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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Vol. I, No. 9 ---oOo--- Winter 1945-46

C O N T E N T S

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 except by specific arrangement with the publisher. All opinions expressed herein are the individual authors' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff members. Although no fiction is published, descriptive and critical manuscripts dealing with any phase of imaginative literature or fantasy fandom are welcomed from all readers. Please address all communications to the editor at 19 East 235th Street, New York 66, N. Y....

This-'n'-That

Without pause or preamble, we proceed at once to listing those fantasy books which appeared in 1945 since our last issue. High Barbaree by Charles B. Nordhoff and J. N. Hall (Little-Brown, $2) is a tale of imaginary dream-worlds conjured up in the mind of a dying man, and is written with the usual incisive vigor that has always characterized novels by these authors of adventure on the high seas. A brief and amusing work is Elwyn Brooks White's Stuart Little (Harper, $2), which tells of the doings of a Tom Thumb-sized son born into a normal American family; the illustrations by Garth Williams are as delightful as the context. The Maze by Maurice Sandoz (Doubleday-Doran, $2½) is a rather grim---if conventional---tale about a nameless "thing" which haunts an old English castle; Salvatore Dali's illustrations match its mood well, and are, in fact, better than the material depicted. Satire dilutes the escapism of Arthur Koestler's Twilight Bar (Macmillan, $2), a play set on a mythical island republic at an indefinite future date; this is warmly recommended, even to those readers who consider themselves allergic to fiction that aims to do more than relate a story. A partly pleasant, partly dull melange of surrealism is A Night with Jupiter and other Fantastic Stories edited by Charles H. Ford (Vanguard, $3); you might like it, you might not: look it over carefully before parting with your currency. An unusual novel is Robert Hichens' Woman in the House (MacCrae-Smith, $2½), which skirts the fashionably occult in dealing with thought-images, extra-sensory perception, and similar topics. The Oboler Omnibus (Duell, Sloane and Pierce, $2½) is a collection of fourteen radio plays by Arch Oboler, that staunch advocate of propaganda well larded with the fantastic; such items as "Hate," "Holiday 194x," "The Immortal Gentleman" and "The Visitor from Hades" are included here. Finally there is Mister Pimney (Ackerman, $1), a brief ghost story by Justus E. Wyman.

Wavering on the borderline between themes of fantasy and the mundane are several volumes. One of these is The Night Has a Thousand Eyes by George Hopley (Farrar and Rinehart, $2½); though mainly a mystery story with a weird atmosphere, this book warrants mention because of occasional intrusion of future foretelling episodes and the like. Howard Haier's Undertow (Doubleday-Doran, $2½) is a morbid and depressing tale of developing insanity, is is Victor Wolfson's Lonely Steeple (Simon and Schuster, $2½).

William Oliver Stevens' Unbidden Guests: a Book of Real Ghosts (Dodd-Mead, $3) is supposedly composed of factual supernatural accounts. A handsome volume indeed (glance at the price; it should be!) is The Ship of Flame: a Saga of the South Seas, by William S. Stone (Knopf, $7½); it is the first time that this Polynesian legend has been committed to print, and the author has done his work well. The book is beautifully illustrated by Nicolas Mordvinoff. Did you think you'd seen the last of the WPA? Look again: its Writers' Project is back once more with Gumbo Ya-Ya: a Collection of Louisiana Fairy Tales (Houghton-Mifflin, $5); the compilers are Lyle Saxon, Edward Dreyer and Robert Tallent. This volume too is illustrated.

Britain, meanwhile, furnishes us with two new fantasy items, both of which deal frankly with the supernatural: Charles Williams' AllHallows' Eve (Faber and Faber, 8/6), a novel; and Best Ghost Stories compiled by A. B. Ridler (Faber and Faber, 9/6), a collection of short stories. (Four other new English books are described in "Open House," on page 233 of this issue.) In the realm of British reprints, the most important are two authored by M. R. James: Collected Ghost Stories (Arnold, 6/6) and a paper-bound reissue of Ghost Stories of an Antiquary (Lothian, 1/3), both enormous bargains. The former is available in this country, too, at a price of $2½ (Longmans-Green); it is unquestionably a volume no respectable fantasy collector's library lacks.

And this, we think, finishes hard-cover fantasy as far as 1945 is concerned. We'll see you again in April, providing no one dusts the editorial typewriter keys with plutonium in the meantime.... ---A.L.S.

Paper-back Fantasy in England, 1941-45

by
R. George Medhurst

One result of the war-time paper shortage, in Britain, has been a springing-up of cheap paper-covered fantasy booklets. Doubtless this seems paradoxical: the explanation seems to be that while the better-known publishers receive a ration of paper which is but a small fraction of their pre-war comsumption, there have appeared on the scene a considerable number of new publishers, each of which finds itself in possession of a quantity of paper, often of very poor quality, which needs to be used up in the most profitable way. So we have had this flood of booklets, priced usually at about a shilling, often not dated, and frequently printed on three or four different colors of paper---pink, green, yellow, and in one case very nearly black---according to what happened to be handy when the edition was run off.

I have gathered up copies of most of these very ephemeral publications. One or two, which are but lamely classified as fantasy, I haven't taken the trouble to buy. Some I may have missed---for the distribution is very irregular indeed. Quite a few, perhaps the majority, I have not read, so that descriptions of them which follow will often be confined to external points of interest rather than to literary value---which latter is for the most part negligible. Further, I have not attempted to deal in this article with the "Penguin", or the "Penguin"-type booklets, such as those bearing "Bay Tree", "Cherry Tree", "Soverign Thrillers", "Hutchinson's" or "Big Ben" imprints. These are for the most part not new titles, but mostly reprints of more expensive cloth-bound volumes.

A few of these fantasies are concerned with the war and its future consequences, though not as many as one might expect. I, James Blunt by H. V. Morton (London: Methuen, 1942; 56pp; 19 x 12½cm; 6d.) is a diary of an Englishman, written in 1944 in a German-occupied Britain, and is intended as a Warning to the Complacent. It is ably written, and is quite well printed on excellent paper, being one of the best produced of all the war-time booklets. The 1946 Ms. by Robin Maugham (London: The War Facts Press, 1943; 44pp; 18½ x 12½ cm; 1/-) is an account of a dictatorship set up in England by the general who defeated Germany. This also appears to be intended as a political warning. The Return of Karl Marx by Grey Lynn (London: Chancery Books, 1941; 117pp; 20½ x 13cm; 1/6) describes a visit of the founder of international communism to London of 1941, and his experiences among the left-wing political parties there; eventually he is expelled from the communist party for left-deviation! The tale has a foreward by Herbert Read.

The remainder that we have to deal with are largely what it is fashionable to label "escapist." Outstandingly so are the publications of Mssrs. Lloyd Cole. Established initially in Worthing, they put out two juveniles: The Radium King by Edmund Burton (no date; 66pp; 21 x 13½cm; 3/6) described as "a story of science gone mad," and In Quest of the Golden Orchid by the same author (no date; 80pp; 21½ x 14cm; 4/-). The prices seem excessive. Transferred to London, the firm made some sort of tie-up with Benson Herbert, issuing three of his science-fiction stories and a fourth which he co-authored with Festus Pragnell. These are: Strange Romance (no date; 95pp; 18½ x 11½cm; 1/6), an interplanetary tale of somewhat lurid nature described as "Fantastic Fiction Series No. 2"(the first is presumably Thieves of the Air, which did not appear until subsequently); Hand of Glory (no date; 31pp; 16 x 10½cm; 8d.), an invisible airplane story; and The Red Haired Girl (no date; 36pp; 18 x 12cm; 9d.), another lurid interplanetary. The volume co-authored by Herbert and Pragnell is Thieves of the Air (no date; 27pp; 9d.), yet another tale on the same theme, this time concerning invaders from the planet Mars.

Herbert apparently broke away from Mssrs. Lloyd Cole to form a "Utopia Publications, Ltd." This firm, working on the sound principle that Utopia is the Place Where One Gets What One Wants, has found that almost any printed matter will sell if its cover is embellished with a good female nude. I am told, in fact, that the first publication of this house was a volume of photographic nudes; this I do not have available for description. Next came Girl in Trouble by E. Frank Parker (London, no date; 36pp; 20 x 12½cm; 9d.), a lurid interplanetary tale; my copy is printed on pale green paper. The nude on its orange cover has arching, bad-tempered brows. There followed Arctic Bride by Major S.P. Meek (no date; 36pp, 18 x 12cm; 9d.), which, in addition to the title story, contains a tale called "Nasturtia" by the same author; the cover is a photographic reproduction of a skeleton, behind which sits the inevitable nude. Robert Bloch's Sea Kissed (no date; 39pp; 18½ x 12½cm; 1/-) is a booklet of short stories, all by this author. There exists a variant edition, in which the number of pages has been reduced to thirty-six, although an extra story has somehow crept in. This is Benson Herbert's "Goper's Head," and is not unamusing. It concerns a retired grocer who contrives to transmit his body into "another universe or dimension or something" while his head is embarrassed to find itself still in this one. The situation resolves itself when his body is eaten by an other-world carnivore. A nude hanging over space and reaching upward adorns the cover of Lady in Danger by Jack Williamson (no date; 36pp; 18½ x 12cm; 1/-). Besides the title story, the volume contains "Spanish Vampire" by E. Hoffmann Price and "The Curse of the House" by Robert Bloch. Love in Time by Johnson Harris, pseud. (John Beynon Harris)(no date; 18½ x 12cm; 36pp; 1/-) contains one story only (reprinted from Wonder Stories magazine). Tiger Girl (no date; 36pp; 18½ x 12cm; 1/-) contains the title tale (by Edmund Hamilton) and E. Hoffman Price's "Apprentice Magician." In Youth Madness by Stanton A. Coblentz (no date; 36pp; 18½ x 12cm; 1/-) there is also a story by Robert Bloch, "The Secret of Sebek." The booklet's cover is a silhouetted nude with a peacock-patterned background; it bears the legend: "American Fiction No. 8." No. 9 is The Sex Serum by H. O. Dickinson (no date; 36pp; 18½ x 12cm; 1/-); this also contains "The Man with X-Ray Eyes" by Edmund Hamilton and "The Red Swimmer" by Robert Bloch. Strange Offspring by Raymond A. Palmer (subtitled "American Fiction No. 10) (no date; 36pp; 18½ x 12cm; 1/-) is accompanied by "The Malignant Entity" of Otis Adelbert Kline. The full-length cover nude is the most attractive of the lot.

A number of fantasies have been put out by [illegible] Swan, Ltd. Their paper and printing are usually of poor quality. Into the Fourth Dimension by Ray Cummings (London: no date; 128pp; 18 x 12½cm; 1/-) and The Moon Conquerors by R. H. Romans (no date; 176pp; 18 x 12½ cm; 1/-) both contain, besides the title novels, short stories reprinted from the American Science Fiction magazine group edited by Charles Hornig. The Dark City by Kay Hammond (no date; 48pp; 21x14cm; 4d.) is a lost civilization tale, and is inscribed "Weird Pocket Library No. 1" ---no. 2 never appeared; Mssrs. Swan excel in issuing solitary numbers of a series. Weird Shorts: First Selection (no date; 35pp; 20½ x 13cm; 7d.) contains a selection of hitherto unpublished short stories by W. P. Cockroft, J. O. Evans, etc., which are for the most part rather good. David Alun's Demon and the Dictator pilfers blatantly from John Collier's mythology. (The bibliography of these Swan productions, not easily come by under the most favorable of conditions, is complicated by the circumstance that a volume of "crime stories" was put out with the same title, cover and format as Weird Shorts: First Selection. The prices of all these items apparently varies with the bookseller: labels specifying higher ones are often found stuck over the original markings.) More, there is The Case of the Missing Airman (no date; 36pp; 18 x 12cm; 4d.), one of a series of booklets about Martin Speed, Detective; it is authored by George Elliott, and is of

science-fictional nature. And lastly there is Occult: a Collection of Stories of the Supernatural (1945; 36pp; 20 x 13cm; 7d.). The cover, of stiff paper, has a design in blue and white showing a trio of demons gathered around a man who has evidently been engaged in esoteric practices, with book, bunsen and retort. The stories are of the usual Swan standard, and the authors include Henry Rawle, W. P. Cockroft and John C. Craig.

(It might be of interest to interpolate here a note about Swan's magazines. Weird Story Magazine appeared in August, 1940, priced at 7d. It consisted of hitherto-unpublished ghost stories, and included a weird comic-strip. The second number, which never appeared, was to print a serial called "The Last Man in the World" by E. Bruce. Three undated periodicals, each containing reprints from the American Weird Tales magazine, appeared at 6d; all were on bad paper---the last, featuring Henry Kuttner's "Dragon Moon," being on such dark brown stock as to make it almost impossible to read. In addition, in a series of magazines called Yankee Shorts (24 x 17½cm; 3d.), published in the 1940-1942 period, there is some fantasy to be found. No. 2 was Yankee Mystery Shorts; nos. 3, 11 and 21 were Yankee Science-Fiction; and nos. 6, 14 and 19 were Yankee Weird Shorts. All contain a mixture of weird and science-fiction, regardless of the titles' claim. Initially all the stories consisted of reprints from American magazines; later numbers contained a large proportion of stories newly written by British authors. The first few issues were labelled "10 cents"---doubtless to lend authenticity to their claim of literary origin.)

