists were able to check the process. Weirdly powerful and like nothing Taine ever before attempted is his "Ultimate Catalyst." How he was persuaded to pen a short story---for his expositions are nearly always a bit wordy---is still a mystery. Its locale is Kilsonia, last remaining dictatorship on the planet, to which all who cling to this anachronistic political ideology have been exiled. It is meatless until pears tasting like beef blood are produced. These greenbeefos accomplish a slow transformation of hemoglobin to chlorophyll, however, and by horrible degrees the members of the colony begin to change into animated masses of varicolored moss. Fleeing in terror from the place, the daughter of the vengeful scientist who developed the deadly fruits fires the entire colony, and so the last remnants of dictatorship on earth perish in flames.

III

And so with this last effort was stilled the mighty pen that was able to hold the reader spellbound at the magnitude of the events it depicted. But let us examine some of these writings more closely in order to see what made them what they were.

Of the greatest there is little to say that would not seem superfluous. Some of its magnitude and mystery, however, may be shown by quoting the phrase from the ancient prophecy around which the plot of the entire novel is built: "When ruin threatens Eos, discover the secret of the five suns---it is the better way." And it is in an attempt to do this very thing that the explorers of Eos project themselves back through the time stream---back to the gray limitlessness of desert in the dawn of creation, before the age of reason, before there existed the living, scintillating globe of Life with its five pillars to the five suns. Many have been the variations on Wells' Time Machine, but Taine's concept of time as a never-ending river in which all events, future and past, are mirrored as from some cosmic scroll, together with his prophetic glimpse of the future of humanity---these have taken the motif a step away from the mechanical aspects of the underlying concept and given it an aura of romance that is most effective.

Probably second in order of merit comes "Seeds of Life," the subtlest presentation of the superman theme to be found in modern fiction. Lacking the involved complication of plot so typical of Taine's longer works, it dispenses with mystery and suspense, depending for effectiveness instead on the characterization given its leading figure and the speed of narration that leads to its smashing climax.

Practically equal to this novel, too, is Before the Dawn. Virile descriptive passages leavened with humor abound here; the following picture of one of the lotus-eaters is an excellent example---

> The scarlet weeds were thrust aside, and a bland, expressionless face the size of a bathtub beamed up at us with a welcoming smile of complete and amiable imbecility. To say that the face smiled is an exaggeration. A smile presupposes at least the rudiments of a central nervous system. There was none behind that vast, flat vacuous face. The huge slit of the tight-lipped mouth, slightly tilted at the corners, did however give the empty face a semblance of intelligence to which it was not entitled. Even the surly countenance of the dullest hippopotomous would have sparkled with vivacity beside that vacant dishpan of a face.

In the end, however, Taine abandons the objective metaphor and earthy simile for an ending of poetic beauty but slightly tinged with materialism, as the closing paragraph of the book aptly shows:

> The sun set and the evening star stole out. Belshazzar raised his head. The last light died in his eyes as the head dropped back, the unconquerable jaws still wide in their last snarl of defiance.

The Iron Star is rich in sharp characterization and possesses a greater proportion of mystery and adventure than Before the Dawn, where obvious limitations of the theme employed would prevent much of this. No one who has ever read this tale could forget the psychiatrist Colton, the physicists Big Tom and Little Tom, Swain---half man, half degenerate simian---, and especially The Captain, the exploring party's guide, a gigantic ape that had once been a man whose one passion of existence is to destroy the evil that has destroyed him. One of the finest excerpts that might be given from the novel is that describing the

shining city:

> ...Miles away over the black desert a mounded constellation of twinkling lights flashed and scintillated like a city of ten million stars. The lights were festooned about a distant invisible mountain in long avenues and gracefully curved lines following the contours, like the street lights of a great city. Or so it seemed to Colton's half wakened eyes, and the words came to his lips unbidden,
>
> "The shining city."
>
> He quickly roused the others. Spellbound they stood gazing at the wonder and beauty of that distant city, alone in the desert, without a rival in the world. Its only peer might have been a star cluster seen from the Milky Way.
>
> "'Like a net of fireflies tangled in a silver braid,'" Lila quoted softly....

The choice of a novel to follow these from the standpoint of quality is a difficult one, since Green Fire, The Purple Sapphire and The Gold Tooth seem about equal in this respect. Personally, I would give the first of the trio a slight edge, possibly because of its more expansive scope. Here we again have a complex plot which fast action whips into a striking climax and closes dramatically:

> Stunned by the hugeness of the events in which they had taken part, and utterly worn out by so many hours of agonizing emotion and suspense, the group of numbed survivors stood there, striken to stillness, scarcely realizing that the cold green fire had passed, and that the cosmic disaster which had been started by the insane presumption of the most gigantic intellect the world had ever seen, had been turned aside once and for all from the earth and heavens.

Probably because of the frequency with which this plot has appeared in science-fiction, Green Fire has come to be regarded as one of the author's less important productions, but the careful reader cannot help noticing that Taine's style and careful treatment have unquestionably prevented its being included in such a category.

Mystery and slow suspense build up to a cumulative finish in The Purple Sapphire. Of great beauty is Taine's description of the Tibetian Sea of Sand, fascinating and compelling with deadly horror lurking always in the background:

> ...As far as the eye could see the floor of the desert below them glowed with a soft, bluish light. While they gazed a sudden gust of wind plowed a long furrow, perhaps half an inch deep, in the level sands about thirty feet from where they stood. Instantly the blue fire above the furrow deepened. It was nature's warning to them to turn back. Then, as they watched, fascinated, the deeper blue paled, and nothing remained to mark the way the wind had taken. Only the blue phosphorescence lay still and unbroken from their feet to the horizon.

