FANTASY COMMENTATOR

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

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THIS-'N'-THAT

In true pedagogic fashion, your editor begins by enunciating a principle of future policy. Because of the great number of publishers of fantasy books now clogging the field who flood readers' mailboxes with announcements of books which have not yet (and may never) appear, no space in this column will henceforth be allotted to descriptions of volumes not yet off the presses. If "This-'n'-That" lists a book, it will be one you can buy or at least order from your neighborhood dealer.

From now on

The third in the Connoisseur's Library of Strange Fiction is E. H. Visiak's Medusa (Gollancz, 8/6), a reprint of a fine, Hodgson-like fantasy of the sea. Translated from the Russian is A Meeting over Tuscarora, a collection of unsophisticated but well written science-fiction short stories (Hutchinson, 8/6). Peter Martin's Summer in 3000 (Quality Press, 8/6) transports its subject (via suspended animation) ten centuries into the future, where the expected conventional strife and adventures ensue. So-so. Black magic is the theme of Francis Gerard's Sorceror's Shaft (Macdonald, 8/6), and The Lady from Venus by Garnett Radcliffe (Macdonald, 8/6) is a fairly amusing account of whacky doings on our sister planet. The Peacemaker by John Romenham (also Macdonald, 8/6) is a conventional account of a new invention being used in an attempt to enforce world peace. Ray Cummings' Shadow Girl (Swan, 5/-) has at last found its way between hard covers; I don't know why---certainly it's not worth reading. A second tale of a new weapon being used to attain international peace is found in Bright Tomorrow by Derek Neville (Crowther, 7/6). As well varied and interesting a table of contents as in his previous anthology is incorporated in Jeremy Scott's new one: At Close of Eve (Jarrolds, 15/-); get it. But avoid John R. Fearn's Liners of Time (World's Work, 5/-), a dull melodrama---vintage 1937 or so---that constantly assaults one's common sense. Rhoda Broughton's Twilight Stories (Home & Van Thal, 6/-) is an interesting collection (a reprint) of Victorian ghost stories; collectors should get it. A new collection of weird tales is M. P. Dare's Unholy Relics; and Andrew Caldecott's Not Exactly Ghosts (both Arnold, 7/6) is likewise an uncanny bit in the M.R.James tradition. And finally---perhaps best, too---is a new work from the pen of Olaf Stapledon. The Flames: a Fantasy is a brief (84pp) novel that continues, in allegory, the author's search for the truth of the spirit. It is available from Secker & Warburg @ 6/-.

British Fiction

There will not, unfortunately, be room for listing all domestic fantasy volumes in this month's column, but at least a start can be made. First of all there is August Derleth's Sleeping and the Dead (Pellegrini & Cudahy, $3¾), containing thirty uncanny stories that range from well known authors to out-of-the-way efforts by Weird Tales contributors; it continues the compiler's series of unusual anthologies, and makes a welcome addition to a connoisseur's book shelf. The Forbidden Garden by John Taine (Fantasy Press, $3) is a highly recommended novel, one of the author's best; get it! George O. Smith's collection of interplanetary yarns is titled Venus Equilateral (Prime Press, $3), and carries an introduction by John W. Campbell, Jr. To Keep or Kill ($2) is Wilson Tucker's new mystery novel that involves a pocket sized atomic bomb and some truly hilarious situations. A thin vein of witchcraft runs through Sylvia Tate's Never by Chance (Harper, $2½), which is primarily a novel of psychological fear. Tomorrow's Horizon (Dorrance, $1¾) is George E. Meagher's setting of a future China. Raoul C. Faure's Mister St. John (Harper, $2¾) gives an interesting presentation of a doctor who had the opportunity to relive his life. A mule that could talk and fly is the subject of Francis by David Stern (Farrar, Straus, $[illegible]). A specialized anthology indeed is [illegible] Strange Tales of Transformation edited by A.C.

(concluded on page 145)

THE GOTHIC NOVEL & PERCY B. SHELLEY

by
James Warren Thomas

Before any discussion of the novels of Shelley can be made, we must first consider the genre to which they belong. They are commonly called "Gothic novels," and there seems to be some justification for their being so classified.

The Gothic novel flourished in the latter half of the eighteenth century. It is usually considered as a recrudescence of romanticism, a revolt against the realism of Richardson, Fielding and Smollett. These men "seemingly exhausted the vitality of the eighteenth century so far as concerned the making of great fiction, and their passing was the prelude to a noticeable decline to which the Gothic romance contributed." (1) The last four decades of the century were a period of "literary groping." (2) This period may be said to have formally begun with the publication of The Castle of Otranto in 1764.