Several paper-bound publications have emanated from The Mitre Press of London. Author Eugene Ascher is responsible for There Were No Asper Ladies: a New and Strange Kind of Thriller (no date; 126pp; 18 x 12cm; 2/-); this is described as a "cheap edition": actually it is the only edition. (The same misleading notation appears on the cover of Parker's Girl in Trouble---vide supra.) No less than two of Justin Atholl's fantasy novels bear the imprint of this firm. They are The Man Who Tilted the Earth: a One-Sitting Thriller (no date; 63pp; 18 x 12½ cm; 1/6), which appears to be something about atom-splitting, and displays a picture of New York City being swept away; The Oasis of Sleep (no date; 62pp; 18½ x 12½cm; 1/6), which concerns a plot by future German super-scientist, and involves a sort of suspended animation theme. Three Mitre Press titles are by R. Thurston Hopkins: Weird and Uncanny Stories (no date; 32pp; 18 x 12cm; 1/-), a collection of rather pedestrian ghost stories: Uncanny Tales (no date; 32pp; 19½ x 13cm; 9d.) which is somewhat disappointing, only one, "The Fairy Goblin of Lychpole Hill," being of fantasy nature; and Horror Parade: a Selection of the Best Uncanny Stories Written by that Master of this Type of Story (1945; 63pp; 15 x 12cm; 1/-), some of whose contents are fictional accounts of the supernatural. The cover of the latter title, in black, red and blue, is by H. W. Perl, and shows two ghouls, a coffin, some bones and a bat. You Can't Hang the Dead: a story of Black Zombie by Leslie Carroll (no date; 31pp; 18 x 12cm; 1/-) is a West Indian horror tale. More Tales of Terror and Surprise (no date---probably 1944; 127pp; 18 x 12 cm; 2/-) contains fourteen stories, six of them new, eight reprints. The reprinted ones are decidedly the best, and include Mary Shelley's "Mortal Immortal," two by de Maupassant, and Poe's familiar "William Wilson" and "The Cask of Ammontillado." The outstanding items in the new efforts are "The Silent Ray" by Arthur Armstrong and Michael Harvey's "Prelude to Madness," a horrific story about the evil effects of blood transfusion. And lastly, there is Uncanny by George C. Bachelor (1945; 32pp; 18½ x 12cm; 1/-). Its cover depicts a hooded, flesh-colored skeleton dripping red blood upon a victim with raised hair; a bat also drips blood. The stories (there are six in all) are of the ghostly variety, of a certain merit.

The publishing house of Everybody's Books overlaps that of the Mitre Press, in the sense that each prints the same type of pamphlets by the same auth-

ors. Eugene Ascher has had published by this London firm both a novel and a set of short stories featuring a sort of occult criminologist of the John Silence variety. They are, respectively, The Grim Caretaker (no date; 49pp; 16 x 10cm; 9d.) and Uncanny Adventures (no date; 49pp; 17 x 10½cm; 9d.). Justin Athol is likewise represented by two titles: Land of Hidden Death (no date; 50pp; [illegible] x 10½cm; 9d.), about an Incan survival, and The Grey Beast (no date; 48pp; [illegible] x 10½cm; 9d.), which is labelled "an eerie vampire thriller." The Gamma Ray Murders by Preston Yorke (no date; 128pp; 18½ x 12½ cm; 2/-) flaunts a cover [illegible]wn by T.F.Cook) showing a corpse lying under a table littered with odd parts of apparatus, with airplanes and a blue ray in the background. The story is not too bad---about a gang, a master-mind, and a ray that can put electrical equipment out of operation over a considerable area. In Tales of Terror and the Unknown: Gripping Stories by Master Writers (no date; 96pp; 18 x 12½cm; 2/-), besides some miscellaneous ghost and crime stories, there is included "The Letter" by Michael Hervey, a tale based on the theories of J.W.Dunne, and "Strange Ancestors," an interplanetary story by the same author. Hervey, incidentally, has been publicized by the slogan "If you're nervey, don't read Hervey!" The paper used for this volume is very bad, being thick, coarse and dark gray, like a poor quality of wrapping paper. Tales of Mystery and Surprise (no date; 32pp; 16 x 10½cm; 6d.) contains three science-fiction stories, concerning respectively a man who saw the future, the invention of an anti-gravity machine, and a man who grew younger as the result of taking an indigestion mixture. Finally, Arthur Armstrong's "Brain Machine," a tale describing a machine for exchanging brains, may be found in Tales of Murder and Mystery (no date; 50pp; 16 x 10cm; 1/-).

A certain H. Kaner has authored some booklets of short stories, some of which are fantastic in theme; they are for the most part published by himself, and the level of writing is not high. Squaring the Triangle and Other Short Stories (Llandudno: H. Kaner, no date; 64pp; 24 x 18 cm; 2/6) includes two tales of the future. Fire Watcher's Night (Llandudno: H. Kaner, no date; 56pp; 18 x 12cm; 1/6) contains "The Professor's Drug," which tells of a drug intended to induce "perfectly logical reasoning." Hot Swag (London: Brown, Watson, Ltd., no date; 64pp; 18 x 12½cm; 1/6) includes a life-after-death story, "Life Beyond."

One of the Polybooks consists of a reprint of Sheridan Le Fanu's well-known Green Tea (London: Todd Publishing Co., 1943; 16pp; 13½ x 21½cm; 6d.). The same firm has issued Peter Rugg: the Missing Man (1943; 16pp; 21½ x 13½cm; 6d.), a story on "Rip Van Winkle" lines. Two other Polybooks are by Claude Houghton: Three Fantastic Tales (1943; 16pp 21½ x 13½cm; 6d.), a collection of fantasies which had previously appeared in a very limited---and expensive---edition; and The Man Who Could Still Laugh (A Story of the Future) (1943; 16pp; 18 x 12cm; 6d.) which is a tale of another dictatorship in the future.

The Todd Publishing Company has also been responsible for the issuance of a considerable number of paper-back reprints of Wells' short fantasies. Their Bantam Books series included "The Land Ironclads," "The Country of the Blind," "The New Accelerator" and "The Empire of the Ants." In the above-mentioned set of Polybooks there appeared "The Man Who Could Work Miracles," "The Truth About Pyecraft" and "The Country of the Blind." Why the last tale should appear in both series is not explained. Each title is nicely produced, and has an interior-cover illustration. Bantam Books also include The Black Cat and Other Stories by Edgar Allan Poe. Wells' Time Machine has also seen a shilling edition, under the Poynings Press masthead.

Other miscellaneous paper-backs include Two Famous Stories: "Justice" & "The Rat" (London: Books of Today, Ltd., no date; 36pp; 18 x 13cm; 1/-), two excellent tales reprinted from the author's New Gods Lead (1932). The Battle of the Singing Men by Gerald Kersh (London: Staples & Staples, Ltd., 1944; 61pp; 18 x 12½cm; 1/6) includes "Prometheus," a story of prehistoric man. The New Saxon

Pamphlets: One, edited by John Atkins (no publisher specified; no date; 48 pp; 21½ x 14cm; 1/6) contains an editorial contribution called "The Apoplectic Revolution" which concerns a new disease that strikes down everyone who gives way to ungoverned fury of expression. The Call of the Hand and Other Stories by Louis Golding (Wineham: Poynings Press Ltd., 1944; 32pp; 21 x 14cm; 1/-) includes some ghost stories. A pseudonymous "Edward" has authored The Laboratory Medium (London: E. Biddle, no date; 12pp; 13 x 9cm; no price given) bears the legend "Yiffway Stories" on its cover. It concerns an apparatus for communicating with the dead, and is described as an episode from a novel called The Supernormal Woman. Two booklets published in Devon have a rather dubious claim for inclusion in this list. They are True Ghost Stories, collected and edited by George C. Bachelor (Lower Chelston: Gulliver Books Ltd., no date; 49pp; 14 x 11cm; 6d.) and Thrilling Tales by Michael Hervey (Lower Chelston: Gulliver Books Ltd., no date; 48pp; 14 x 11cm; 6d.). The cover of the first shows a white figure flitting under a blue-gray arch; the stories themselves consist of rather unreliable accounts of well-known "authentic" ghostly episodes, such as the Cock Lane spectre. The Hervey booklet sports a cover which is apparently unrelated to its contents; one of its stories concerns the Devil's Hoofmarks at Topsham, and another describes the accomplishment of one M. Bottineau, who could allegedly detect the approach of ships three or four hundred miles away. Then there is Death of the Vampire Baroness by Violet Van der Elst (London: Van der Elst Press, Ltd., 1945; 80pp; 12 x 19cm; 1/6). The stories to be found here are crudely written, and have a peculiarly adolescent flavor. There is a brief account of the authoress, whose "appreciations of life's whims, its kindness and its cruelties, and...understanding of the psychology of Humanity are incomparable, and no finer proof of this can be found than in these stories," etc., etc. This is the lady who stages demonstrations outside jails whenever there is to be a hanging. According to the back cover of this booklet she is also concerned in manufacturing "shavex: a revolution in shaving."

Finally, I mention a few juvenile fantasies. A series of "Mighty Midgets" sell at 2½d. each, and are published by W. Barton of London; they are all the same size (9½ x 6½cm) and pagination (32pp), and are undated: Runaway Robot by S. Sandforde (#5), The Thought Reader by Cameron Carr (#8), Anti-Gas! by D.G. B. Simpson (#31), Terror above the Stratosphere by Nixon Hinson (#36), and Moon Monster (#51) by Charles Ambrose. In spite of a certain carelessness in the use of pseudonyms, #51 is actually a sequel to #36, both being, incidentally, interplanetaries. A series of modern fairy tales sell variously at 2d. and 2½d., are all undated, and are published by two London firms, sometimes by Popular Fiction Ltd. and at others by the Phoenix Press; they are 18 x 12½cm in size. Bernard Buley, who will be remembered as having contributed to the defunct British science-fiction magazine Scoops, has written them all. There are two series, one involving a "Wizard" and the other a little girl called June, who is "in league with the fairies." The first of these is very badly done, but the second series, built up on an ingeniously constructed mythology, is, allowing for hasty writing, surprisingly good. Two titles are of science-fictional interest: The Wizard in Space (#66; 18pp), which describes two Moon trips, one made by rocket-ship, and another via a magic carpet; and The Boy Who Played with Giants (#72; 16pp), which concerns itself with robots, an anti-gravity ship (whose principle I suspect has been lifted from Strang's A Thousand Miles an Hour) and a "Science City." Elizabeth Portwin's Boy in the Moon (no publisher specified; no date; 15pp; 17½ x 24 cm; 2/-) contains colored illustrations by Ern Shaw, some of which depict the interior of a space ship. Like so much fiction intended for children, the style of writing encountered here is very arch and patronizing. The idea of a small boy inadvertantly making off with a space ship is doubtless borrowed from H. G. Wells; it seems to me not to have improved during its change of hands. The Moon

Rocket deals with Brenda and Bobbie, who build a rocket in their wood-shed, and travel in it to the Moon. Though noted as "A Porterprint Production," its author, publisher and price are conspicuously anonymous, and it has, moreover, appeared in two distinct editions: one has two full-page blue and white illustrations, 10pp, and is 24½ x 18½cm in size; the other has five three-colored illustrations, 14pp, and is 10 x 7cm in size.

It is to be presumed that this flood of paper-covered booklets will slacken off as the paper-shortage lessens. Doubtless the small size of the editions, restricted region of distribution (greater London) and their fragile nature will put them among the scarcest of science-fiction collectors' items.

---oOo---

The Wind Trail

by
A. Merritt

Over the hills the wild winds are sweeping,
Whistling thro' pine and humming o'er lea,
High on the rocks the surges are leaping,
Shouting the song of the fetterless sea,
And it's oh, to be free!
Free from the city and free from the striving,
Free from the ordered, atomic plan,
Free from the faiths and the profitless hiving,
Free from the limitless lockstep of man---
Down with the north wind in Viking sally,
Clasping with laughter each wild forest maid,
Smiting their green knights, then roaring the rally
With conquerors' wassail in dell and in glade,
Scattering the red and the gold of the plunder,
Vandal's largesse to the cowering plain;
Leap thro' the clouds to the drums of the thunder,
Rush down the fields to the tambours of rain;
Then off to the deeps where the storm scud races,
Dive far down to the cool green wave
Where a sea girl lifts white arms for embraces;
Dart with the gulls where the mad breakers rave.
Drive on the mist to the cold lily's tower,
Besiege her with lances of languorous light,
Strip the shy wild rose in her hidden bower,
Dream with the poppy thro' the soft purple night---
But free, free, free!
Free to leave them or free to love them,
Free to forget or free to care,
Free as the hawk high circling above them,
Free to gather or free to spare.
Dervish mist on the meadow whirling,
Moonbeams in minuet 'thwart the glen,
Roistering stream from the far heights swirling,
Wild fire dancing over the fen,
Make me one of you! I am as one of you!
Make me free!