Although The Gold Tooth's general tone is lighter and more personalized, it too contains passages of striking beauty. Its late chapters, which describe the adventures of the explorers amid underground caverns with their rivers of mercury, forest of crystalline gold "trees" and mighty quicksilver waterfall, all show the mark of an author possessed of a remarkable imagination and a deft ability to translate it into words.

ability to translate it into words.

"White Lily" time and again rises to peaks of unforgettably brilliant prose; a fine example of Taine's description, for example, is found in his depiction of a living man attacked by silicon life---

> The clothes...began to glisten in the moonlight as if stiff and brittle with hoar frost. Yet the night was sultry. A sleeve, rotted at the shoulder of the coat, crumbled and fell away. The frostiness of the rest thickened to a glittering fur of thousands of needlelike crystals. The rotten fabric collapsed under the increasing weight as the crystals grew, and fell with a tiny, fairy chime of tinkling glass to the quartz, exposing the shapeless arms and legs... On the bared flesh...as delicately as an expert artist, an invisible worker rapidly etched the outlines of the skeleton as the completely dissolved substance of the bones sweated through the flesh. Simultaneously the flattened head became a bejewelled hemisphere of densely packed crystals that grew and multiplied visibly. Within twenty seconds the entire body was crusted over with a bristling pelt of glittering needles, whose steady growth filled the moonlit atmosphere with a creeping, metallic rustle.

Following close behind these novels come The Greatest Adventure and Quayle's Invention. The latter's plot gives the author several opportunities to give vent to humor that is edged with biting and satirical sarcasm---and he does not hesitate in taking advantage of it. One of the more memorable examples that might be noted is Taine's travesty upon the professional detective:

> King wrestled like an enraged bear, but the detectives captured the sack.... Panting and speechless with rage...King saw his precious sack upended and dumped on the filthy planks.
>
> Out tumbled in colorful confusion half a dozen cabbages, several rotund beets, two dozen head of the finest lettuce, a few pounds of string beans, and potatoes innumerable.... Those astute Sherlocks...having cooly opened their pocket knives...slashed at the innocent potatoes, made salad of the lettuce and string beans, coleslaw of the cabbages, and finally, in a horrible orgy of professional zeal, they disembowelled the beets. For yards around them the wharf was littered with massacred vegetables....

Bringing up the rear of the procession of Taine's novels are "Tomorrow" and "1287," which, while readable and in spots interestingly entertaining do not draw the author's powers to a sharp enough focus to make them outstanding. In the light of their predecessors, they are inferior---but compared to the average example of the science-fiction novel they are not deserving of overmuch censure.

Five book-length stories of the writer cannot be commented on, for they have not yet been published---possibly because of the present-day editorial policies already decried. They are "Red and Yellow," "To Be Kept," "Satan's Daughter," "G.O.G. 666" and "The Forbidden Garden." Because a studied and leisurely build-up lacking slam-bang action seems taboo among science-fiction editors, the likelihood is that no early publication of them can be expected. This is more the pity because it robs Taine of any incentive to produce further novels. That his facile mind still teems with ideas for new tales is amply evidenced by a letter he wrote to Julius Schwartz late in 1938, from which the following extract is

(continued on page 190)

Armour, Donald

So Fast He Ran

London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1940. 319pp. 22 cm. 8/-.

Further information: Illustrated.

Synopsis: Thrown by some strange unknown force from age to age, backward through time, Theodore Nunn must undergo a fight against fear until he succeeds in attaining mastery over himself.

Review: Theodore Nunn and his fincee, Gwen Martin, with fifty thousand pounds worth of stolen jewels in their possession, were making their escape in a car, and were well on the road from London to Weymouth, where they hoped to connect with the boat for New York. Fear of discovery, however, caused Nunn to drive through a red traffic signal when a policeman stepped forward to point out that his rear light had failed. A police car followed in pursuit, and overtook the fugitives when their vehicle ran out of fuel at the foot of the famous Maiden Castle prehistoric hill-camp, near Dorchester. Nunn fled on foot, leaving the woman to shift for herself. Terror-stricken at the thought of pursuers close behind, he ran screaming into the earthworks, and, just as the police had almost overtaken him, suddenly disappeared into thin air. Only his clothes, complete to their last detail, were ever found by the sorely puzzled searchers.

Thus starts the story of a series of strange adventures in which Nunn, with only the memory of the desertion of the girl and the subsequent pursuit, is hurled by some strange force backwards in time from age to age. In each period of history in which he materializes he finds he has to undergo a similar fate. Gradually he realizes that only by facing his fear will he find peace; by running away in time of danger, he is doomed to re-enact time and time again the same harrowing mental experience. Finally, in the prehistoric age, he fights to the death with a huge bear, saving his woman and his own soul in the process.

Written in an interesting manner, this fantasy holds the reader's attention throughout. King Arthur and his knights, the Roman occupation of Britain, the Saxon invasion of England, and life in prehistoric times---all these pass in kaleidoscope before our eyes as the hero flits from era to era. Every page is enjoyable.

---Frederick Charles Brown.

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quoted:

> ...The other day I had a perfectly gorgeous plot about Mars, which would eliminate all the interplanetary stuff, to which I object just as the editors do, and yet give an extremely plausible account of which happened on Mars. The idea is so good (in my opinion) that it is worth spreading, and I doubt whether it could be done profitably in 50,000 words. I will have to look at some of Wells' books to see how much space he required to spread himself on an idea of similar complexity. Wells usually wastes no words.