For the person with a logical mind who insists upon pinning things down, who delights in definite categories, and who rejoices when he can neatly pigeon-hole a fact, the term "Gothic" is unsatisfactory, even annoying. Gothic novels are like religions in that there seems no one factor common to them all which definitely justifies their existence as a separate species.

Baker says, justly, that the word "Gothic" is "an inexact term like 'Romantic.'" (3) This is mild criticism. The term is downright messy. In a general sense it "originally conveyed the idea of barbarous, tramontane and antique, and was merely a term of reproach and contempt." (4) Later, through some obscure literary alchemy, it came to mean almost anything medieval.

Even the architectural connotation of the word is obscure. In this sense it seems to convey the idea of an edifice which is dark, dank and gloomy, and which is preferably in a state of decay. Summers mentions "congestions of heavy, dark, melancholy and monkish Piles, without any just Proportion, Use or Beauty compared with the truly ancient." (5)

In a literary sense, "Gothic" has no specific, cut-and-dried meaning, although it implies a vast number of things. It has come to be applied to novels dealing in "mystery and wonder, fear and suspense, sensation and terror." (6) If there is any simple definition of the Gothic novel, it might best be expressed thus: The Gothic novel is a romance of terror. In most cases it subordinates characterization and concentrates upon the creation of incidents which are designed to awaken this emotion of terror in the reader.

However, while terror in some form is almost always part of the Gothic novel, its presence does not automatically make a novel Gothic. There are many which make use of the terror motif, yet which do not fall within that class. F. Wright Hoxley's Red Snow and The Night Land by William Hope Hodgson are terror romances, but they cannot be called Gothic.

More, though it is true that the non-Gothic terror tales cited are comparatively modern, this is no help in isolating the Gothic novel as a type, for the latter cannot be placed within any exact chronological period. It is still with us, a recent example being Mervyn Peake's Titus Groan (1946).

So, if we are to separate the Gothic romance from the mass of other stories of terror that have been written, we must consider some of its specific ingredients. We have already noted the architectural significance of "Gothic." This particular aspect is important with relation to the Gothic in literature.

One of the influences instrumental in the birth of the Gothic novel is the awakening of an interest in the past. Since architectural remains and ruins

are among the most obvious of our links with the past, it is not surprising that the castle became an important factor in this type of literature. The medieval castle---or at least a romantic variety of it---is so ever-present in these novels that the word "castle" might almost be used interchangeably with "Gothic" in describing them.

The theme of the almost omnipresent castle as a setting for the action of the Gothic romance is fully developed by Eino Railo in his book The Haunted Castle:

> From its earliest beginnings English romantic literature displays a rare affection for Nature and the feelings awakened by it; when to this are added the yearnings of the Romanticists for the historical past, a conception is evolved of a romantic stage to which I have given the generic name of The Haunted Castle, and which, in my opinion, forms a synthesis of horror-romantic material. (7)

It is obvious that Railo intends his "generic name" to apply to all the Gothic trappings, but his choice of "castle" as a typical term or common denominator is significant.

Again, the presence of a medieval castle alone is of course not sufficient to place a terror novel within the Gothic pale. Of the numerous other ingredients which must be considered, Montague Summers gives the following list:

> ...a castle, a cavern, a groan, a giant, a blood stained dagger, howling blasts, a knight, a lady who is the heroine, assassins, a monk, skeletons, skulls, etc., a magic book sprinkled with blood, mysterious voices, a secret oath, a gliding ghost, a witch, a wound, a midnight murder. (8)

Knight adds:

> Corpses, blood, insane frenzies, suspended animation, fires, midnight shrieks, exciting steps on the stair, ...burial of the living, earthquakes, strokes of lightning, convulsions, eyes transfixed in sockets, dreadful palpitations, mesmerism. In short the Gothic romance was imagination in revolt against common sense. (9)

The desolate wasteland aspects of nature were emphesized. Stunted trees, storm-blasted moors, dim forests, brooding mountains and melancholy twilight were common devices. Anyone can add to this catalog of horrors simply by thinking of the things in life that are most repulsive. The list of subjects that were in common usage ranges from the relatively healthy topic of gore to the morbid and erotic ultimates of incest, decay, loathesome putrescence and the charnel-house horrors of final dissolution.