SPITZ, Jacques

Sever the Earth

London: John Lane---the Bodley Head, 1936. ix-167pp. 19 cm. 7/6.

Further information: This is an authorized translation by Margaret Mitchiner of the author's L'Agonie du Globe, and is illustrated with a number of line drawings by Denis Tegetmeier.

Synopsis: Sever the Earth is a piece of pseudo-historical writing dealing with a global catastrophe supposed to have taken place in the mid-1940's. Through an unexplained agency the earth splits in half in such a way as to make two separate hemispheres (one containing Europe, Asia and Africa, the other bearing Australia and the Americas).

The story shows us first the strange climactic disturbances as the crevasse forms and widens, and then leads us through the events brought about by its discovery. At first the two halves of the globe are separated from each other by only about forty miles, and aerial communication between them can still be effected. This becomes impossible as the gap gradually widens, however, and eventually the two worlds become so far separated that they cannot communicate even by radio.

The climax of the tale centers about the discovery that not only are the two halves receding still further from each other, but that the moon is being drawn into dangerous proximity with them. Astronomical calculations show that the old world (from whose viewpoint the book is written) should collide with the satellite at a certain date. The meeting is avoided by a hair's breadth, but five days later the moon and the new world are involved in a cosmic crash which destroys both. The story ends with the surviving half-planet occupying alone the approximate former orbit of Earth.

Review: Whether it is a fault of translation or a difficulty inherent in all French science-fiction this writer does not presume to state, but Sever the Earth is severely marred by the same flippancy and shallowness and the same weakness of plot and characterization one notes in many of the works of Jules Verne. Moreover, it can be called a story only through courtesy; it lacks characters, personal conflicts and aspirations, and plot in the ordinary sense of those terms. The impression it gives is that of a detailed synopsis for a full-length novel.

Were it not for this flippant handling and some extremely inept attempts at humor, Sever the Earth might perhaps be acceptable as a pseudo-historical treatise---a recognized if infrequently encountered classification of science-fiction---but in its present form the work leaves much to be desired.

The profound implausibility of the phenomena described weakens the story still further. In the first place, no attempt is made to explain or to suggest an explanation for the earth's splitting. One could perhaps overlook this omission were it not extremely difficult to imagine such an occurrence without an accompanying cataclysm that would utterly destroy all life. An abnormally heavy precipitation and a series of severe earthquakes seem mild corollaries indeed to the rendering asunder of a planet. Moreover, at the time of moon's collision with the new world the two bodies are but 48,000 miles from the surviving half---and it seems improbable that such a crash could occur without destroying everything within a much greater radius.

Subject to these flaws the story is mildly enjoyable, but this reviewer cannot conscientiously recommend it as an example of first-class science-fiction.

---Francis T. Laney.

It Nearly Was

by
Richard Frank

(Author's note: Sam Moskowitz's article "It Might Have Been---", which appeared in the Winter 1944-45 issue of this magazine, was extremely interesting to me because back in 1935-37 I had frequent contact with William L. Crawford and his troubles regarding Marvel Tales. The following account is an attempt to throw more interesting sidelights on the fascinating background of this fine fan publication.)

Ten years ago I was living in my home town of Millheim, having just completed high school, and intending to wait a year before continuing my studies at Pennsylvania State College. One day the doorbell buzzed at my home, and a slim, moderately well-dressed chap of medium height stood in the doorway. He introduced himself as William L. Crawford, editor of Marvel Tales and Unusual Stories, and head of the Visionary Publishing Company. He said he had happened to be at the college---twenty miles away---and had noticed that Millheim was relatively near by. Since he had three subscribers in the town, he had decided to visit them. Prior to seeing me he had contacted K. Russell Miller (who later helped me publish the first number in the Bizarre Series), but had failed to find the other fan at home.

Crawford and I had a pleasant chat about fantasy, Marvel's future, and the possibility of his publishing science-fiction books. The upshot of it all was that he invited me to go along back with him to Everett, Pa., and spend some time there at his home with him.

I've never regretted that trip. Although it is only a hundred miles from Millheim to Everett, it was rather cold that Fall of 1935, and we intended to hitch-hike through lonely, mountainous country. Crawford had arrived in Millheim in the same way. We eventually arrived at our destination, but I sometimes think that we walked longer than we rode!

First I toured the Marvel Tales printing shop. Perhaps a description of that will help readers understand some of the difficulties that Crawford mentioned so often in his advertisements. We mounted a rickety stair to a loft on the second floor, and entered a barn-like room which must have once housed poultry. The floor was littered with feathers. Threading the way through other debris, we eventually arrived at a little room cluttered with fonts of type, an old platen job-press, and a toy-like hand press on which---believe it or not!---the first valuable issues of Marvel and Unusual were printed. Judging by the advertisements and the excellent amateur magazines I had received by mail, I had expected to find the Visionary Publishing Company a more impressive plant. For, while containing typographical faults, its magazines were top-flight editorially. What I saw was naturally surprising; I had not known, of course, that Crawford was just an ardent fan losing money for the love of his hobby.

During the next few days I got the thrill of my fan life. For Julius Schwartz, then editor of Fantasy Magazine---the greatest fan magazine of them all---and Charles D. Hornig, then managing editor of Gernsback's Wonder Stories, both called. (I might mention parenthetically here that as a result of the meeting Hornig and I became close friends, and that he visited me frequently during the next eight years. The following Summer, too, I was the New York City guest of Schwartz and Otto Binder.)

But to return to Crawford's "insurmountable obstacles," as the advertisements called them.... Any fellow who is---or was---an amateur publisher is aware of the trouble involved in getting out their sheet. Miller and I ran into plenty in the Bizarre Series, so I can speak with some experience. Here, now, was a fan setting type by hand, printing entire issues alone, and at first even

relying upon a hand-operated printing press. Is it any wonder that there were typographical errors present when he was his own type-setter, proof reader, and printer? Miller and I hand-set the first Bizarre number that way, and although Merritt's "Three Lines of Old French" is just a short story, it seemed mighty long when we had to pick up each letter and bit of punctuation individually and then distribute the type after the page had been run off---then repeat the process all over again. Yes, Crawford's primitive printing facilities was one of his chief difficulties.

But there were others. Finances---that was another big thorn in his side. He once told me that he had lost nearly $5,000 in an effort to put Marvel on the newstands. A relative agreed to put up some cash if Crawford succeeded in landing it there. He therefore visited a national news agency, which promised nation-wide distribution---for a fee of $5,000 on each of two printed-in-advance issues. What man has $10,000 available to invest in a hobby? When Amazing Stories was wobbling through its final issues before Ziff-Davis took over in 1938, Crawford made a trip to New York to visit its publishers. What do you think the Teck outfit asked for their "aristocrat of science-fiction"? A mere $50,000! So the financial angle figured heavily in preventing Marvel's newstand appearance.

In the meantime he was publishing books and pamphlets on the side, all meeting the same printing and mechanical difficulties. But Crawford never stopped trying to give Marvel Tales, his pet, nation-wide circulation. He thought that somehow, somewhere, he would get financial backing; the advertisements that he circulated were not attempts to raise false hopes in fandom, but rather evidence of faith in his own convictions. As Moskowitz noted in "It Might Have Been---," he even had part of one newstand issue set up in type.

But the fate that seems to threaten all amateur publishers was waiting eagerly for Bill Crawford. Still struggling, braving heavy financial losses, he eventually gave up the fight. It was a great blow to fantasy.

I believe that the entire fan world owes William L. Crawford an undying tribute for his efforts---the excellent issues of Marvel Tales, for The Shadow over Innsmouth, the first book of H. P. Lovecraft ever to be printed, and for the stirring example of what the true amateur fantasy publisher, filled with the interests of the entire field, can accomplish.

---oOo---

Shoon of the Dead

by

William Hope Hodgson

Open the door,
  And listen!
Only the wind's muffled roar,
  And the glisten
Of tears round the moon.
  And, in fancy, the tread
Of vanishing shoon---
  Out in the night with the Dead.

Hush! and hark
  To the sorrowful cry
Of the wind in the dark.
  Hush and hark, without murmur or sigh,
    To shoon that tread the lost aeons:
  To the sound that bids you to die.
Hush and hark! Hush and hark!

He Pierced the Veil

H. Rider Haggard as a Writer of the Supernatural

by
Thyril L. Ladd

To the serious student of the supernatural in fiction, or to the critical reader who loves this type of writing above any in the bizarre, this exposition bears no new message. Such a one is already aware that the prolific writer, H. Rider Haggard, has easily won his place, and stands in the forefront with all the great supernatural authors of later days. Omitting Poe---who this writer considers of such stature that comparison with him of any other of the latter-day probers into the unknown would near the ridiculous---Haggard needs yield ground to none of the others: be he the artistic master of antique legend, Dunsany; that great searcher of the psychic, Blackwood; that master of abysmal horror, Lovecraft; the prominent creators of otherworldly beings, Bram Stoker and Clark Ashton Smith; or such deft painters of vivid eeriness, Theophile Gautier and Robert W. Chambers.

Though each volume is not saturated with such themes, Haggard touched on the supernatural, the riddle of the Beyond, in nearly every book he wrote. He most frequently ponders on life beyond the grave in early chapters of his novels, often through the lips of his characters. And he was not led to create a mythos, some circle of non-existent deities; always he was able to find source-material in the legends and beliefs of the world that lay about him.

To establish his claim as a writer of the supernatural one needs consider no more than a half-dozen of Haggard's novels. Indeed, in this article I shall touch upon but a fraction of his productions, though it should be noted that many of those not mentioned carry distinct psychic undertones.

Beyond much serious contention it would seem that She and The World's Desire are the most outrightly supernatural of Haggard's productions. She being familiar to all, it would be probably more appropriate to consider the other of the two in some detail. The World's Desire is completely, utterly, of the supernatural; its fundamental plot hinges on it, and is enriched by a wealth of fearsome detail. Odysseus, its hero, reaches Egypt in his search for that Being in whom is incarnated all that man seeks most eagerly. And in Egypt the witchcraft of the wicked Queen Meriamun brings to the forefront striking scenes portraying the summoning of evils from Outside by rituals of ancient magic. Here the ever-lovely Helen, in whom is embodied the World's Desire, has chosen to dwell in her temple, guarding from sight her beauty which drives men to madness, watched over by the shades of three of history's greatest heroes who have been brought from beyond death to protect her. And ever, from the crimson ruby on her breast, drops of blood fall upon her white gown, only to vanish without stain. (Indeed, this last phenomenon is mentioned in Servius' commentary on Virgil, whence Haggard and Lang presumably adapted it.) A powerful scene in the book is that wherein Queen Meriamun uses her knowledge of ancient sorcery to call back from the body of Hataska---whom she has just poisoned---the spiritual forces which have knowledge of the future:

> Then in so soft a whisper that scarce had its breath stirred a feather on her lips, Meriamun spoke the Word of Fear, which may not be written, whose sound has power to pass all space, and open the ears of the Dead....and as she spoke, from the dead form of the woman...there issued forth another form and stood before us, as a snake issues from its slough...and as was the dead Hataska, so was this form...but still the corpse rested upon Osiris' knee....

The description of the night-bound temple which precedes this episode is an admirable introduction, and accentuates the weird atmosphere which prevails. Again, in the same World's Desire, Queen Meriamun, holding the casket in her hands, opens it to rouse the dreadful Sleeper within, saying "Come forth, thou Ancient Evil!" ---and from out the small casket sweeps a serpent-form with human head, enlarging as it emerges, and twining itself about the queen's body to whisper evil knowledge in her ear. Superlative scenes such as these abound in this novel, as well as in the others of the She tetrology. Haggard's abilities as a terror - weaver never stem from artificialities, either of subject-matter or of style. He uses no manufactured language, no coined words, no unheard-of mythologies, relying on known source-material and a lucid, straightforward prose for cumulative effect. And seldom is he unsuccessful.

The opening chapter of Eric Brighteyes, which deals with the witch, Groa, exemplifies well the primitive beliefs and superstitions concerning traffic with unhallowed forces. It is, moreover, similar to the themes which occur in the author's other African novels. At one end of the scale, perhaps, is The Wizard, where an actual spiritual duel is fought between a Christian clergyman and a devil-ridden witch-doctor. Midway through it is the trilogy of ostensibly historical tales dealing with the Zulu kings: Marie, Child of Storm and Finished. Here we meet the witch-doctor Zikali, most aged of all Zulus, before whose magic even arrogant tribal royalty bows and trembles, who watches the ruling house march through the years to its doom. This awesome figure, sitting in the shadows of his dreaded black kloof, weaving his spells and tossing his bewitched knuckle-bones, appears also in She and Allan. Finally, at the opposite end of our scale is Nada the Lily, where pagan superstition is unrelieved by the presence of a white man; witchcraft and occult forces run rampant; dread prophecies are pronounced; dooms are promised and come to pass. In this novel we meet the terrible pack of the Wolf Brethren, and unseen horrors forever lurk in the background, ever ready to spring from the shadows without warning.