Whether Taine has written or will write this projected novel is problematical---and one is inclined to be of pessimistic outlook. Certainly new ef-

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Still in Demand

by
Thyril L. Ladd

In Fantasy Commentator #6 there appeared the results of a six-month survey showing which books of fantastic fiction were in the greatest nation-wide demand. As this proved of interest and gained favorable reception, I have compiled a similar list, this time extending it over a one-year period. Comparison will show that certain changes have occurred, some books having been asked for fewer times than before, while others have gained in popularity during the interim. Without further ado, then, here are the results, showing the number of times these volumes have been advertised for in a well-known trade journal.

The Outsider (Lovecraft)	165	King Solomon's Mines (Haggard)	28
The Ship of Ishtar (Merritt)	105	The Night Land (Hodgson)	28
The Circus of Dr. Lao (Finney)	102	The Maker of Moons (Chambers)	27
The House of Fulfillment (Beck)	77	Uncanny Tales (Crawford)	27
Out of Space and Time (Smith)	74	The Sword in the Stone (White)	27
Brother of the Third Degree (Garver)	70	The Ghost Pirates (Hodgson)	26
The Face in the Abyss (Merritt)	67	The Monk (Lewis)	26
Om (Mundy)	57	Etidorhpa (Lloyd)	26
Old Ugly Face (Mundy)	56	The Star Rover (London)	26
Swords of Mars (Burroughs)	55	The Garden of Vision (Beck)	25
Presenting Moonshine (Collier)	55	Some Ghost Stories (Burrage)	25
The Worm Ouroborus (Eddison)	55	House by the Churchyard (Le Fanu)	25
Dream's End (Smith)	55	Melmoth the Wanderer (Maturin)	25
Gladiator (Wylie)	54	The Room in the Tower (Benson)	24
Beyond the Wall of Sleep (Love'ft)	53	Back to the Stone Age (Burroughs)	24
Ayesha (Haggard)	47	The Ivory Child (Haggard)	24
After Worlds Collide (Balmer-Wylie)	46	Sinister House (Hall)	23
The Mysterious Stranger (Twain)	46	Collected Ghost Stories (Onions)	23
Life Everlasting (Corelli)	44	Dracula's Guest (Stoker)	23
She (Haggard)	43	Others Who Return (Wakefield)	23
Brave New World (Huxley)	43	The Place Called Dagon (Gorman)	22
Collected Ghost Stories (James)	40	Dwellers in the Mirage (Merritt)	22
The Purple Cloud (Shiel)	37	The Moon Pool (Merritt)	22
Darkness and Dawn (England)	36	They Return at Evening (Wakefield)	22
The Ghost Kings (Haggard)	35	The Ill-Made Knight (White)	22
To Walk the Night (Sloane)	35	The Openers of the Gate (Beck)	21
Someone in the Dark (Derleth)	33	Looking Backwards (Bellamy)	21
Lest Darkness Fall (de Camp)	33	Spook Stories (Benson)	21
Starmaker (Stapledon)	32	The Moon Maid (Burroughs)	21
Out of the Silence (Cox)	31	The King in Yellow (Chambers)	21
The Prince of Peril (Kline)	31	The Dark Chamber (Cline)	21
The Undying Monster (Kerruish)	31	The Soul of Lilith (Corelli)	21
Carson of Venus (Burroughs)	30	Wandering Ghosts (Crawford)	21
The Smoky God (Emerson)	30	Alruane (Ewers)	21
The Celestial Omnibus (Forster)	30	The Planet of Peril (Kline)	21
House on the Borderland (Hodgson)	30	Widdershins (Onions)	21
Last and First Men (Stapledon)	30	Lost on Venus (Burroughs)	20
After Many a Summer Dies the Swan (Huxley)	29	The Hill of Dreams (Machen)	20
When Worlds Collide (Balmer-Wylie)	28	Black Light (Mundy)	20
A Fighting Man of Mars (Burroughs)	28	The Edge of Running Water (Sloane)	20
		The World Below (Wright)	20