It is apparent that the Gothic novelist had a wide range of mechanisms to choose from. Is there any one of these ingredients or any combination of them which infallibly stamps a novel as Gothic? It has already been stated that the element of terror alone will not accomplish this feat. It is also conceivable that a non-Gothic novel could be written with one or two of the devices listed predominating. However, any work containing, let us say, a judicious combination of four or five of these factors used in such a manner as to rouse effectively the emotion of terror in the reader could hardly fail to be obviously Gothic.

The question now becomes one of degree. The horror romance may be said to be more or less Gothic, proportionate to the number of typical ingredients used. A melange of practically all of them---such as Lewis' The Monk---would be at the upper end of the scale approaching the extreme or ideal Gothic. Such a

work is sharply separate from all other types of the literature of terror. At the opposite end of the scale no clear-cut line of demarcation appears. Novels with few Gothic ingredients may be said to shade off imperceptibly from mild Gothic to novels showing Gothic influences until finally, somewhere, they cease to be Gothic at all and become merely terror tales. It is interesting to see where Shelley's juvenilia, the two novels Zastrozzi and St. Irvyne, fit into this scale.

1810 was forty-six years after the publication of Walpole's Castle of Otranto. By this time there had appeared such notable examples of the genre as Mrs. Clara Reeve's Champion of Virtue (1777); The Romance of the Forest (1791) and The Mysteries of Udolpho (1795) by Mrs. Ann Radcliffe; The Monk by M.G.Lewis; and Charles Brockden Brown's Wieland and Ormond (1798 and 1799).

That Shelley, who was engaged in his first literary endeavors around 1810, felt the influence of these works is revealed by the character of his earliest poetic attempts. They abound in the expressions and imagery of the Gothic novel. His "Revenge" (1809), "Ghasta" (1810) and "Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson" (1810) are terror-romantic in subject matter and technique. The latter contains such typical expressions as "Banshies moan on the storm"; "fiend from the regions of hell"; "yelling vampire reeking with gore"; "death demon's scream"; and so on.

It was almost inevitable that the inquiring mind of young Shelley should produce a Gothic romance. Whether the adage "you don't have to be crazy, but it helps" applies to producers of outre fiction or not is a moot question. However, that Shelley was at least a non-conformist is indicated by the fact that his stay at Eton earned him the titles of "mad Shelley" and "Shelley the athiest." At the age of seventeen (1810) he entered Oxford, and in the same year Zastrozzi, a Romance by "P.B.S." was published.

The plot of Zastrozzi is quite simple and completely in the Romantic tradition. Verezzi loves Julia di Strobazzo. Matilda di Laurentini succeeds, with the aid of the villain Zastrozzi, in supplanting Julia in Verezzi's affections. This is accomplished by telling him that Julia is dead. Verezzi immediately falls into a romantic brain fever and is finally nursed back to health by Matilda. The latter then begins a long-drawn-out siege of Verezzi's heart. During the course of this one-sided amour Matilda restrains her passions only with great difficulty.

Zastrozzi, in the meantime, is a sinister-figure-lurking-in-the-background, appearing now and then in consultation with Matilda to advise her how to conduct her campaign against Verezzi. His advice is good, for she finally marries the latter. The action reaches its highest pitch in a scene where Verezzi sees his Julia alive and realizes with horror that he is irrevocably married to the nymphomaniac Matilda. He commits suicide by stabbing himself, whereupon Matilda pulls the fatal dagger from his corpse and murders Julia with it in a singularly brutal manner.

The role of Zastrozzi in all these events is finally revealed by his confession as he and Matilda are being tried by the Inquisition. He hated Verezzi because the latter's father had betrayed his--Zastrozzi's--mother. He was the end product of this betrayal and had sworn to avenge it upon all members of the Verezzi family. To this end he had engineered the marriage of Verezzi and Matilda and had arranged that Verezzi should discover that Julia was alive, well knowing what the result would probably be.

It is rather difficult to criticize a work of this kind. There are no adequate moral grounds for doing so. If Shelley had turned out to be a hack, a complacent "I told you so!" might be in order. Since this did not occur, one can wish only that he had collected all of his juvenilia and burned them.