In his introduction to Eric Brighteyes Haggard himself gives his views on spectral happenings, saying:

> The tendancy of the human mind...is to supply uncommon and extraordinary reasons for actions and facts that are to be amply accounted for by the working of natural forces....

Here, then, we have his definition of the genuinely supernatural: that which is actually normal, yet which ignorance insists on twisting into something occult, not natural.

Cleopatra contains some fine writing in the genre. Here are to be found such descriptions as that of Hermachis' mystic preparations for ascending the Egyptian throne, that of his vision of Isis, and of his visitation to the city located in The Place of the Dead. Egyptian magic likewise runs in a strong current through Moon of Israel, where the refrain is always of mighty Forces from Beyond who order, direct and choose---herding the characters relentlessly along to their ultimate fates.

A few novels warrant briefer mention. Love Eternal describes a young man in communication with the dead, who is haunted by the spirit of a fair woman. The theme of Stella Fregelius also carries spectral adumbrations. Eerie and exciting, too, is The Treasure of the Lake, where supernatural events baffle Allan Quartermain. No argument need be cited to prove The Virgin of the Sun a novel of the uncanny, for the pall of the supernatural hangs above each chapter, hinting of a mystic world which man may wonder at but never fathom. And although it is primarily a science-fiction tale, some episodes in When the World Shook---es-

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FARRÈRE, Claude, pseud. (Charles Bargone) (1876-)

The House of the Secret

New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1923. 234pp. 22 cm. $3.50.

Further information: This novel was originally published in France in 1911 under the title La Maison des Hommes Vivants. The American first edition was limited to 1500 copies; it is an authorized translation by Arthur Livingston.

Synoptic review: Claude Farrère, well known in his native country for his prose writings, has but but three of his exciting novels published in the United States. These are: Thomas the Lambkin, a tale of piracy; Useless Hands, a pseudoscientific romance of the future; and The House of the Secret, which we are at present concerned with. In addition to these, several of his short stories have been translated and published in America in the magazine Weird Tales.

In this novel, a young French officer, Captain André Narcy, becomes lost, while on an official mission, in the lonely uninhabited heath surrounding a chain of mountains east of Toulon. During the course of his blind wanderings he stumbles upon a lone house in the hidden recesses of a narrow ravine. In this house are three incredibly aged men who insist that he accept their hospitality until the next day. However, Captain Narcy soon discovers that it is not their intention to allow him to leave. He is told, amid an eerie and suspenseful atmosphere, of the fearful secret of the old men and of their unscrupulous devotion to the perpetuation of that secret.

This knowledge is revealed to Narcy in order to explain why his being permitted to reach the outside world would endanger the well-laid plans of many years. He resigns himself to death, but his captors are averse to murder. They prefer, instead, to hold him prisoner. But, knowing that a search would be made for the young officer, and fearing the discovery of their existence, they utilize their vast scientific knowledge to create an exact, synthetic likeness of Captain Narcy. This they send to its end by ordering it to commit suicide.

Here the story reaches its climax, for as the synthetic duplicate lies decomposing in the stream where it has drowned itself, certain flaws in the experiment, due either to accident or design, reveal themselves with terrific consequences to Narcy. The story ends soon after in a scene where pity and revulsion, pathos and horror, play equal roles.

An extraordinary and inventive plot such as this is enough to recommend The House of the Secret to all readers of horror and imaginative fiction. However, there are many other qualities in its favor.

The air of weirdness and terror is well and evenly maintained.

The method of narration, while perhaps awkward---that of a dying man setting down, during the last few hours of his life, the story of his experiences to warn mankind of a lurking menace---is yet very effective.

The book is compactly written. M. Farrère evidently realizes that endless detail and ramifications of plot in a horror story can have only a detrimental effect. At no point does the author deviate from the narrative thread and turn the reader's interest away from the central purpose---which is the creation of a mood of horror.

Altogether there are few adverse criticisms to be made of this novel. The only factor that materially detracts from the total effect is a tendancy towards excessive melodrama and over-intensification of emotion. This trait---frequently present in French novels of this genre---is nevertheless not sufficiently in evidence to lower the quality of the book. It serves only to annoy the reader on occasion. A minor fault that might also be noted is an overabundance of coincidence in the early chapters.

---Maynard Solomon.

Tips on Tales

by
Thyril L. Ladd

M.P.Shiel's Lord of the Sea (1901): When Richard Hogarth discovered the huge, diamond-studded meteor, he knew that there lay enormous wealth---and power. This was his chance for revenge against his unmerited conviction for murder, his opportunity to revolt against the overlordship that heredity and wealth gave the few over the many in England. So, secretly, he caused to be built twelve great fortified "islands," which were then anchored at strategic spots on the world's oceans, where their guns commanded all shipping that might pass. After this he issued a manifesto---claiming the waters by the same right that men before him had claimed lands and made themselves kingdoms; "I am Lord of the Sea," said he, and to the nations' dismay he demanded, and got, levies and tribute before ships were permitted to sail by his well-placed islands. The remainder of this highly engrossing novel deals with Hogarth's efforts to socialize the world governments and reapportion the land, that all might enjoy what until then had for the most part been possessed by the few; and with the events that grew out of this benevolent dictatorship. The Lord of the Sea is powerfully written, and undoubtedly represents one of Shiel's most successful efforts at casting a fantastic tale.

Percy Brebner's Knight of the Silver Star (1907): The townspeople laughed and jeered at a young man who claimed he had glimpsed a strange lost land just beyond the great glacier which overhung their village, but he unheedingly made the hazardous journey up and over the ice-wall. There he found himself in a valley that had been glacier-locked for centuries, where men and women still lived as they had in bygone days. There, too, he was precipitated into adventures within a medieval citadel. This tale's modern rendering of a Gothic atmosphere is most unusual, and is well worth reading.

F. Anstey's Brass Bottle (1900): When the young architect bought an old brass bottle at an auction, he little dreamed that on unstoppering it he would release a genie who had been imprisoned there ages ago by King Solomon. But this did indeed happen, and thus was begun a series of fantastic events in which the hero was involved. The story is replete with humor---some of it dated, to be sure, but extremely entertaining nonetheless. The genie is determined to "help" his unwitting benefactor, and does so with a grandiloquence and fervor more suited, perhaps, to the time of King Solomon than to that of a modern young Englishman, who finds much of it extremely embarrassing.

Robert W. Chambers' Police!!! (1915): While most collecting fans possess or have read the delicately humerous fantasy episodes in the author's earlier In Search of the Unknown (1904), it does not seem generally known that he wrote a sequel to it. In Police!!! Chambers continues these adventurous episodes, peopling the the book, indeed, with the same characters previously met with. This reviewer believes this book to be even more interesting than its predecessor, perhaps because of the modern settings for the adventures, each of which delights the reader with a surprise ending worthy of Robert W. Chambers at his best.

Elizabeth Birkmaier's Poseidon's Paradise (1892): Here one finds an enthralling account of the sinking of Atlantis, with carefully noted sources for the author's concepts of the legendary continent. Woven into this is an extremely fantastic tale of life there, and of fearsome experiments that have been undertaken in order to create immortality. All in all, it is a well-written story, a volume well worth reading.

Forgotten Creators of Ghosts

by
A. Langley Searles

V - Bessie Kyffin-Taylor

Judging from the evidence extant, there are many authors who dabble casually in the fictional outré, apparently laboring under the delusion that it is a relatively uncultivated field where few have preceeded their literary footsteps. Occasionally such dilettantes unearth new ideas, or furnish pleasingly fresh variants on well-known thematic gambits. More often, however, their efforts are largely derivative and frequently badly-written besides. The work of Lady Kyffin-Taylor hovers annoyingly between these two extremes: From out of the Silence: Seven Strange Stories (1930) is a heterogeneous combination of traditional plots, a few excellent variations on them, and a writing style that varies from a satisfactory to a downright incompetent level. Indeed, the most consistent characteristic of her prose is its patent---if at times naive---sincerity.

Inability to achieve an adequate medium of expression is probably the authoress' chief fault. Such a criticism is too strongly based for comfort, since it involves not only careless composition, but a glaring ignorance of the fundamental rules of English grammar on her part. This last manifests itself in the stringing together of three or four obvious sentences by commas, and much incorrect italicizing. The development of the stories, too, is often awkward and at loose ends. This is especially true of their climaxes, which lose much potential effectiveness through being diluted by excess wordage. Moreover, the conversation encountered never hits the happy medium of familiarity that a good writer's should, and the slang expressions it embodies usually leave an impression of clumsiness rather than informality.

Since many others have handled similar themes with less originality, it is obvious that the stories in From out of the Silence seem of lower quality than they actually are solely because of inadequacy in their vehicle. Basically they have much in common: all deal with varying examples of the dead influencing the living; all are somewhat longer than the average supernatural short story; and all are told in the first person by one who has taken part in the events depicted. Ghostly reenactments of murders take place in no less than five. Those encountered in "Room No. Ten," "Sylvia" and "The Star Inn" are neither outstandingly good or bad, and conform to expected traditional patterns; that of "Two Little Red Shoes," while not without merit, is badly marred by the conventional sentimental approach which---to a lesser or greater extent---is present in all of Bessie Kyffin-Taylor's work; while "The Wind in the Woods," although it might have been more compactly written, impresses one as being the best of the group. "The Twins" deals with a dead man's evil influence over the life of his surviving birthmate, and how it was eventually stopped; this tale becomes almost sticky on occasions with a romantic sentimentality that is both exaggerated and out of place.

A more satisfactory example of fiction, on the other hand, wherein somewhat novel subject-matter is given better than usual treatment, is "Outside the House"; this impresses one as being the most outstanding of the authoress' efforts. It tells of a house built near the site of an abandoned mine, and which is haunted by the spirits of men who were sent into its workings, only to die there when trapped by falling earth. After sundown no one in the region dares venture out-of-doors; and when a chance visitor at the place who scoffs at what he considers mere superstition does so, he suffers a horrible experience that results in his eventual death. The description of the ghostly figures intent on drawing him down to destruction is quite well done, and is the more effective for

being contrasted by sharp, well-chosen, materialistic detail. Like most of the other tales in the volume, however, this suffers from diffuseness, but it is the sole one in which high tragedy, unrelieved by any softening touch, triumphs at the denouement---and is much the better as a result.

There are certain similarities of prose-style and theme which might, were her efforts less obviously those of a tyro, lead one to suspect certain literary derivations of Lady Kyffin-Taylor's fiction. As a whole, her work is a weak reflection of that found in Mrs. H. D. Everett's Death Mask. In the matter of individual stories, "Two Little Red Shoes" is somewhat reminiscent of E. F. Benson's "How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery"; "Outside the House" echoes to some extent "From the Depths" by F. B. Austin; and one is reminded by "The Wind in the Woods" of H. G. Wells' "Red Room." The favorable chronology of all these likenesses makes critical commitment tempting: but this writer, feeling that likenesses alone may be deceptive and inconclusive, is inclined to play a warier game. Until more definite evidence indicates the contrary, Bessie Kyffin-Taylor is to be regarded as a forgotten creator of ghosts who remained for the most part isolated from influence of fellow workers in her chosen medium.

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He Pierced the Veil---concluded from page 213

pecially that where the modern adventurers' minds are taken from their bodies at the command of the ancient Atlantean sorceror-king, to speed with him in astral form from the ghost-ridden city in the bowels of the earth to far-away places on the world's surface---possess an eerie atmosphere. One of the most fascinating supernatural creations in all of literature is that of Murgh the Death, to be found in the author's Red Eve, to whom bird-like familiars bear the souls of the dying as he sits upon his ebon throne in a spectral courtyard. And I have yet to find the equal of that scene wherein this terrible figure sails into the Venetian harbor, his flaming red figure the only moving shape on a vessel manned by rotting corpses!

The Ghost Kings tells of a white maiden in whom the Zulus believe has come to dwell a divine spirit---the actual embodiment of their revered Lady of the Heavens. As the plot unfolds after some admittedly placid opening chapters, she comes at last to a strange land inhabited by wizards and witches; each lives beneath the shade of a great tree, so linked to it by occult forces that should a tree die, so would the one sitting beneath it. Weird incidents abound here, the very love motif being cunningly interwoven with hints of otherworldly powers. The suspense culminates in a powerful climax that leaves the reader with the distinct impression that The Ghost Kings alone would be sufficient to establish Haggard's reputation in the field.