The Treasure of Ho (Beck)	19	Sirius (Stapledon)	14
Land that Time Forgot (Burroughs)	19	Seven Famous Novels (Wells)	14
A Romance of Two Worlds (Corelli)	19	Lukundoo (White)	14
A Dreamer's Tales (Dunsany)	19	The Ninth Vibration (Beck)	13
Boats of the "Glen Carrig" (Hodgson)	19	The Way of Power (Beck)	13
Pirates of Venus (Burroughs)	18	The Cave Girl (Burroughs)	13
Synthetic Men of Mars (Burroughs)	18	The Shadowy Thing (Drake)	13
Tanar of Pellucidar (Burroughs)	18	Omega (Flammarion)	13
Red Eve (Haggard)	18	The Twilight of the Gods (Garnett)	13
The Yellow God (Haggard)	18	The Magician (Maugham)	13
In a Glass Darkly (Le Fanu)	18	Burn Witch Burn (Merritt)	13
The Chessmen of Mars (Burroughs)	17	Dawn of Flame (Weinbaum)	13
Wisdom's Daughter (Haggard)	17	The Hampdenshire Wonder (Beresford)	12
Carnacki the Ghost-Finder (Hodgson)	17	In the Midst of Life (Bierce)	12
Madam Crowl's Ghost (Le Fanu)	17	The Girl in the Golden Atom (C'ngs)	12
Last Men in London (Stapledon)	17	A. D. 2000 (Fuller)	12
The Supernatural Omnibus (Summers)	17	The World's Desire (Haggard & Lang)	12
More Spook Stories (Benson)	16	The Great Weird Stories (Neale, ed)	12
Visible and Invisible (Benson)	16	The Elixer of Life (Ransome)	12
The Twenty-Fifth Hour (Best)	16	The Banshee's Warning (Riddell)	12
The Master-Mind of Mars (Burroughs)	16	Weird Tales (Riddell)	12
The Secret Power (Corelli)	16	The Door of the Unreal (Biss)	11
Creep, Shadow! (Merritt)	16	At the Earth's Core (Burroughs)	11
Incomplete Enchanter (Pratt-deCamp)	16	The Gods of Mars (Burroughs)	11
Prince Zaleski (Shiel)	16	Full Circle (Collier)	11
The Gap in the Curtain (Buchan)	15	The Lost World (Doyle)	11
Thuvia, Maid of Mars (Burroughs)	15	The Red Napoleon (Gibbons)	11
The Lady of the Heavens (Haggard)	15	Maza of the Moon (Kline)	11
When the World Shook (Haggard)	15	Sam Small Flies Again (Knight)	11
Lost Horizon (Hilton)	15	Shadow over Innsmouth (Lovecraft)	11
The Devil-Doctor (Rohmer)	15	The House of Souls (Machen)	11
Dr. Arnoldi (Thayer)	15	The Scarlet Empire (Parry)	11
My First 2000 Years (Viereck-Eld'dge)	15	The Frozen Pirate (Russell)	11
The Time Machine (Wells)	15	The Pale Ape (Shiel)	11
The Warlord of Mars (Burroughs)	14	Quayle's Invention (Taine)	11
Beware after Dark! (Harré, ed)	14	Imagine a Man in a Box (Wakefield)	11
Wylder's Hand (Le Fanu)	14	The New Adam (Weinbaum)	11
Out of the Silent Planet (Lewis)	14	Islandia (Wright)	11

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forts from the pen that produced novels ranking with the better science-fiction tales of the early 'thirties, an era responsible for some of the finest of these ever written, could scarcely be poor. They might, moreover, go far toward improving the woeful condition now prevailing, toward elevating science-fiction from its present status as the prey of radio serials, comic books and the screen, in all of which the common denominator of juvenility is only too plainly apparent. One taste of Taine's work leaves the reader with the remembrance of having encountered something adult, and not overloaded with standardized super-science, forced melodrama, or saccharine romance. Among men of science, this author is known as Dr. Eric Temple Bell, and is respected as a mathematician of repute; but the vivid reality of his fiction has made him famous to a far larger public, to whom he will always be remembered as simply "John Taine."

Forgotten Creators of Ghosts

by
A. Langley Searles

IV - Dick Donovan

Just at the turn of the century, in the early part of that period which one critic has misleadingly termed "the golden age of the ghost story", there appeared under the authorship a then well-known detective-story writer a collection of supernatural fiction entitled Tales of Terror (1899). When one reflects upon Donovan's contemporaries one is led to expect much: surely with examples by such titans as Machen, Lee, Chambers, Bierce, Wells, Crawford and others before him, he would be expected to produce work in the genre showing familiarity with current narrative methods, and possibly even to profit by their assimilation and add a few improving touches of personal technique as well. But no. With one eye on the subject-matter of The Night Side of Nature and the other on the style of The Castle of Otranto, Donovan has managed with uncanny facility to absorb and reproduce the worst features of both.

Unhappily, it is not materially exaggerating matters to say that the book exhibits so many faults that one is puzzled as to where to begin their enumeration. The chief of these, as this writer sees it, is the downright obviousness of the tales. With but three exceptions, the reader becomes fully aware of each story's climax long before it is reached; in some cases, indeed, the very title is sufficiently descriptive to telegraph it to him beforehand. "The Legend of Wolfspring," "The Spectre of Rislip Abbey" and "The Mystic Spell"---to cite three in this category---are all examples of ghostly prose in its coarsest possible texture, displaying too much emphasis on raw bones and blood and too little on art.

And yet one might be tolerant of the author in this respect did he not offend almost as seriously in another. Unable to lure the reader on by tacit promise of a powerful denoument, Donovan continually utilizes such stock melodramatic expressions as "Oh, if I had only had some faint warning of what was to come," "Had I but known of what was shortly to transpire," etc., etc., presumably hoping thereby to accomplish the same purpose. As a rule these statements leave one with no more than a healthy desire to yawn, though by the time the end of the volume has been reached the frequency of their appearance sums up into an insult to the intelligence.

Even the exposition and conversation bear the stamp of stilted and heavy-handed melodrama at its Victorian nadir. Worse, at its Gothic nadir---for Tales of Terror exhibits faults that are never to be found in the work of Dickens, Le Fanu and Heron, and even Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe have produced stories but slightly inferior to Donovan's in these respects.

His themes, too, are mostly heirlooms. Le Fanu's "Carmilla," written some three decades before, still stands today as the best vampire tale ever to appear; and yet we find Donovan's "Woman with the 'Oily Eyes'" and its sequel still dispensing with all psychological aspects of the theme, and depending for effect on one of its crudest variations that this critic has ever encountered. "The Legend of Wolfspring" and "The Dance of the Dead" are treatments of two German legends; the former is poorly handled, but the latter---involving Rubezahl, the Spirit of the Silesian Mountains---is one of the better stories in this collection, and shows welcome touches of humor. With a single exception, all the remaining tales deal with far too-familiar variations on supernatural visitations of various sorts, none of which receive stylistic treatment of a sufficiently high quality to require lengthy comment.