The novel has many imperfections which are, however, excusable when one considers the age of the author. It suffers from incompleteness and a certain ob-

security. It doesn't quite "come off." In the first eleven pages a long roll of characters is introduced. We read of Zastrozzi, Ugo, Bernardo, Verezzi, Bianca and Julia. We are told nothing about any of these people. The one fact we are certain of is that the first three have, seemingly without reason, abducted Verezzi and chained him up in a cave. From here until the final inquisition scene we learn only that Zastrozzi hates Verezzi and that he is hatching some kind of a plot. The novel suffers from this continued concealment of Zastrozzi's motives. All the action is meaningless, and the crude manner in which Zastrozzi's purposes are revealed is anticlimactic. One is left with the feeling that all the hero-villain's melodramatically sinister machinations were unjustified and that he could have concluded the matter more tidily by stabbing Verezzi in the first chapter.

Gothic elements abound in this story. The style and general tone are rococo and flamboyantly opulent. The absurd extent of this elegance is revealed by the fact that the characters shed not honest, red blood but "purple gore." The dialogue is spectacular. Zastrozzi is continually wishing for someone's heart to be "reeking on my dagger." A typical sample of conversation follows:

> "Unkind Verezzi! is it thus that you will ever slight me? is it for this that I have laid aside the delicacy of my sex and owned to you a passion which was too violent to be concealed? Ah! at least pity me! I love you: oh! I adore you to madness!"
>
> She paused---the peculiar expression which beamed in her dark eye told the tumultous wishes of her bosom.
>
> "Distress not yourself and me, Signora," said Verezzi, "by those unavailing protestations. Is it for you---is it for Matilda," continued he, his countenance assuming a smile of bitterest scorn, "to talk of love to the lover of Julia?" (10)

Such samples as this would be enough to deter the hardiest present-day reader---were they the sole merit of the book. However, the chief interest lies not in such dialogue, but in the Gothic ingredients present. There are many of them ---all interesting---though today they are apt to inspire amusement rather than the mood of terror and fear they were intended to evoke.

The descriptive passages are powerfully Gothic:

> The sun began to decline; at last it sank beneath the western mountain, and the forest tops were tinged by its departing ray. The shades of night rapidly thickened.
>
> The sky was serene; the blue ether was spangled with countless myriads of stars: the tops of the loftly forest trees waved mournfully in the evening wind; and the moonbeam penetrating at intervals, as they moved, threw dubious shades upon the dark underwood beneath. (11)

A short time later in the same night described above, Zastrozzi and Matilda poison a hapless wretch who happens to be handy for the occasion. As the pair watches him die the weather changes:

> The moonbeam darting her oblique rays from under the volumes of lowering vapour, threatened an approaching storm. The lurid sky was tinged with a yellowish lustre---the forest tops rustled in the rising tempest---big drops fell---a flash

of lightning, and, instantly after, a peal of bursting thunder, struck with sudden terror the bosom of Matilda. (12)

These passages, with their calculated mood creation and their arbitrary change of tone to suit the action, are purely Gothic, and are reminiscent of similar descriptions in the works of Mrs. Radcliffe and Charles Brockden Brown.

Many of the Gothic elements quoted from Summers and Knight appear in the above passages and in the plot-summary of Zastrozzi. The Gothic "cavern" appears in the first chapter, a "stroke of lightning" tumbling it in upon the imprisoned Verezzi; Ugo and Bernardo are described as "assasins"; instead of a monk, we are given the Inquisition itself; both blood and corpses are in evidence, the killing of Julia and the poisoning will do for "midnight murders," and the former provides us with the "bloody dagger"; Verezzi's brain fever is both "suspended animation" and an "insane frenzy"; Verezzi is buried alive when his cavern prison collapses; and, of course, the ubiquitous castle plays a part:

> He beheld a large and magnificent building, whose battlements rose above the lofty trees. It was built in the Gothic style of architecture, and appeared to be inhabited.
>
> The building reared its pointed casements loftily to the sky; their treillaged ornaments were silvered by the clear moonlight, to which the dark shades of the arches beneath formed a striking contrast. (13)

And another:

> In the center of an ampitheatre formed by mountains, surrounded by wood, stood the Castella di Laurentini, whose grey turrets and time-worn battlements overtopped the giants of the forest. (14)

In 1811 Shelley's second novel, St. Irvyne; or, the Rosicrucian: a Romance by "a Gentleman of the University of Oxford," was published. That Shelley was still brashly immature at this time is shown by a series of amusing letters that passed between him and his publisher, J. J. Stockdale. (15) However, the great improvement over his first novel is evident from the very beginning of St. Irvyne. Witness the really excellent opening scene:

> Red thunder clouds, borne on the wings of the midnight whirlwind, floated, at fits, athwart the crimson-colored orbit of the moon: the rising fierceness of the blast sighed through the stunted shrubs, which, bending before its violence, inclined towards the rocks whereon they grew: over the blackened expanse of heaven, at intervals, was spread the blue lightning's flash; it played upon the granite heights, and, with momentary brilliancy, disclosed the terrific scenery of the Alps, whose gigantic and misshapen summits, reddened by the transitory moonbeam, were crossed by black fleeting fragments of the tempest cloud. The rain, in big drops, began to descend, and the thunder-peals, with louder and more deafening crash, to shake the zenith, till the long protracted war, echoing from cavern to cavern, died in indistinct murmurs amidst the far-extended chain of mountains. In this scene, then, at this horrible and tempestuous hour, without one existent earthly being whom he might claim as friend, without one resource to which he might fly as an asylum from the horrors of neglect and poverty, stood Wolfstein. (16)

Can a more strikingly desolate scene and situation be imagined? After this there can be no doubt as to the Gothic character of the book. Wolfstein finally bows to the elements, falling down in a trance. He is rescued by a band of monks in a funeral procession. Bandits attack the group and despoil the monks. Wolfstein joins the bandits and later falls in love with their beautiful captive, Magalena. He effects her escape from her cavern prison by poisoning the bandit chieftain and joins her in freedom.

Wolfstein, however, is not wholly free from the past. Wherever he and Magalena go, they are dogged by the mysterious Ginotti, a strange and awe-inspiring being who had been a member of the robber band. Wolfstein and Magalena go to Genoa and enter into the city's gay social whirl. Their combined folly and jealousy soon occasions the suicide of an acquaintance and they are forced to flee.

They take refuge in a Gothic castle where they again encounter Ginotti. The latter now reveals his purpose to Wolfstein. It is implied that he is a member of the mysterious Rosicrucian Brotherhood. He tells Wolfstein that he has probed the darkest forces of nature and now possesses the secret of eternal life. He is weary of existence and wishes to pass his knowledge on to Wolfstein so that he himself may be released and allowed to die. He gives to Wolfstein a magic book containing the formula for the elixer of life and tells him to "seek at midnight, the ruined abbey near the castle of St. Irvyne, in France."

But the midnight incantation fails, and Magalena and Wolfstein die as strange powers are evoked. Ginotti receives just the opposite of what he wished for:

> "Yes," howled a voice superior to the bursting thunder peal; "yes, thou shalt have eternal life, Ginotti." On a sudden, Ginotti's frame mouldered to a gigantic skeleton, yet two pale and ghastly flames glared in his eyeless sockets. Blackened in convulsions, Wolfstein expired. ... Yes, endless existence is thine, Ginotti---a dateless and hopeless eternity of horror. (17)

Here again we have the mysterious and sinister lurker, whose motives are concealed from the reader too long. This story, however, does not suffer as much from this defect as did Zastrozzi. Ginotti's purpose is revealed sooner, and, up to the time of this revelation, the story is sustained fairly well by the action. The plot is complicated by the addition of a story-within-a-story; this concerns Eloise de St. Irvyne, Wolfstein's sister, but it is not particularly relevant to the proceedings sketched above.

There is no need to recapitulate all the obvious Gothic elements revealed by this summary of the plot, but it is interesting to note that they are used much more effectively and are more fully developed than they were in Zastrozzi. For example, compare the previously quoted opening scene and the following passage with those cited from the first novel:

> Over the dark expanse, the dim moon beaming, and faintly, with its sepulchral radiance, dispersing the thickness of the vapours which lowered around (for her waning horn, which hung low above the horizon, added but tenfold horror to the desolation of the scene); the night-raven pouring on the dull ear of evening her frightful screams, and breaking on the otherwise uninterrupted stillness,---were the melancholy greetings to their new habitation. (18)

From the passages quoted and from the instances of the use of Gothic ingredients noted, it is evident that both of Shelley's novels must be placed in the

upper reaches of the Gothic scale. Zastrozzi uses at least half of the listed devices, while St. Irvyne exhausts the whole catalog, with the exception of incest.

This placement, of course, does not take into consideration literary quality or even the effectiveness of the tales as producers of terror. Zastrozzi falls flat, with scarcely a shiver in all its pages. However, St. Irvyne has some passages that one can imagine the nineteenth century reader shuddering at. It is far more evocative of terror than The Castle of Otranto. The fact that this can be said about the imitative product of an eighteen year old youth shows to what extent the formula of the Gothic romance had expanded since Walpole's effort.