Rider Haggard's novels look both ways: into the legendary past and into the unknown future. They stand, title after title, as proof absolute of their author's position as a great writer of the supernatural. Nor was any hysterical or volcanic outburst of enthusiasm ever needed to establish him as such; fame has come to him through the steady acclaim of thousands of readers, through the acid test of the years. The reader of the supernatural who is alert and well-grounded in his lore knows this well; the careful critics of the genre, too, have long since been aware of it. This brief article's purpose, then, has been to touch upon Haggard's tales for the benefit of others: the newer readers; those who are prone to consider the author primarily a dealer in romantic adventure; or the ones who may never have heard of him at all. If they are truly lovers of supernatural fiction they will inevitably place these books where they rightfully belong: side by side with the excellent---but certainly no greater---Jewel of the Seven Stars, The King in Yellow and The Outsider.

Thumbing the Munsey Files

with William H. Evans

Argosy for March, 1906 offered another of Howard R. Garris' biological fancies in "Professor Jonkin and his Busier Bees"; here the professor succeeds in cross-breeding bees with fireflies, producing hybrid insects that can gather honey at night as well as during the day. Humorous mishaps follow, and are described in amusing fashion. In the same issue of the magazine was "41 Nights of Mystery" by Guy Chase Hazzard. A comet, passing close to the earth, draws off all its electric power, leaving civilization very much crippled---although not as badly as it would have today. In spite of all attempts to find remedies, nothing can be done until the comet leaves forty-one days later. The tale is quite good, considering its period.

The February, 1906 issue of All-Story magazine carried an amusing fantasy by W. B. Finney, "The Buyer of Time." It concerns a man who sells a day of his time and discovers himself living a day behind everybody else. The conclusion leaves the reader up in the air.

Allstory-Cavalier Weekly started off 1916 by offering two "different" stories in the January 1st number. One was E. A. Morphy's short tale "The Astrogen Waistcoat," which describes the trial flight of "a life-preserver for use in planes which uses the new, very buoyant gas 'astrogen'." More important and interesting, however, is Victor Rousseau's "Sea Demons," a four-part serial novel. Strange creatures from beneath the sea attack humanity, guided by the traditional mad scientist bent on revenge. A British submarine finds the home of the "queen" of these beings---who are, incidentally, much like bees in their social system---and by finally controlling her succeed in thwarting the invasion. Although the novel as a whole is good, its scientific background is inadequate.

The cover of the January 9, 1926 Argosy bears an illustration for Fred MacIsaac's four-part serial "The Vanishing Professor." Dr. Frank Leonard, professor of chemistry and physics at Omega College, invents a device that renders him invisible, and, since academic workers are notoriously underpaid, he decides on using it to "borrow" funds from a local bank and thus set himself up in the stock market. The plot is complicated by a former student who steals the invention and a gang of thieves which is also after it; the ensuing cops-and-robbers chase makes exciting reading, the story finally ending on a happy note with Professor Leonard marrying a rich heiress.

The next week Argosy presented one of Paul L. Anderson's cave-man stories, "The Trampling Horde." This describes the first taming of wolves, and a meeting between the cave-men and the last of the Neanderthals; it is excellently done. Readers may be interested in other tales in the series which preceeded it: the names and dates of publication are as follows---

Son of the Red God"	Jan. 31, 1920	"Master of Magic"	July 17, 1920
"Lord of the Winged Death"	Mar. 6, 1920	"Wings of the Snow"	Aug. 28, 1920
"Cave that Swims on the Water"	May 8, 1920	"Up from the Abyss"	Mar. 22, 1924

On February 6, 1926 MacIsaac started yet another serial, this time a five-part novel published anonymously. "The Seal of Satan" tells of millionaire Hudson Grant's selling his soul to Satan in exchange for being rescued from death by thirst on a raft in mid-Atlantic. Transported to Brazil, he becomes involved in a struggle for control of a vast plantation, falling in love with the owner's daughter. She becomes his bride after casting out the devil.

Two issues later Richard Barry's five-part serial novel of fantasy, "Sea Lure," began. Three survivors of shipwreck find in the Sargasso Sea a colony of castaways and their descendants who calls themselves the Society of Con-

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The Immortal Storm

A History of Science-Fiction Fandom

by

Sam Moskowitz

(part 2)

It became obvious to Raymond Palmer early in 1933 that even the elaborate printed number of Cosmology which Ruppert had been kind enough to print for him was not enough to reawaken a fanwide interest in the International Scientific Association. He therefore abandoned the ISA and its club organ and cast about for something else. Inspired in all probability by "The Best Science-Fiction of 1932," a filler in the Winter, 1933 issue of The Time Traveller which listed the readers' choices of the outstanding fantasy of that year, Palmer hit upon the Jules Verne Prize Club. Its aims are perhaps best expressed by quoting an advertisement printed in the January, 1933 Science Fiction Digest:

> Help select the three best stf stories of 1933. Join the JVPC and do your part in carrying forward the torch ignited by the immortal Jules Verne. Help make the world "Science Fiction Conscious."
>
> The Jules Verne Prize Club is non profit-making, all receipts going to the selection of the stories and the awarding of suitable cups to the winners.

Dues were set at twenty-five cents, and Palmer was the organization's chairman. Moribund from the start, however, the club soon expired completely when members failed to pay dues. For this reason, too, no loving cups were awarded the winning stories' authors. After announcing these facts in the February, 1934 issue of Fantasy Magazine Palmer stated that the club would revert to an inactive status for the year 1934, and promised its revival in 1935; not surprisingly, this suspension of animation proved permanent.

In Europe, meanwhile, the most active group was to be found in the membership of the German Rocket Society, a large percentage of which were science-fiction enthusiasts---this being regarded, however, as mere coincidence. Hermann Oberth and Max Valier, known in this country because of the generous publicity furnished them by Hugo Gernsback, belonged to the society, and together with Willy Ley they conducted a series of experiments that (unknown to them) presaged the German "buzz-bombs" of the second World War. Ley, as is generally known, eventually emigrated to America, where he has since acquired an enviable reputation in his vocational field. A long and excellent history of the German Rocket Society may be found in his book Rockets.

An organization known as the British Science Fiction Association had sprung up in England in the meantime. This was predominately a correspondence club, and by 1933 had linked itself to the American ISA.

V

The Fantasy Fan

The great depression was now at its peak, and there was scarcely any activity or industry in the United States which did not feel its effects. The science-fiction magazines, selling at prices above the average "pulp" level, were particularly hard hit. Probably the keen loyalty of their followers was the only factor which saved them from swift extinction. As it was they were badly shaken. Astounding Stories began to appear bi-monthly instead of monthly, and finally ceased publication altogether with its March, 1933 number. After futuristic cov-

er designs did not perk up lagging sales, Amazing Stories reduced its size after a single bi-monthly issue. Wonder Stories experimented with a slimmer magazine at a reduced price, and after a time reverted to small size and the original 25¢ figure. The quarterly issues of the latter two periodicals eventually gave up the ghost altogether when metamorphoses of price, thickness and schedule failed to keep production out of the red. Under the stress of such changing conditions staff heads began to fly, and for reasons never accurately ascertained, David Lasser, then editor of many of Gernsback's magazines, parted company with Uncle Hugo. In dire need of someone to fill the vacant post, Gernsback cast about for a competent worker that might be obtained cheaply. His eye caught the title of a pamphlet on his desk---The Fantasy Fan. He glanced through it, at first casually and then with studied interest. A short time later, on the strength of the impression gained from the first issue of this amateur publication, he hired its seventeen-year-old fan editor, Charles Derwin Hornig, to edit Wonder Stories!

Truly, this is a Cinderella story of science-fiction fandom. But what was this publication of such promise? What of the man who produced it?

Its editor, Charles D. Hornig, was born in 1916 in Jersey City, N. J. Next to Mortimer Weisinger he was the second fan of importance to come from this area. By nature he was---and is---friendly, genial and idealistic. This latter trait, whence stem his alleged pacifistic beliefs, caused him some trouble with draft authorities in recent times when he refused to undergo combat training.

Young as he was, Hornig in 1933 possessed a fine collection of science fiction as well as a near-complete set of Weird Tales magazine. The idea of publishing a fan magazine sprang from sight of a copy of The Time Traveller. Subsequently he became a regular contributor to Science-Fiction Digest, and eventually struck an agreement with Ruppert to print The Fantasy Fan.

Even today many fans believe that Hornig's effort was created for the sole purpose of giving the follower of weird fiction his medium in the fan press. This is a grave error. The Fantasy Fan was founded as a general type fan magazine, styled along the pattern set by Science Fiction Digest and The Time Traveller. It was even advertised as such. More, its initial issue articles dealing with nothing but science-fiction subjects. With the second number an abrupt change of policy occurred, the editorial stating:

> Starting with this issue, we will present a story every month (maybe more than one) by Clark Ashton Smith, H.P. Lovecraft, August W. Derleth, and other top-notchers in the field of weird fiction. You science-fiction fans are probably wondering by the import of the last sentence why we will not print science-fiction. Well, here's the reason. In the Science Fiction Digest we have a fan magazine for those scientifictionally inclined.... We feel that the weird fan should also have a magazine for themselves---hence The Fantasy Fan.

More factors than this actually brought about this change, however. First, Hornig had obtained unexpectedly several excellent contributions from Lovecraft, Smith, Howard and Derleth. Secondly, despite the statement in The Fantasy Fan's first issue that it was not intended as a competitor of Science Fiction Digest, it was inevitable that the two publications would compete if their policies were not changed. In the third place, Hornig's recent elevation to the post of a professional editor doubtless made him feel it was incumbent upon him to show more literate taste. Lastly, he had a wide knowledge of the field of supernatural fiction. Ease of policy-shift was likewise favored by the very name of his magazine, it being general enough to include either weird or scientific material. However, realizing that he could ill afford to alienate science-fiction readers, Hornig cannily continued to print features designed to win their support.

Allen Glasser returned to some activity in The Fantasy Fan, possibly feeling that any aid given the magazine would help it show the rival Science Fiction Digest in a bad light. He even plugged the Fantasy Fan Federation now that one faction of the Scienceers had affliated with it. His sporadic contributions to Hornig's sheet was not a true index of continued interest in fan activities, however; as a matter of fact, the true state of affairs was expressed by an advertisement in the very first number, where Glasser offered his science-fiction collection for sale. Nevertheless it was not until 1938, when his personal file of The Time Traveller was put up for sale, that most people felt that Glasser was retiring from fandom permanently.

Bob Tucker commenced journalistic activity in the first (Sept., 1933) number of The Fantasy Fan. His initial contributions concerned "scientifilms", which he was well acquainted with, and British science-fiction. In those days Tucker was a strait-laced bibliophile; a year later, however, with his "How to Write a Weird Tale" he had launched upon a campaign of tomfoolery as "Hoy Ping Pong" that was to earn him his present reputation as a humorist.

In a department entitled "The Boiling Point" The Fantasy Fan provided a medium of expression for readers wishing to air their pet gripes. This department ran for but six issues, being discontinued because of the ill-feeling aroused. As might therefore be guessed, debate waxed hot and furious throughout the half-year period. Forrest J. Ackerman initiated the verbal hubbub by claiming Clark Ashton Smith's "Light from Beyond" to be a sorry example of science-fiction, although he at the same time expressed admiration for the author's "Flight through Super-Time" and "The Master of the Asteroid." He was promptly pounced upon by both Smith and Lovecraft, who, with verbal pyrotechnics and glorified name-calling proceeded to pummel him soundly. It is the opinion of this writer that their actions were unbecoming to their statures as intellects and authors; Ackerman was definitely entitled to his opinion, which he expressed intelligently. It happened to be his misfortune, however, to be defending science-fiction as preferential to weird fiction in a magazine catering to supporters of the latter, and also to be labelling as poor the work of a then very popular writer. One of the very few readers to come to his support summed up the situation as follows:

> It seems to me that young Forrest J. Ackerman is by far the most sensible of the lot. Instead of intelligently answering his arguments, Messrs. Smith, Lovecraft, Barlow, etc., have made fools of themselves descending to personalities.

As a real help to the lover of weird and fantasy fiction Hornig's magazine reigned supreme in the field at that time. Superb fiction and excellent poetry by H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, Eando Binder, Dr. David H. Keller, Robert E. Howard and Robert Bloch was featured. Competent articles and bibliographical material concerning such masters as William Hope Hodgson, M. R. James, Robert W. Chambers, H. Rider Haggard and Charles Williams appeared in its pages. (Indeed, it was in The Fantasy Fan that H. C. Koenig began his twelve-year-long campaign to gain recognition for Hodgson that has proved to be so successful in recent years.) Lovecraft's scholarly essay, "Supernatural Horror in Literature," was published serially, but unfortunately was never completed. There were fine regular columns on many phases of fantasy, too, the best of which---"Weird Whisperings" by Weisinger and Schwartz---claimed credit for doubling the magazine's slim circulation. Almost every weirdist of importance in fandom was at one time or another represented in its pages. And as a love-feast for such fans it has never again been equalled.