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Open House

The following is quoted from a letter sent to Thyril Ladd by M. Doreal:

...So many books have been pirated in England that I have made it a hobby to hunt volumes that are not supposed to exist. Merritt's "Metal Monster," for example, was published there in an unauthorized edition under the title "The Metal Emperor." I once owned a copy, which I secured in London, but lost it in some baggage while travelling. Giesy's "Palos of the Dog-Star Pack" was once printed in London, also. And a paper-bound edition of "The Blind Spot" appeared some time ago in Germany.... There is one book of Haggard's which I have seen, yet which is not listed in bibliographies of the author---King of Kor. It was privately printed in an edition of twenty-five copies which were then given by Haggard to his personal friends. It contains the life of Ayesha ("She") in the interval between Kallikrates' first and second deaths. I tried to purchase the volume, but could not, as it was in a private collection,...

From Europe Basil Davenport writes:

I haven't seen much in the way of fantasy literature recently. A long time ago I ordered some Arkham House books, but I think that must have been the only package of mine which has gone astray, through an act of God, the restraints of princes, or malice of the king's enemies. While in Nancy I got Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural, most of which I had read, from the Red Cross Library; and I have had Wagenknecht's Six Novels of the Supernatural. In that I was glad to reread Arthur Machen's contribution, which I encountered as a child when it appeared during the last war in Century Magazine. I have always remembered it and a couple of years ago I urged it on Bill Sloane, of Holt, for an anthology he was projecting; he didn't care for it as much as I, however, and I thought my memory might have been at fault. But on rereading it I still think it should have gone in, for it is in some ways even more powerful than I remembered. Nevertheless, its serious fault is that no explanation is given for the sudden cessation of the terror. There my childhood recollection helped the author out: as I recalled it, the beasts revolted because by the wickedness of the first Great War man had abdicated, and I felt then that order was restored when the war ended; but actually, the revolt of the beasts ends for no reason while fighting is still going on---and there was no direct connection with the war anyway.

If an author offers explanations of his fantastic phenomena I think those explanations should be complete and consistent on their own terms. That is something I have against Heard's Great Fog. He pretends to be very scientific, and even a layman like myself can see that he has many facts dead wrong. "The Great Fog" itself is a good enough story, but it suffers to me from appearing to be a sort of wish-fulfillment of the author's. Heard belongs, apparently, to some sort of semi-Buddhist cult, the same one which led Huxley to denounce the development of science in the last chapter of Time Must Have a Stop. Now heaven knows that is a perfectly tenable point of view, and Mary Shelley was inspired to write Frankenstein---which I don't think is a good story in itself---just to provide us with a symbol for it. But one has the feeling that Heard would like to see mankind chastised for its presumption in inventing so many things by being deprived of all the things---such as automobiles and accurate scholarship---that he himself does not care for. But I would be willing to bet that Heard is very fond of music; and so in constructing his penitential universe he would preserve that. In the great fog sounds carry "a mile or more." Nonsense! Any schoolboy knows that fog blankets sound waves almost as effectually as light waves; perhaps Mr. Heard may some day find himself fog-bound in a sailboat and have to listen

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Thumbing the Munsey Files

with William H. Evans

In addition to the third installment of "Marooned in 1492" the October 1905 Argosy offered its readers a strangle little story by Edward A. Moree. In "An Author's Vengeance" he tells of a would-be writer who, driven mad by continual editorial rejections of his manuscripts, decides to destroy all the books in the world. He develops a species of insects having an amazing fecundity and a tremendous appetite for printed matter. In the course of exhibiting them to a friend, two escape. The question then is---were they male and female? In the end the whole affair turns out to be a hoax, however. Nevertheless, the tale is fairly entertaining. The third installment of William Wallace Cook's serial adds more trouble to the plight of the time-travellers who are adventuring in the days of Columbus, the process being continued even further in the next installment. In the concluding one, however, it is resolved, and everyone finds himself back in his own era. To round off the year, December's Argosy had a fair offering in "'Twixt Two Plagues" by F. J. Knight-Adkin. This yarn relates of two brothers one of whom can control all the light in New York City, and the other of whom has a device to control the heat there. In their rivalry each turns his weapon upon the other, with consequent disastrous results.

During this same period Allstory magazine published a superb atmospheric tale: Don Mark Lemon's "Gorilla." This tells of an English nobleman who is given, when near death, a blood transfusion from a trained gorilla. The gorilla dies---but haunts the castle. And although the man recovers, but behaves queerly and ultimately disappears. Later, in an old dungeon is found a gorilla with a man's face; and eventually another corpse is discovered and buried as the nobleman's---though none but the immediate family and the doctor are permitted to view it.

Although the last three months of Argosy in 1915 were barren of fantasy fiction, Allstory was more fruitful. With the December 4th number Burroughs began "The Son of Tarzan" as a six-part serial. One week later Semi Dual, the occult detective, returned in J. U. Giesy's "Snared," which ran for two more installments. The next issue produced a veritable feast for the fantasy lover---- in addition to these novels there was begun the first of a trilogy that was to gain wide and deserving fame: "Polaris---of the Snows," by Charles B. Stilson. Here is told the tale of a boy, stranded in Antarctica when his explorer-father dies, and of his adventures on the road back to civilization. He stumbles upon Sardanes---a lost colony of Greeks---and falls in love with a girl there, finally escaping with her after becoming involved in the usual triangle and fighting in many battles. As a good fast-action tale and a counter-irritant after a strong dose of Lovecraft this novel is warmly recommended. In the same number of Allstory is a brief story by George Allan England, "The Tenth Question," in which a madman who conceived a grudge against doctors kidnaps them and forces them to guess what he is thinking of by asking him ten questions; if they fail, death is fated to them. One, more clever than the rest, finally guesses that his captor is thinking about---zero. England's effort is quite entertaining, besides being reminiscent of Weinbaum's "Brink of Infinity," which appeared twenty years later.