Neither novel would make one of today's mystery story addict's hackles rise. Yet crude as they are, both are worth reading---once. One is inclined to agree with Summers when he says, "I have never come across any [Gothic] novel, however feeble, however immature, which can be deemed such dreary and dead rubbish as are only too many of our modern trite and yawny novels." (19)

According to Railo, St. Irvyne has even had some influence upon the history of the Gothic novel. Speaking of Bulwer-Lytton's Zanoni, he says that he is inclined "to regard it as certain that, for many of its details, Zanoni has to thank Shelley's St. Irvyne whose Wolfstein and Ginotti reappear as Glyndon and Zanoni." (20) This view is at least logical, if not correct, for the plots of the two novels are extremely similar.

The present writer, inured to the horror tale, felt not a single chilled vertebra while reading Shelley's efforts. However, it must be confessed that he has since been beset with a haunting fear that Goldwyn or Zanuck will purchase the screen rights for them.

Notes

(1) Grant C. Knight, The Novel in English, New York, 1931, p. 77
(2) Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle, New York, 1927, p. v
(3) Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English Novel, vol. 5, London, 1934, p. 175
(4) Montague Summers, The Gothic Quest, London, no date, p. 37
(5) ibid., p. 38
(6) Baker, op. cit., p. 175
(7) Railo, op. cit., p. vi
(8) Summers, op. cit., p. 41
(9) Knight, op. cit., p. 79
(10) Richard Herne Shepherd, ed., The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, London, 1888, pp. 16-17 (vol. 1)
(11) ibid., p. 19
(12) ibid., p. 23
(13) ibid., p. 20
(14) ibid., p. 58
(15) Richard Herne Shepherd, ed., The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley, London, 1888, pp. 24-9 (vol. 1)
(16) Shepherd, The Prose Works, p. 115 (vol. 1)
(17) ibid., p. 219
(18) ibid., p. 181
(19) Summers, op. cit., p. 87
(20) Railo, op. cit., p. 210

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WHITE, Terence Hanbury (1906-)

Mistress Masham's Repose

New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946. 255pp. 21cm. $2.75.
Toronto: T. Thomas Allen, 1946. 255pp. 21cm. $3.00.
London: Jonathon Cape, 1947. 224pp. 19cm. 8/6.

Review: This book is unquestionably one of the most charmingly amusing stories which this reviewer has read in many a day! It is amusing in concept; amusing in style; amusing because of its excellent illustrations and end-papers, drawn cleverly by Fritz Eichenburg.

The principal character is a ten-year-old girl named Maria. She lives in an enormous, ruined, English castle, browbeaten by a very nasty vicar (her guardian) and her governess, but befriended by Mrs. Noakes (the cook) and the Professor, who dwells in a small cottage near-by that is crowded with first editions, yet is lacking in food and similar necessities.

In the center of a lake on the great, run-down estate there is a small island, where stands a temple called "Mistress Masham's Repose." No one has visited this island for generations, so one day when Miss Brown, the governess, has a sick headache, Maria decides to play pirate and invade its untouched shores. She thus becomes the first human being to discover that the island is inhabited by a race of Lilliputians!

She makes friends with the tiny people, and learns their history. While Gulliver brought back no captives when he was rescued, the captain of the vessel which picked him up, realizing the financial possibilities of exploitation, secretly returned to Lilliput and captured a group of the tiny creatures. These unfortunates he brought to England, trained, and prepared to make his fortune by exhibiting them at fairs, etc. But one night when the captain became drunk the Lilliputians escaped---and founded their colony on this tiny island. They had avoided discovery until Maria found their hiding place.

Mistress Masham's Repose swings through a series of delightful episodes to become tense when the Lilliputians and the Professor set out to rescue Maria from the old castle dungeons, where the governess and the vicar have incarcerated her; and there is a final crisis, when Miss Brown sets out to murder the girl to prevent the villainies of herself and the vicar from being discovered.

The characters which Mr. White has created for this tale are masterpieces of deft ingenuity. He has made his young heroine natural and human---and no angel by any means. The vicar is believably unpleasant, while Miss Brown is positively vicious. The cook is an amusing old soul---and her dog "Captain" a stroke of artistic genius. One of the most amusing passages of the whole book shows the old dog soliloquizing about his mistress---wondering if she has a soul, and goes to heaven as dogs do, and deciding it is worthwhile to keep his mistress as a pet, though she is something of a nuisance at times!