Much of Hornig's salary went into publishing the magazine, but despite its sterling contents and attractive format no more than a pitiful circulation was ever attained. Finally, when well-paying jobs began to monopolize more and

more of Ruppert's time, he was forced to discontinue printing it at the reduced rate he had been charging. And with genuine regret Hornig discontinued The Fantasy Fan with its February, 1935 number, after eighteen consecutive monthly issues. It is indeed fortunate that many readers took out their remaining subscription money in back numbers; that is why so many leading fans today possess complete sets of The Fantasy Fan. In vivid contrast is The Time Traveller, of which few fans own single copies---let alone intact files.

VI
William H. Crawford and His Contemporaries

Those who own copies of Fantasy Magazine, The Time Traveller, The Fantasy Fan, Cosmos, the final Cosmology and the Arra Publishers' pamphlets can gain some idea of the great contribution made to fandom by Conrad H. Ruppert. Had it not been for him its embyronic days would have been a sorry story indeed. His well-printed copy lured professionals who would scarcely have lingered long otherwise into taking active part in these journalistic endeavors. There is no question but what many professional authors took great delight in their fan activities, and entered into them with the same enthusiasm that did the neophyte fans. It is also not to be questioned that Ruppert's inability to continue the below-cost printing of fan magazines was a major factor in the deterioration and eventual eclipse of the old-time fandom centering about Fantasy Magazine, and a shifting toward the foreground of secondary publications which had theretofore been of little importance. This change was rendered an even more gradual one than the reader has been led to expect by the presence of another publisher who operated in the field at almost the same time as Ruppert, and whose productions were of almost equal importance. This publisher was William H. Crawford.

Crawford's position in an impoverished field was unique in that he had a certain amount of ready capital. This he intended to invest in a science-fiction magazine designed to feature a more literary grade of prose than that being currently offered by corresponding newstand publications. In late 1933 prominent fans received a neatly printed circular announcing the magazine---titled Unusual Stories---and reproducing its first page, which embodied the beginning of "The Titan" by P. Schuyler Miller. Material by H. P. Lovecraft, Ralph Milne Farley, Dr. Miles J. Breuer, Robert E. Howard, Stanton A. Coblentz and Dr. David H. Keller was also scheduled for this and future issues. The magazine was labelled a monthly, the subscription price being twenty cents per copy or one-fifty by the year.

> It has been said that science-fiction as an art is undergoing a period of slow and painful evolution, from which it will eventually emerge as the literature of tomorrow. Though this is undoubtedly true it has been our conviction that science-fiction should have a place in the literature of today. It does not occupy that position now, we believe, because of the restrictions placed upon it by short-sighted editors and publishers. They use only tales which follow certain stereotyped forms. They avoid the "off-trail" story because it violates one or another of their editorial taboos, with the result that science-fiction has been sinking into the mire of the commonplace.

So ran the context of the announcement circular. Dissatisfaction with the current newstand fare was, of course, nothing new---but this was the first instance of any action crystallizing out of such dissatisfaction. It is worthy of note also that Unusual Stories was not, as the above quotation might lead one to believe, to feature science-fiction only: Crawford planned to include tales of fan-

materialize after all in a modified form, and that Fantasy Publications (the name his publishing enterprises now carried) would enter the book-publishing field. The first volume announced was Eugene George Key's Mars Mountain; these were to be followed by Andrew North's People of the Crater and The Missing Link of Ralph Milne Farley. As if all this were not enough, a series of paper-bound pamphlets was planned as well.

Only one of the pamphlets actually appeared. This was a neat booklet bound in stiff white cover stock that contained two short stories: "The White Sybil" by Clark Ashton Smith and David H. Keller's "Men of Avalon." Its selling price was a modest fifteen cents per copy.

Two numbers of Unusual Stories materialized as well. They contained forty-eight small-sized pages apiece, and were dated May-June, 1935 and Winter, 1935. Material by P. Schuyler Miller, Robert A. Wait, Lowell Howard Morrow, Robert Bloch and others appeared. The second number printed "Derelict", Robert W. Lowndes' first essay into fan journalism; Donald A. Wollheim and Forrest J. Ackerman likewise contributed poetry to the magazine, although it was not for them their first important appearance. As a whole Unusual Stories was an invertebrate affair which never packed the punch of Crawford's Marvel Tales. And though it sold for but ten cents a copy it never attained even the meagre circulation of its sister publication.

Crawford finally managed to issue Mars Mountain, which emerged as a a tiny board-bound volume of 142 pages. In addition to the title story two others were included, "Earth Sees Mars" and "Lake Tempest," both authored by Eugene Key. They were of little merit, and amateurishly illustrated besides, though the book is a rare and sought-after item in collecting circles today. It was not well received in 1935, however, and this probably discouraged Crawford from issuing the North and Farley titles he had contemplated. His second attempt in the field was far more pretentious and important---but equally unsuccessful. It was the production of the first book by H. P. Lovecraft: The Shadow Over Innsmouth. This boasted high quality paper, strong black linen binding, and four illustrations by Frank Utpatel; it was an exceptional bargain at the selling-price of a dollar. Nevertheless, scarcely a hundred copies were bought. Crawford's third (and final) effort was the non-fantasy Facts Behind the Evidence, which proved also to be a failure from the standpoint of sales. Had his book-publishing been a success, he planned to print E. E. Smith's Skylark of Space and a collection of C. L. Moore's fiction; fandom was not yet ready for this early version of Arkham House, however.

In the meantime the final issue of Marvel Tales was distributed. This fifth number was enlarged in size, and with this change all the atmosphere of compact, balanced professionalism that had characterized the fourth was lost completely. But despite the ungainly, amateurish appearance the quality of the contents did not suffer. Apart from serials, the outstanding story was "Mars Colonizes" by Dr. Miles J. Breuer, which virtually rates the designation of classic, as it is the finest fantasy the author wrote except for his "Paradise and Iron."

This writer has already outlined elsewhere the heart-breaking story of Crawford's plan to put the sixth Marvel on the newstands from coast to coast, giving references to the material slated for inclusion (Fantasy Commentator #5), and the interested reader is referred there for further details. So shamefully small had been fandom's support for all these enterprises---Marvel Tales at its peak boasted a circulation of less than two hundred copies---that Crawford, in an attempt to recoup a fraction of his losses, sold his stocks of Marvel Tales to dealers for a pittance. Thus even today copies may be seen in Eastern bookshops ---though they are far from common.

A further signal contribution of Crawford to fandom was his printing of Fantasy Magazine after Ruppert was no longer able to do so. Had he not undertaken this task the periodical would have folded with the September, 1935 number

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A further signal contribution of Crawford to fandom was his printing of Fantasy Magazine after Ruppert was no longer able to do so. Had he not undertaken this task the periodical would have folded with the September, 1935 number

instead of the January, 1937 one---so that its life was thus prolonged by a full year's time.

In analyzing the man's contribution to the fan world of his time we find that it ranks second only to that of Conrad H. Ruppert. At their poorest and sloppiest Crawford's handiworks were a credit to the field; and his idealistic principles were unquestionably exemplary. But he was damned to failure by the crushing fact of being forever unable to reach his potential audience. Professional magazines would not run the advertisement of an obvious competitor---indeed, Weird Tales turned down one proferred by The Fantasy Fan; and, barring newstand distribution (which Crawford could not afford), it was only through such a medium that he could hope to obtain adequate support.

Aside from this, Crawford's publications are of interest as being the most ambitious of those created by fan dissatisfaction with the degenerating product of professional fantastic fiction extant during 1932-4. All such publications stemmed from the unwavering conviction of the fans that they were capable of doing a better job than the professionals; and their failure to achieve a permanent measure of success was due not to the fact that they were mistaken, but rather to an inability to master the mechanics of the productive medium.

(Lloyd Arthur Eshbach, one of the associate editors of Marvel Tales, a prominent author in his own right, and a science-fiction fan and collector, is worthy of parenthetical note here because of his position as editor of an elite amateur journal, The Galleon. It is unfortunate that this journal was of a general type, for Eshbach showed good taste and excellent business acumen in its handling, and had it been devoted entirely to fantasy history might have been very different. However that may be, The Galleon is important from the viewpoint of fans by reason of two fantastic stories it printed: "The Quest of Iranon" (in the July-August, 1935 number) and "The Mist" (in the September-October, 1935 issue). The second was written by David H. Keller, and the latter, of H. P. Lovecraft's authorship, is the most beautiful story he ever wrote; Eshbach's publication undoubtedly rescued both from complete obscurity.)

Operating behind the scenes during these times were private literary organizations of whose existence fandom at large was scarcely aware. One such group was The Calem Club of New York City, whose members included H. C. Koenig, H. P. Lovecraft, Frank Belknap Long, Jr., F. Morton, Samuel Loveman, and others, all drawn together through a mutual interest in fantasy. This was actually the nucleus of the Lovecraft circle which gained an ever-widening number of adherents throughout the country in the persons of such men as E. Hoffman Price, Farnsworth Wright, Robert Bloch, Henry Kuttner and August Derleth, becoming intimates who knew Lovecraft best. For a long time this circle held its meetings, somewhat aloof from fandom at large, and yet, possessing common cause with it, working in much the same manner. It was not until 1939, in fact, that its existence was expressly revealed. A similar organization calling itself The Outsiders Club was subsequently discovered to have been operating in Washington, D. C. A few of their meetings were attended by Jack Speer, who made the discovery; according to him, the members' interest was so strongly for supernatural fiction that they were prone to belittle and ridicule science-fiction as a whole. Because of this attitude it is to be doubted that they could ever have been smoothly assimilated by fandom in general.

At a somewhat later date in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there sprang into existence a group titling itself the Milwaukee Fictioneers. It was in the main composed of professional authors, formed for mutual exchange of ideas as well as for social reasons. By the time that its membership included Raymond A. Palmer, Stanley G. Weinbaum, Ralph Milne Farley, Robert Bloch and Lawrence Keating, however, a specialized slant became perceptible above the basis of generality. After Weinbaum's death, and more especially after Palmer's ascension to the editorial staff of the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company as custodian of Amazing Sto-

ries, less and less was heard from the group. One suspects that this double loss extracted all the spirit of vitality from it.

It may be felt by some readers that this professed history of fandom is too bibliographical in nature. If so, let them reflect upon the fact that the early fan publications were not only the pride but the very foundation of the field; more, they were the existent proofs that the fans were capable of more than criticizing the professionals and quarrelling among themselves, that they possessed the ability to think and act constructively. The lives of these publications is consequently more important than 90% of the rest of fandom's history. For, since history is essentially a systematic record of man's progress, we turn to their magazines to discern the story of science-fiction fans' progress---and progress it was. The outgrowths of the publications all too often bore the stamp of degeneracy and decadence.

VII

Secondary Fan Publications: the TFG and its Followers

About midway through 1934 a new, secondary group of fans began to make itself evident. They were those fans who, either through lack of contacts, tender years or non-possession of pronounced journalistic abilities did not fit into the elite circles dominated by Science Fiction Digest, The Fantasy Fan or Marvel Tales. They admired and respected the work of those top fan journals, considering them ideals worthy of emulating; but at the same time they were a little envious and felt hurt at being excluded from what almost amounted to a closed entente. Often they were fans whose very natures made cooperation with an existent group impossible. But individualistic or no, they found no welcome mat upon the doorstep, and were forced to progress on their own initiative.

From out of Oakman, Alabama there appeared full-blown an organization bearing the unwieldy title of The International Science Fiction Guild. The only member listed by name was Wilson Shepard. This group issued a four-paged hektographed bulletin (the first time, incidentally, that hektography as a method of duplication had appeared on the scene) entitled The International Science Fiction Guild's Bulletin and dated May-June, 1934. Disconcertingly, it gave no clue as to the type of organization it represented, and nebulously stated itself to be the magazine "we have promised you." The bulk of its first number was taken up with a gossip column "Odds 'n' Ends" by one Willis W. Woe, and began a continued story "The Murder by Long Distance" by "Noname." The entire contents were obviously written by Shepard himself, and smacked of humerous juvenility.

The second number, together with a letter printed in the readers' column of Amazing Stories, cleared up some of the mystery. Some of the members were named, and the club's aims were given as doing "everything to boost science and weird fiction" (note the all-inclusive appeal!) and to publish "real" news "not covered with sugar." This was the first published hint of reaction against Fantasy Magazine's carefully censored news reports which strictly avoided the controversial slant. And while it might be an admission by Shepard that he felt incapable of competing with the latter magazine in her own field it was certainly an indication of his willingness to publish anything it was afraid to.

The ISFG swung into activity by instituting a campaign against back-number magazine dealers who charged "crooked prices." Members were warned not to pay more than ten cents for older second-copies of fantasy magazines, nor more than cover price for recent ones. Further, Shepard threatened to publish names of those dealers who were guilty of excessive overcharging. This was an amazing tack for a fan journal to take---indeed, an unprecedented one for that time. By open blacklisting a sheet boasting of but a few dozen recipients at most was attempting to control something national in scope. And surprisingly enough, a certain measure of success attended these efforts. A later number of the Bulletin

reported that Isadore Manzon, a dealer well known at that period, had reduced his prices to the point where his name was being removed from the blacklist; he was cautioned, however, against further offenses.