The last months of 1925 find Argosy offering only two tidbits to the fantasy fan. The October 10th issue featured "Creatures of the Ray" by James L. Aton. The ray in question produces abnormally heightened growth, and here is used by a typical mad professor (sans beautiful daughter this time, however) who decides to create a race of giant ants who will dominate the planet, since he is dissatisfied with humanity. A newspaper reporter on the scene manages to foil his schemes---and humanity is saved. Despite the familiar ring possessed by the plot, the yarn is fairly good. William F. McMorrow's three-part serial "The Sun-

Makers" commenced four issues later. Inhabitants of Venus invade Earth in a powerful space-ship, apparently to explore for later conquest, as they leave bearing samples of the flora and fauna. One of the captives aboard succeeds in destroying the craft, however, and all ends well for humanity---although, since the novel proved popular, McMorrow wrote a sequel ("Venus or Earth") in which he made this salvation but temporary.

Argosy for November 23, 1935 published an unusual tale by Donald Wandrei. In "The Monster from Nowhere" a strange amoeba-like entity visits a quiet countryside, stirring it into panic. This excellent tale was reprinted in The Eye and the Finger (1944), Arkham House's collection of the author's shorter works. In the next number appeared Murray Leinster's "Extra Intelligence," wherein a biochemist develops a device to increase the intensity of thought. His assistant uses it on the biochemist's body after the latter has committed suicide, and barely stops catastrophe when an alien entity attempts to occupy the body. A very good tale---and one which leads the writer to believe that a collection of Leinster's stories would find as much public favor as has Wandrei's.

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Fantasy in Complete Stories Magazine: a Bibliography

compiled by
William H. Evans

(Compiler's note: The following listing, given in chronological order, includes all fantasy tales which were published in this periodical's first 35 volumes.)

"The Feng Shui"	Warrack Wallace	July 25, 1925
"Pot Luck"	Joseph Montague	Apr. 25, 1926
"When Manhattan Sank"	George S. Brooks	July, 1927
"The Dark Disk"	Victor Rousseau	March, 1928
"Tombs of Terror"	Wright van Deusen	July, 1928
"Three Hanged Men Stand Guard"	B. A. Alexander	Sept., 1928
"The Red Powder"	Herman Landon	Feb. 15, 1931
"Belari the Black"	T. T. Flynn	May 15, 1931
"White Crocodile"	Kenneth K. Calvin	June 15, 1931
"The Green Terror"	Herman Landon	July 15, 1931
"The Chemical Criminal"	Wright van Deusen	Aug. 1, 1931
"Revolt in the Tropics"	James Clarke	March 15, 1933
"Die-Hard"	Cole Richards	June 15, 1933

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Open House---concluded from page 194

for the bell-buoy that is his only guide in order to learn his mistake. Similarly in his penguin tale he has what is in itself a first-rate idea: that the only two real paths of evolution are via the Man and the Bird,---the hand, with consequent development of the practical mind, and the wing, with, for aught I know, consequent development of esthetic and emotional impulses. But then how is it that the penguins, who possess but rudiments of either, are so far advanced? Heard should have given us a utopia of flying, dancing, loving creatures---like Stapledon's Venerians. I know that his super-penguins have evolved fingers by now, but how did they get the inventive brains to learn to make fingers with, before they had the fingers? This might of course be reconciled satisfactorily--but the author doesn't do it....

David Lasser, then editor of Wonder Stories, a man who was later to achieve national prominence as head of the Workers' Alliance. With Lasser was Gawain Edwards Pendray, author and rocketry expert, Dr. William Lemkin, also a well-known author, as well as lesser lights of the Gernsback staff. They lectured eruditely to the Scienceers on their individual specialities, and finally departed amid much pomp and ceremony. The day had been a heady one for most of the neophyte fans, and they wandered to their homes in a happy daze.

At the club's next meeting they were rudely awakened, however, for they were then presented with a bill for use of the room at the museum; evidently Uncle Hugo had had no intention of footing the expenses as he had so expansively indicated. And to add insult to injury Glasser himself billed the club for the cost of his time spent in contacting Gernsback. The ensuing bitter debate as to the legitimacy of these debts was more than the conventional tempest in a teapot, for controversy reached such a pitch that it led to dissolution of the Scienceers.

It is probably true, however, that this incident was not the only bone of contention present. Throughout the club's existence minor strife had been occasionally precipitated by that minority of the membership which was composed of science-hobbyists. It was the old story of the Gernsback ideal---all science-fiction lovers were potential scientists, and should aim at something more than mere entertainment. But to the majority of the Scienceers entertainment was an end in itself, and they revelled in a frank enjoyment of discussing their hobby with kindred spirits. Nevertheless, this difference added fuel to the already-kindled fire, and did its part in producing the conflagration.

Yet so enjoyable had been these informal club discussions that by twos and threes many members of like tastes drifted together frequently, and although the old-time strength was never again achieved, two individual sections, one in Brooklyn and another in the Bronx, met irregularly as late as 1933. A group of Texas fans, who had received permission to become a branch of the Scienceers early in its career, lost contact with the parent members after the schism, however, and were not again heard from.