But best of all the author's characterizations is the old Professor. His cottage is crammed with moldering tomes---books are everywhere, most of them open at some place once of interest to their absent-minded owner. His search for a mislaid set of DuLange is amusing indeed---especially when, in despair at his inability to locate the volumes, the Professor sits down to ponder on the books themselves.

Smoothly written, the book's praiseworthy qualities are apparent on every page. Many fantasies have passed through this reviewer's hands, but few have approached the quality of Mistress Masham's Repose. It can be reread many times with pleasure, and must claim place among the very best of the genre.

---Thyril L. Ladd.

THE TARZAN THEME

by
Darrell C. Richardson

Many stories have been written about children being reared by animals by authors other than Edgar Rice Burroughs. That the public gives credence to this fascinating theme is proved by the ready belief given to news articles about a "gazelle boy" that circulated some months ago. Various animals have been used to help form an authentic background for such tales. In the myths surrounding the founding of Rome we read of Romulus and Remus, who were supposedly reared by a she-wolf. In Kipling's Jungle Book the boy Mowgli is also reared among wolves. And of course the young Tarzan of Burroughs was brought up by Kala, the mother ape, and learns to speak the language of these great anthropoids. While these are perhaps some of the most famous of their type, there are others which deserve attention as well.

One of the finest stories written on this theme is C.T.Stoneham's Kaspa the Lion Man, published in 1933 by Methuen of London. (It appeared in America under the title The Lion's Way, and was released as a film, King of the Jungle.)

The tale begins by telling of Eve Linton, who lives in a remote section of Africa with her uncle, Louden Grant. She loves the wild loneliness of the veld and the jungle. On one occasion, she explores the wilderness of Nyoka Mountain, where she finds a safari encamped, headed by Lucian Morley, a Canadian. And that night he tells her the story of Kaspa Starke, the Lion Man....

Christopher Starke and his wife were missionaries who were murdered by natives. Their little son, Kaspa, was lost in the bush. And incredible though it seemed, Kaspa was adopted by a lioness, and grew up to hunt with the lion pack.

He was discovered and recognized by a friend of his father, and later captured by an old Dutch hunter. Eventually he learned to speak English and adopted civilized ways. At this time he was six and a half feet tall, and perhaps the strongest-muscled and most splendid looking man in the world. He was kind and gentle, yet his thick hair and golden beard actually gave him the appearance of a maned lion.

Morley, a distant kinsman of Kaspa, tells Eve that Kaspa was presumably drowned at sea, but that Dogo, a huge, black-maned lion called the brother of Kaspa, made his home on the very mountain-top where they are now camping. Before Eve leaves Morley teaches her the "peace call," a sign that lions use on approaching a strange being. On her way back she actually meets Dogo, and by a combination of her uncanny knowledge of animals, intuitive perception, and some sort of telepathy is able to converse with him. She becomes his friend, and later hunts with him through the jungle.

De Costa, a renegade Portugese, writes Eve that her uncle has taken ill while visiting him, and is in need of her. Although she is suspicious, Eve heads nevertheless for De Costa's distant estate, taking Dogo with her. On the journey Kaspa the Lion Man suddenly appears! Eve learns that, had escaped drowning, and that he has renounced civilization, preferring to live in the jungle with his lion friends. Eve is borne to his retreat, and the two fall in love.

The balance of the novel deals with the capture of Eve by de Costa, her subsequent rescue, and the further intrigues of her captor, all involving the exploits of the lion man. Grant dies, and the book ends with Eve and Kaspa settling down on a huge African estate to a life of happiness far from the lights of civilization.

Of higher literary quality is Lord of The Leopards by F. A. M. Webster, published in London by Hutchinson in 1935. It is a remarkable tale---well written and with an authentic background. The author has travelled extensively in Africa, Egypt and India, and has a flair for portraying animal psychology well.

Twin sons, Hector and Lysander, are born to Janet and John Barrabal, who are missionaries in that section of the dark continent where the dreaded cult of the leopard men is found. During a widespread uprising of this cult the Barrabals and their mission station are wiped out. At the time of this massacre the twins happen to be away in the jungle in the care of Golden Lotus, a Chinese servant---and she, despite being surrounded by the leopard men, manages to save one of the twins and escape. Hector, however, is taken captive.