It would seem highly unlikely that any such actions as these would have as their basis an isolated fan circle in rural Alabama---and such indeed was a justified suspicion. Shepard had, through a letter in the Amazing Stories "Discussions" column, come into contact with the New York fan Donald A. Wollheim; and it was Wollheim who had suggested to him the anti-dealer campaign, furnishing the names and addresses which the Bulletin published. As time progressed Wollheim began to assume a continuously increasing importance in the club, influencing Shepard's most important decisions from behind the scenes and shaping the course of the organization as a whole.

In its fourth number the ISFG's Bulletin announced its first independantly published "book", which was also the first of a series of stories promised members in the initial issue. It was far from a book, being a four-paged, hektographed leaflet on cheap yellow paper titled "I Was a Passenger in My Own Body" by Capt. N. E. P. North and crudely illustrated by one Ivan Nepolis. Despite the pseudonyms the entire sheet was quite obviously the work of Shepard himself.

From the beginning there had been strong emphasis on the fact that the ISFG was not a club in the usual sense of that term, but simply a voluntary union of science-fiction lovers. Early in 1935, however, an effort was made to bring about more unified centralization, a number of proposals leading in this direction being put before the membership for a vote. As a result, a number of changes occurred. First of all, the organization adopted the title of The Terrestial Fantascience Guild, the club organ being rechristened accordingly. Local organizations of members were forbidden. Each member was to be assessed twenty-five cents a year for "maintainance of Guild facilities." All important matters were to be submitted for voting before the membership through the medium of the Bulletin, and the bulletin itself was to be devoted to topics of general interest rather than to a strict agenda of business. The club was further to produce an emblem that was to be its official insignia. This set of working rules was the closest thing to a constitution the Guild ever achieved.

By this time the TFG Bulletin was appearing with monthly regularity, and was increasing rapidly in quality. Its articles were interesting and frequently informative. Wollheim himself was represented with contributions of letters, articles and columns; one of the latter, "Sun Spots," proved of sufficient fanwide appeal to outlast the life of the sheet and continue on elsewhere years later. Wollheim also designed the official emblem, which was subsequently first printed in the TFG Bulletin's April, 1935 issue.

Strong as the anti-dealer campaign had been, the one which the Terrestial Fantascience Guild next began made it seem but the mildest of issues. Wollheim had some time back sold to Wonder Stories magazine a story entitled "The Man from Ariel." But no amount of urging could prompt the publishers to disgorge the staggering sum of ten dollars which therefore became due at the niggardly word-rate in force at that time. Ignoring payment in lieu of his career, Wollheim sent them a second story (which was rejected) and then a third, whose plot they offered to buy for development by one of their staff writers. Feeling that if he could not collect payment for an entire story his chances for doing so on a mere plot were even slimmer, Wollheim turned down the offer. He next initiated a systematic survey of Wonder's treatment of their other authors in order to find out if he was the sole one to receive such shabby dealing. Letters from Arthur K. Barnes, Henry Hasse, W. Varick Nevins, Chester D. Cuthbert and Russell Blaiklock stated that they too had not received payment for stories. Barnes, in fact, was owed for fiction that had been printed as far back as 1932. The most flagrant

case of all, however, was that involving Clifton B. Kruse, who did not know that his "Heat Destroyer" had ever been published. He had submitted it years ago to a contest sponsored by the magazine, and later received from them an empty envelope torn open at one end; believing the story to have been returned and lost in the mails, he had not pursued the matter further.

This non-payment scandal was aired in detail by the TFG Bulletin. Moral support was received from Stanley G. Weinbaum and Henry Hasse, the latter referring his grievance to the literary agency he patronized. Aid was also lent by the International Cosmos Scientific Association, a group which had but recently sprung into existence, and concerning which we will learn more in later chapters. This aid involved the mimeographing by the ICSA of the April, 1935 Bulletin that carried the major story of the matter. This particular number received wide distribution, and the adverse effect it had on the Gernsback regime was considerable. (Wollheim's article therein was reprinted in the January 1, 1941 number of Fantasy News as a boomerang against its author in a situation where conditions were allegedly reversed, and may be consulted by those interested in a more detailed account than space permits giving here.) The upshot of the whole affair was that Nevins, Cuthbert and Barnes pooled their claims with Wollheim; a lawyer was hired, and a settlement with Gernsback finally arrived at.

Mention of the last issue of the TFG Bulletin need be made but to cite a few minor matters. First, probably as reward for being an open ally in the above campaign, the ICSA was accorded official recommendation. Second, the formation of local TFG groups received sanction. And last of all, there appeared an account of an "Impossible Story Club", which was allegedly founded in the Argosy-Allstory days before the advent of science-fiction magazines, and which included such members as N.E.P. North, Ivan Nepolis, B. Murdock, etc. As far as this historian can determine, no such club ever existed, its name and membership list being a fabrication from the whole cloth by Wilson Shepard.

One of the TFG's objectives had been the publication of a magazine devoted entirely to science-fiction. This was realized when in May, 1935 there appeared Astonishing Stories, an eleven-paged, small-sized, hektographed affair which sold for ten cents. Stories by Wollheim, Evert, Shepard and North were included. The almost ludicrous attempt of the sheet to pass itself off as a competitor to the professional magazines doomed it from the start, and the greatest success it ever attained was being considered a rare item by fan collectors of 1937-1938.

Wollheim assumed the editorship of the TFG organ, and promptly changed its title to The Phantagraph. And after a single hektographed number it metamorphosed to printed format. The first printed number (for whose reproduction W. L. Crawford was responsible) appeared in the summer of 1935. It had large-sized pages and featured an excellent array of material; encouragement from such notables as F. Orlin Tremaine (then editor of Astounding Stories) and H.P. Lovecraft also materialized. Shortly afterward Shepard obtained access to a printing outfit and took over production himself.

Encouraged by the excellent material being received from Smith, Lovecraft and others, Wollheim decided to pattern the publication after the now-defunct Fantasy Fan. Simultaneously The Phantagraph was standardized on a monthly schedule and small format. The quality of material used was very high, and in this respect the magazine easily equalled its ideal. Short stories, poems and essays by H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Henry Kuttner, Robert E. Howard, William Lumley, Duane W. Rimel, Robert Nelson, H. C. Koenig, Emil Petaja and August W. Derleth were featured. Some of this material had been intended for publication in The Fantasy Fan, as might be suspected. Collectors who have overlooked this periodical have missed much indeed.

Wollheim distributed The Phantagraph through the mailings of three amateur press associations simultaneously. For a few numbers it kept the head-

ing "published by the Terrestial Fantascience Guild," but its July, 1936 issue it abandoned what had become a mythical byline. (Wollheim's association with these associations during this period greatly influenced his thinking, and while active among them probably conceived the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.) In April, 1937 when Wollheim discontinued the publication as a subscription magazine and initiated an exclusive press association distribution fandom lost a worthwhile journalistic effort, for The Phantagraph quickly degenerated into its near-valueless form of today, when it is being produced solely to maintain the reputation of the oldest fan magazine still appearing regularly.

The last effort of the Wollheim-Shepard combination was the magazine Fanciful Tales of Time and Space. This neat, printed publication appeared in the fall of 1936. It boasted a fine cover by Clay Ferguson, Jr., and featured "The Nameless City" of H. P. Lovecraft, along with other excellent material by Keller, Howard, Wollheim, Derleth and others. Yet, although fan response to it was fair, and although it was in every way a production of which the publishers had every reason to be proud, mechanical difficulties prevented a second number from ever being issued.

The failure of Fanciful Tales ended the coalition of Wollheim and Shepard permanently. Shepard on his own tack produced "The History of the Necronomicon" of Lovecraft, and issued three numbers of a little fan magazine The Rebel which he planned to fill with hotly controversial material. However, it never showed any promise and went to its deserved death, dragging with it into oblivion Shepard himself, whose only appearance thereafter was due to material left in the hands of the Moskowitz Manuscript Bureau. The Terrestial Fantascience Guild itself expired quietly too, dying as it had been born with an utter lack of fanfare, and being quickly forgotten by all concerned.

VIII
The Science Fiction League

The birth of the TFG coincided almost exactly with that of an even more important organization, the Science Fiction League. Credit for conceiving the league idea is generally given to Charles D. Hornig, editor of Wonder Stories at the time and the first managing-secretary of the group. However, in an autobiography printed in Fantasy Magazine, Hornig states that Gernsback broached the idea originally. While this might be simple diplomacy of a subordinate, it will be remembered that Gernsback initiated a Short Wave League in one of his chain of radio magazines some years earlier, so that Hornig may be relating no more than the simple truth.

Announcement of the SFL was made in the May, 1934 Wonder Stories, and on the magazine's cover there appeared the league's emblem of a soaring rocket. Gernsback himself had written a four-page editorial introduction describing the plan. Certificates of membership, emblematic lapel buttons and club stationery were ready for distribution. It was obvious that more than trifling preparation had gone into the creation of this, the first professionally sponsored club for fantasy fans. A board of directors, largely composed of professional authors, but with the most prominent letter-writers of the day (Ackerman and Darrow) also represented, had been chosen. Gernsback was listed as the executive secretary, and Hornig held the assistant secretary's post.

Gernsback summed up the league as "a non-commercial membership organization for the futherance and betterment of the art of science fiction." No one realized at the time that in so doing he had renounced his belief that science-fictionists must be science-hobbyists, that he had founded an organization which specifically stipulated its aim to be the furtherance of science-fiction---science itself---his former idol---not even being listed secondarily. At this point it should also be realized that those who in their later battles against Wonder

Stories, the SFL and their representatives used "the Gernsback delusion" as a rallying cry were actually crying down a conception long since discarded. A man of intelligence, Gernsback recognized that while science-hobbyists did exist, they were nevertheless greatly outnumbered by fans of the fiction stemming from it---and recognizing this fact, acted accordingly.

League rules were few and liquid, their flexibility admittedly not designed to cope with situations brought about by fan-feuding. Indirectly the organization would benefit Wonder Stories in building up a stable reading audience, and thus increasing its circulation; however, this in itself could be regarded as furthering the cause of science-fiction. Even if it were granted that the SFL's basis was a wholly commercial one, therefore, fanwide benefits which accrued as a result were of necessity independant of this. Looking back from the vantage of a decade's perspective, we are forced in fact to admit that the Science Fiction League was more beneficial and important to fandom than any organization which preceeded or followed it. Not only did it actually create the fan field as we know the latter today, but it gave the field something that it had never possessed before: realization of its own existence.

From every part of the country there emerged through local chapters those fans who were most interested in their hobby, those who would form the backbone of a national structure. Communication between individual members was facilitated by the SFL columns that appeared in each issue of Wonder Stories, and which carried fan names and addresses. League-sponsored quizzes, compiled by leading fans of the day, called for an encyclopedic science-fictional knowledge if one were to obtain a high score, and through this medium too were reputations gained in the field. The sections in these quizzes devoted to pure science were relatively small---an additional indication of the trend toward ever weightier emphasis upon fiction at science's expense. Of the many other activities coming to light in this column that of J. O. Bailey's compiling information for a bibliography of science-fiction holds perhaps the most topical interest at this writing, with the publication of his Pilgrims through Space and Time in the offing (one hopes!) after years of postponements.

And slowly, frequently after a laborious gestation, individual chapters began to appear. Some, of course, were of no lasting importance, being virtual- no more than the three members' names required for official recognition. Others, however, were destined to leave a permanent mark on fandom's history.

George Gordon Clark, who held the honor of being the SFL's first member, was unique also in forming its first chapter, that of Brooklyn. The very fact that he had received membership card number one was the determining factor in convincing Clark that he should make himself a leading fan; and, after organizing local chapter number one, there was no holding him back. He quickly accumulated a large science-fiction collection, purchased a mimeograph machine, and engaged in a whirlwind flurry of activity that persisted at a high pitch for the duration of his stay in the field.

Chapter number two was formed in Lewiston by Stuart Ayers, and never attained much prominence, though Ayers was a sincere and interested fan. Jack Schaller formed the third (Erie) chapter. The Los Angeles chapter, one of the most important, was organized soon after (October, 1934) by E. C. Reynolds, about whom little is unfortunately known; two other important fans, Roy Test and W. Hofford, were on the initial roster. Ackerman put in an appearance at this time too, apologizing for his inability to create a chapter in San Francisco. Soon the league was spreading like wildfire, with locals being sponsored by such names as Robert W. Lowndes, Arthur L. Widner, Olon F. Wiggins, Lewis F. Torrence, D.R. Welch, Robert A. Ward, L. M. Jenson, Paul Freehafer, Clarence J. Wilhelm. Vernon H. Jones, Bob Tucker, Day Gee, H. W. Kirschemblit, Allen R. Charpentier, Thomas S. Gardner, Henry Hasse, Joseph Hatch, Leslie Johnson, Raymond A. Palmer, Lionel Dilbeck and Alvin Earl Perry. From this list one can gain some idea of the num-

ber of fans urged into activity by the concept of the Science Fiction League. Today many are still well known in the field, though until their appearance in SFL columns they had never been heard from.