IV

The Emergence of the True Fan Magazine

Among those fans who had met and cultivated friendship at the gatherings of the Scienceers were Julius Schwartz and Mortimer Weisinger. As time was to prove, they had much in common and many latent capabilities. Weisinger was a jovial, rotund fellow, possessed of a slight lisp, who was later to make his mark as a columnist, author, literary agent and editor. By contrast Schwartz seemed sober, and was a steady person with a good sense of perspective. Between them they conceived the idea of remedying fans' apathy since the Scienceers' dissolution by initiating a fan magazine. Enlisting the aid of Allan Glasser---for they apparently doubted their abilities to accomplish something creatively successful alone---who edited their brain-child, they circulated an announcement predicting the early appearance of a publication of interest to the science-fiction fan, editor and author which was to feature descriptive and biographical articles, news, bibliographical material and occasional fiction. The response---as hundreds of would-be publishers have since discovered---was far from sensational; but it was sufficient encouragement for the magazine to be issued. It was called The Time Traveller.

The first two numbers of The Time Traveller, like its announcing circular, were mimeographed. The main feature of the initial issue was a complete list of extant fantastic moving pictures (or, as they have come to be known, "scientifilms") contributed by Forrest J. Ackerman of California. Like many others in the early days of fandom, Ackerman had become well-known in the field through

his many letters printed in science fiction magazines' readers' departments. And as there no other criteria at the time to utilize, the guage of someone's interest and activity in the field was how often he wrote to the professional science fiction magazines. Editors vigorously urged their readers to write each month, and Ackerman's production as a rule far exceeded this editorial quota. Jack Darrow and Bob Tucker are two other prominent examples of readers who won their fame in the letter columns and found that it followed them into the fan field. Though this remained an easy road into fandom for some years it was eventually considered an excessive display of egotism to appear month in and month out there; fan indulgence in this once-accepted must became less and less frequent, so that if a well-known fan's letters not written in self-advertisement appeared at all regularly in these columns he soon found them quoted in the fan press and satirically commented on. Indeed, by 1938 letter columns were well representative of the opinions of the average reader---as opposed to the active fan---although editors to this day delude themselves into believing that this is not the case.

But we have digressed. Good as they were, The Time Traveller's future was not to be judged by its first two numbers. For at this time Weisinger and Schwartz became acquainted with Conrad H. Ruppert, an avid fan whose interest in amateur journalism had led him to acquire a printing press. Overnight The Time Traveller metamorphosed into a printed journal and an upward spiral of progress was begun.

To most present-day fans Conrad H. Ruppert is an all but unknown name, but his part in creating for fandom the finest set of periodicals it has ever produced is a story of unbelievable devotion to science-fiction. He painstakingly set by hand every issue of The Time Traveller from then on, and every number of Science Fiction Digest and Fantasy Magazine up until the latter's third anniversary number. The fact that each of these rarely were less than 30,000 words in length and appeared on a regularly monthly schedule gives the reader a rough notion of the amount of work involved. During this time, too, Ruppert hand-set Hornig's Fantasy Fan and the "Cosmos" supplements to Fantasy Magazine---and all at below-production cost, out of the sheer love of science-fiction. Later he was to appear as printer of the weekly Fantasy News, the "Nycon" program and Dawn of Flame, the Weinbaum memorial volume. Ruppert's contribution to the field would be difficult to overestimate.

Meanwhile, the standards of The Time Traveller were constantly raised. An index of Amazing Stories was completed, and one of Weird Tales begun. Gossip and news of fans, authors, editors, magazines and allied topics found an eager audience, and the material published aroused interest to a peak never before attained. Exhilirated by this success, the staff organized science-fiction fandom's first publishing company, the Arra Publishers. It is remembered today for three pamphlets: Allan Glasser's Cavemen of Venus, Mort Weisinger's Price of Peace, and Through the Dragon Glass by A. Merritt, the first two being original short stories and the third a reprint.

Precisely how important the work of Glasser in these publishing enterprises was has never been made clear. However, the later success of Schwartz, Weisinger and Ruppert as a trio leaves no question of their abilities to carry on without him. Those who have known Glasser say that above and beyond an unmistakable superiority complex he was intelligent almost to the point of brilliance. He had made himself well-known through letters in readers' columns, he was looked up to as a leading fan, and generally regarded as an amateur author about to be graduated to the status of a professional.

But Glasser's fall from fame proved to be even more meteoric than had been his rise. Wonder Stories at about this time offered prizes for the best science-fiction story plots submitted by its readers. Allen Glasser's prize-win-

ning submission was of such excellence that A. Rowley Hilliard's inspired writing turned it into a classic. Older fans today still remember the poignant little tale, "The Martian." But what many do not know is that the plot was actually Weisenger's. Glasser had been told the plot in confidence, and, realizing its worth, hastened to mail it in to Wonder Stories' contest. Close upon the heels of this breach of ethics followed another and more serious one. The August, 1933 issue of Amazing Stories published, under Glasser's name, "Across the Ages." It was soon discovered, however, that this story was a plaigarism of an earlier tale entitled "The Blue Haze of Heat." And, although the evidence involved was never published, it was alleged at the time that further investigations showed him to be guilty of numerous other plaigarisms in non-science-fictional circles.

These events produced the expected results, Glasser running afoul of legal consequences, losing the respect of fandom, and finding his friendship with Schwartz and Weisenger completely broken. They also resulted in the demise of The Time Traveller. The ninth and last number of this publication was a small-sized, four-page affair wherein the names of Schwartz and Weisenger were nowhere to be found, and which carried the announcement that it was to merge with Science Fiction Digest, a magazine that was to fill all unexpired subscriptions. And so was terminated the first true fan magazine as we recognize such today.