As has been remarked, the greater part of the league roster was deadwood. Typical of many such short-lived locals was the Newark branch, organized in May, 1935 by Robert Bahr, Charles Purcell and Sam Moskowitz, and later augmented by John Maderas, William Weiner and Otto Schuck. Little of consequence was accomplished in the three or four meetings held, and the group finally broke up because of a controversy as to what type of activity to engage in. At no time did the members think of contacting the nearby New York or Jersey City chapters, oddly enough, and thus attain some share of mutual progress.

Undoubtedly the outstanding chapter of the time was that in Chicago. Authors and fans alike were represented on its roster, names such as Walter Dennis, Jack Darrow, William Dillenback, Harry Boosel, Florence Reider, Paul McDermott, Milton J. Latzer, Howard Funk, Neil de Jack, Al Fedor and the three Binder brothers being prominent. The reports of their meetings printed in Wonder Stories eclipsed in interest those of all others. Moreover, they published an official organ called The Fourteen Leaflet, which appeared regularly from November, 1935 to the Spring of 1937.

The Chicago chapter planned, during the summer of 1935, to send delegates to the national SFL headquarters in New York---a meeting which would, had it materialized as planned, have been in effect the first national convention in fandom. Charles D. Hornig was informed that Jack Darrow, William Dillenback and Otto Binder would arrive in New York on the evening of June 28, 1935. In honor of the occasion a meeting was arranged at the Wonder Stories offices, to which Hornig invited many of the most important local science-fictionists of the day. At the eleventh hour word was received that the Chicago delegation had been delayed, and could not arrive as planned; Hornig decided to hold the meeting despite this fact---a wise decision, since it proved to be far and away the finest held up to that date. Present were Philip J. Bartel, Frank B. Long, Jr., Theodore Lutwin, Laurence Manning, George G. Clark, Irving Posow, Herbert Leventman, A. L. Selikowitz, Conrad H. Ruppert, Julius Schwartz, John B. Michel, Donald A. Wollheim, Herbert Goudket, Kenneth Sterling and Julius Unger. The Chicago trio arrived the next day, which they spent in company with Hornig, Weisinger and Schwartz; their thousand-mile trip was one of the most interesting news tidbits to circulate in fandom at the time, and went well with the chapter's reputation as the leading SFL group of its day.

As leading members moved from the Chicago area, however, the chapter gradually lost the nucleus of its activity, and when the Gernsback regime collapsed in 1936 the beginning of its end was marked. Dissatisfaction with the rejuvenated league under Standard Publications' banner was a possible cause of severance of all SFL ties in 1937, when the group announced themselves as the Chicago Science Fiction Club in the final number of The Fourteen Leaflet. Soon meetings were abandoned entirely, and members were heard from only on an individual basis thereafter.

The Brooklyn chapter, meanwhile, though boasting less than ten members, blossomed forth smartly under Clark's live-wire guidance. Together, these fans produced The Brooklyn Reporter, whose first issue was mimeographed in February, 1935. In all-around interest it had more appeal than any extant publication in the field save Fantasy Magazine. Basically it was a primer for the neophyte fan, and truly to the unitiated an object of fascination, though at the time Wollheim and other comparative veterans poo-poohed its "stale news." The Reporter featured biographies of science-fiction celebrities, reviews of current fantastic stories, quiz columns, hints to collectors, etc.; to these were later added reviews of books, news items and longer articles. Before the magazine's five-issue life was over it had added Selikowitz, Widner and Wollheim to its staff, sent copies

to the heads of every Science Fiction League chapter, and undoubtedly converted many fans to real activity in the field.

The only other league organ of importance was Lincoln SFL Doings, published by the Lincoln, Illinois chapter which was headed by P. H. Thompson. This group soon faded into inactivity, however, without having made any substantial contribution to the fan world.

Two other locals are worthy of passing mention. In England Douglas F. Mayer headed the league's first foreign branch at Leeds, a chapter which was to include many of the most important science-fictionists in the area and prove a rallying-point for British fans generally. In Philadelphia the chapter of Milton A. Rothman was likewise destined to have a long and active life.

A second SFL quiz had been published, and the organization presented a placid surface mirroring national cooperation. But beneath this calm were beginning to flow currents that were to wreck the league's efficient functioning completely. The sources of these were not only the Terrestial Fantascience Guild and the International Scientific Association, but the greater New York chapters of the Science Fiction League itself. Development and interdependence of the latter will now be considered in detail.

William S. Sykora, who had entered fandom when he attended a few of the late Scienceer meetings, was director of the New York City chapter, whose roster also included Julius Schwartz, Conrad H. Ruppert, Donald A. Wollheim and John B. Michel. Here for the first time the first and second fandom groups were meeting on common ground, and the close contact only emphasized the rift dividing them. The younger members, justly or no, felt that the attitude of veterans toward them was patronizing and at times antagonistic, and these mutual differences were unquestionably involved in the genesis of the trouble into which the chapter quickly drifted. Meetings were held alternately at the homes of Sykora and Ruppert. From the first this was the group for which Hornig held the highest hopes. His dream of making it the SFL showpiece was doomed never to be realized, however. The membership never exceeded the original five, and since these five promptly split into two factions having little in common Hornig is desparation finally issued a plea for someone to take the job of reorganizing the chapter and putting it on its feet. But no offers were forthcoming.

In Brooklyn, meanwhile, more trouble was afoot. At a well-attended meeting with Hornig himself present, member Harold Kirschenblit was voted out of the secretary's office on charges of gross inefficiency. Disgruntled by this, Kirschenblit later wrote to Hornig, saying that there was no reason why a borough the size of Brooklyn could not have two SFL chapters; Hornig consenting, a group of fans was rounded up and Kirschenblit applied for a charter. This was granted, and in June, 1935 he was appointed director of the Eastern New York SFL, subsidiary 1A of the Brooklyn chapter. By making it a subsidiary club Hornig hoped to maintain a greater measure of control over it, as Clark, head of the parent chapter, was quite friendly to him.

Harold Kirschenblit had not shown any outstanding abilities at leadership prior to this time, but the new group he headed blossomed forth remarkably. This was due not only to his own native ability, but to a rapid decline of the parent Brooklyn chapter. There are several reasons for this decline. First of all, its activities fell off in interest. Aside from publication of The Brooklyn Reporter the only serious pursuit undertaken was a weak attempt to catalog fantasy cartoons; and in a day when the groundwork of fandom was in the process of being built this was idle luxury at best. More important, however, was Kirschenblit's favorable location; unlike Clark, he headed a chapter which met near members' homes. And with these factors in his favor, he soon had such active fans as Frederick Pohl, Irving Losow, Herman Leventman and Marvin Miller attending meetings regularly; frequent visitors were Wollheim and Sykora, with Hornig, Schwartz, Michel and even Clark himself being present occasionally. The editor-

ial in the first Arcturus, official organ of the Eastern New York SFL, summed up the situation quite aptly:

> The ENYSFL, the largest in New York City to date, has grown from the modest role of the first sub-chapter, to its present commanding position on the SFL horizon. It has far outgrown its parent chapter, the Brooklyn SFL, and is still growing rapidly. Scarcely a meeting goes by without the addition to our rolls of at least one new member. Charles D. Hornig...agreed at a recent meeting that hereafter the ENYSFL would be in complete command of the SFL activities in Brooklyn, the Brooklyn chapter to become dormant.

This was an almost sensational turn of events. And it was now evident to Hornig that he had failed in his attempt to keep the local chapters strongly under his control. Here the Brooklyn stronghold had quickly melted away and the New York City group, having shown virtually no activity, required reorganization. In an attempt to reaffirm leadership, Hornig took over directorship of the latter himself. The result of his action was an explosion which rocked the Science Fiction League on its very foundations, one which for showmanship has yet to be surpassed in the fan world.

(to be continued)

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Thumbing the Munsey Files---concluded from page 218

tent. Conditions are far from being in accord with this connoted ideal, however, as the younger generation is fomenting rebellion against the patriarchal leadership, desiring to return to civilization. The usual beautiful girls attract the castaways, who are themselves divided, as one of their number is content to stay while the others wish to leave. The appearance of an exploring vessel precipitates open revolt, the entire group eventually leaving the spot and forming a community of its own on the Atlantic Coast. This novel is appealing fantastic adventure, and is well written.

And thus we are brought to a somewhat abrupt conclusion, for in this three-month period of 1936 Argosy magazine was disappointingly barren of fantasy.

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Open House
(letters from our readers)

The British fan and collector Frederick C. Brown discusses some 1945 books:

You may be interested to hear that the new reprint of Vengeance of Gwa, published by Books of Today, Ltd., is now on sale over here. S. Fowler Wright puts his own name under the title in this edition, dropping the pseudonym of A. Wingrave which he previously used. Other new titles recently published are 22 Strange Stories edited by John L. Hardie (Art and Educational Publishers, Ltd., 8/6); this contains a selection of supernatural tales by Machen, Blackwood, Hardy, Le Fanu, Onions and others. Michael Harrison's Higher Things (Macdonald, 8/6) is an amusing satire of the present day, dealing with the troubles of a bank-clerk who found he possessed the gift of levitation, which he developed until he could fly at will. There is also Dog's Life, by Gordon Boshell (Secker and Warburg, 8/6), a further satire, recording the exploits of one Mr. Perkins, who, knocked down and killed by a bus, finds his personality transferred to the body of a mongrel dog which was nearly run down by the same vehicle. Mr. Perkins' reactions to this strange new world make amusing reading. The final triumph of his

human reasoning powers over latent animal instincts result in his achievement of learning how to write---with his pen held in his mouth! Monkey Paradise by Countess G. Hessenstein (Methuen, 7/6) is a borderline skit dealing with the return to jungle life of an educated monkey, whereupon he relates to his jungle cousins the history of his experiences in civilization....

Cpl. Paul Spencer, in commenting on our seventh issue, remarked:

Jameson was certainly not an outstanding writer, but his stories were usually entertaining, and will be missed. "By-Products" is most stimulating. I agree on the more or less incidental values of science-fiction in arousing interest in science, sending the mind off on novel trains of thought, etc.; and I also agree that it contains much "science" that is both inaccurate and misleading. But is this inaccuracy necessary? Cannot interesting stories be written without the addition of misinformation and illogic? Naturally there must be a good deal of the hypothetical, but I see no reason why science-fiction must introduce elements such as Jameson describes as "utter nonsense."

The article on Sloane is written in a style very similar to Lovecraft, as though Onderdonk had just finished reading "Supernatural Horror in Literature." Perhaps I can best indicate this article's success by saying that I am now all eagerness to obtain a copy of The Edge of Running Water. (I've already read and enjoyed To Walk the Night.) What I'm wondering is, Has Sloane read Lovecraft...? (We would like to know the answer to that ourselves. What scanty information is available indicates that he has. Sloane was the one to call attention of Publishers' Weekly to The Outsider and Others---see the article in the February 24, 1940 issue of that periodical, pp. 890-1. Efforts at confirmation of the matter have proved fruitless, however, as letters directed to Sloane at his last New York address have been returned unclaimed. --ed.)

Of interest to both amateur and professional authors is the follwing information from Walter H. Gillings, well-known British fan:

...In a new British science-fantasy magazine which I am editing, and is to appear shortly, I shall be presenting comparitively little-known science-fantasies that have been published as books in the form of short stories. They will, in other words, be greatly condensed digests of books lending themselves to precis treatment, and will run from three to four thousand words. Most of the boys over here don't seem to have the time for it, and if there are any American fans who would like a cut at the job I'd welcome hearing from them. It doesn't matter particularly what the books are as long as they're not generally known and help to reflect the field outside of Wells and Verne, which to our ordinary reader is about the whole of it. What I want is not a mere summary or review but a story in every sense of that term---covering the whole of the book as concisely as possible, and written in a good, narrative style. So far, I've done two books in the series myself: Lynch's Menace from the Moon (a particular favorite of mine) and Bennett's Demigods. I like doing them immensely, but having other things to do in connection with the magazine, I'd like some help. So, I must now find someone interested and competent enough to continue the series, or more than one person, if they're forthcoming. They will, of course, be paid regular rates for the job. That's the set-up. Anybody interested? (Those who are may address Mr. Gillings at 15 Shere Road, Ilford, Essex, England; he will be glad to furnish full details to anyone communicating with him. --ed.)

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In our next issue, in addition to all the regular features, and the third installment of "The Immortal Storm," Fantasy Commentator will present Richard Witter's long article "The Superman in Modern English Fiction." Watch for it!