But The Time Traveller had left its mark behind. It had been the first sizeable central rallying-point in the science-fiction world, and this had given the more active fans opportunity to segregate and come into mutual contact. The seeds had been sown, and they proved to be far more prepotent than anyone then would have thought possible.

In Cleveland, Ohio Jerome Siegel and Joseph Schuster surveyed The Time Traveller and one of the seeds sprouted. The magazine's policy was a mistake, they decided. What fandom really needed was a publication devoted mainly to fiction and having a minimum of fan chatter. After all, the main thing people were interested in was science-fiction itself. And so was produced another amateur periodical---aptly titled Science Fiction--- in October, 1932 and ran for five numbers. It was mimeographed, and rather poorly, too, but its contents were of excellent quality. The editors managed to get material from such well-known writers as Raymond A. Palmer and Clare Winger Harris, and Siegel himself wrote fiction under the nom de plume of Bernard J. Kenton. Shuster's artistic abilities were in evidence also, and turned out well despite the limited medium of the stencil with which he contended. Today Science Fiction is a collector's item of extreme rarity; few fans possess copies of it, and these are never seen to change hands.

In California, meanwhile, Forrest J. Ackerman, together with a fan named Norman Caldwell, had founded a minor clique known as the Fantasy Fans' Fraternity. Meetings were held in San Francisco, then Ackerman's home town. Although this organization had little or no influence in fandom at the time it is notable in that it was the forerunner of a series of California clubs that terminated in the world-famous Los Angeles chapter of the Science Fiction League.

Meanwhile, further activity was taking place in New York City. After the break with Glasser, Schwartz and Weisinger, together with Conrad Ruppert, Forrest Ackerman and Maurice Z. Ingher, formed Science Fiction Digest, a corporation in which each had a share and to which each contributed a specified sum of money. This corporation then issued a magazine under this title, its first number appearing in September, 1932. Because of default in payment, Weisinger was later dropped from the organization, and Ruppert eventually bought Ingher's share; but with these changes the corporation continued in force, making a profit, in fact, during its latter days.

The initial issues of Science Fiction Digest were almost identical in

format and content with the large printed numbers of The Time Traveller. Except for the title and the staff the two would be difficult to tell apart. Maurice Ingher was editor, and Weisenger, Palmer, Schwartz, Ackerman and Schalansky also held editorial posts. After Ingher left the group Ruppert assumed editorial directorship in April, 1933, a position which he held until mid-1934, when vocational duties forced him to relinquish it for the less time-consuming one of business manager. From this time until the magazine's demise Julius Schwartz carried the editorial reins.

For all-around quality Science Fiction Digest has never been surpassed in the history of fandom. Its regular columns became famous; these included "The Science Fiction Eye," which Julius Schwartz devoted to information for the collector; "The Ether Vibrates," a gossip column of news sidelights conducted by Mortimer Weisinger; Raymond Palmer's "Spilling the Atoms," which also concerned chatter of current topics; "The Scientifilms," devoted to reviews of current and past fantasy moving pictures by Forrest Ackerman; Schwartz's "Science Fiction Scrap Book," featuring thumbnail reviews of fantasy fiction books; and "The Service Department," which listed valuable bibliographical data. Excellent original fiction by such authors as A. Merritt, Raymond Palmer, P. Schuyler Miller, Clark Ashton Smith, Dr. David H. Keller, C. L. Moore, Mortimer Weisinger, Donald Wandrei and Arthur J. Burks appeared regularly. A biography or autobiobiography of a famous author, artist or editor connected with the field was included in almost every issue. The outstanding authors in the field---among them Lovecraft, Weinbaum, Leinster, Smith and Howard---combined their talents on a cooperative basis to produce two popular tales, "The Challenge from Beyond" and "The Great Illusion." Most legendary of all, however, was the novel "Cosmos," written by eighteen authors and issued with the magazine in supplementary serial form. Each part ran from five to ten thousand words, and the author line-up was as follows: A. Merritt, Dr. E. E. Smith, Ralph Milne Farley, Dr. David H. Keller, Otis Adelbert Kline, Arthur J. Burks, E. Hoffman Price, P. Schuyler Miller, Rae Winters, John W. Campbell, Jr., Edmond Hamilton, Francis Flagg, Bob Olson, J. Harvey Haggard, Raymond A. Palmer, Lloyd A. Eshbach, Abner J. Gelula and Eando Binder. Besides such special features, Science Fiction Digest printed solid, interesting, factual articles in every number. Up until the end of its life it remained the undisputed leader in the field, and its influence on the varied currents of fan history was profound indeed.

(to be continued)

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Forgotten Creators of Ghosts---concluded from page 193

The sole example of a near-original theme to be found in Tales of Terror is "The Corpse Light." This tells of a luminous spectre of a murdered man leading to the discovery of his body, and to a reconstruction of circumstances surrounding the crime. The weird atmosphere is fairly well sustained throughout, and the prose style is above Donovan's usual standard.

There is a third story in the book which is worth reading, "A Night of Horror." The subject-matter (discovery in an old castle of the hidden bodies of a murdered woman and her daughter, upon the proper burial of which the building is no longer haunted by their ghosts) is familiar, true; but it is fairly well developed, the choice of detail is good, and it impresses one as being the most modern in cast of all the author's supernatural efforts.

Dick Donovan is to be judged as an anachronism, a hangover from the Gothic days when sheeted ghosts dragged their chains noisily through the darkened castle corridors of England. His Tales of Terror is an item of last rarity; but, considering the quality of its contents, this is neither surprising nor undesirable, for he is best a forgotten creator of ghosts.