In the meantime, one of the men kills two leopard cubs in their cave. The leopardess, seeking for her young, trails the killer to the cult's stronghold and there finds little Hector, who snuggles up to her unafraid. Her savage mother heart goes out to this little bundle of life, and she carries him off and adopts him. Shortly afterwards the forces of authority crush the leopard cult, and find in their stronghold one of Hector's little red shoes. Not surprisingly, it is taken for granted that the boy is dead. Lysander, meanwhile, is adopted and sent to England to be educated.

Thus Hector grew up as a young leopard. At ten years of age he could swim like a seal and climb like a monkey. He was, moreover, as strong as a young gorilla and as fleet as a cheetah. He quickly learned to converse with the jungle animals, but of human speech he had none. Because of his intelligence he becomes king of that remote region, and lord of the leopards there.

The balance of this exciting tale concerns Hector's discovery of man, a second great uprising of the leopard cult, the eventual meeting of the brothers, Lysander's return to Africa where he takes up his parents' mission work, and various jungle wars, including Hector's declaration of war against the white men with his huge army of leopards. All of these, plus other equally intriguing episodes, make for a thrilling and dramatic climax.

Bob Byrd's Ka-Zar, King of Fang and Claw, published in 1937 by Wright and Brown of London, begins with a plane crash in the jungle. The survivors are John and Constance Rand and their son David. The mother soon dies of the injuries she has sustained, and the father is afterwards murdered by two German adventurers who have learned of his secret emerald mine.

David rescues a lion from quicksand and the two become friends. He learns to converse with the various denizens of the jungle. David (who becomes known as "Ka-Zar") chooses to remain in the jungle with his animal friends rather than return to civilization when the opportunity is offered him.

Orme Sackville's Jungle Goddess, printed in London by the Modern Publishing Company, deals with Miota, a sort of female Tarzan who was reared in the jungle by jackals. She is discovered by a safari that is lost in the inaccessible interior. The literary quality of this book is vastly inferior to the other titles reviewed here.

Jungle fantasies on the Tarzan theme seem to have a peculiar fascination for readers of fantasy. Perhaps the reason is that beneath the polished exterior of civilized man there still exists that primeval urge that seeks to carry him back to those prehistoric ancestors of the earth's dawn.

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Acknowledgement: The poem "Faunus Nocturnal" by L. Blackledge Lippmann, which appears on page 132 of this issue, is reprinted from the Book News Monthly magazine, in whose July, 1913 number it originally was published.

THE THRILL BOOK

by
William H. Evans

The Thrill Book magazine, one of the least known sources of fantasy and one which has prompted the wildest speculation and given rise to numerous rumors, was published by Street and Smith in 1919. It had a short career, lasting only sixteen issues, or eight months. A promising future was cut off when its publication was suspended by a printers' strike in November, 1919.

During its publication it seems to have had two joint editors; whether this situation held true during all sixteen numbers is unknown, however. These editors were Eugene A. Clancy and Harold Hersey, who edited, twelve years later, the two issues of the ill-fated Miracle, Science and Fantasy Stories.

The first volume (eight issues) appeared in a size about that of Time, on rough pulp paper saddle-stapled. Starting with volume two, the magazine reverted to the standard pulp size, and the number of pages increased from 64 to 160, comparing with Argosy issues of this period.

Contrary to most reports and impressions, The Thrill Book definitely was not an all-fantasy magazine such as Weird Tales or Amazing Stories, but a general action pulp similar to the Munsey twins and the other Street and Smith magazines of the period (which may be the reason it died in the strike: the older, well established periodicals in the chain would have first call on printing resources). It published some fantasy, true, but also generous portions of non-fantasy.

Because of this fact, as well as the general interest in the magazine, the publication of the following analytical review of each issue seems fitting.

March 1, 1919---vol. 1, no. 1

"Wolf of the Steppes" by Greye la Spina (cover story) (9pp)
A typical werewolf tale, laid in New York, with Russians as central characters. It is of good quality, of the type Weird Tales printed in 1926-30.

"Ivory Hunters" by Will Cage Carey (9pp)
A somewhat humorous story of adventure in the north.

"Lilith" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (probably Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"The Jeweled Ibis" by J. C. Kofoed (2-part serial) (11pp)
Somewhat fantastic adventures with a mysterious sect, supposedly descended from the ancient Egyptians, under the great pyramid. Sax Rohmer has treated this theme much better several times.

"The Man Who Met Himself" by Donovan Bayley (5pp)
A man's subconscious materializes as his duplicate---which leads to trouble. The story is somewhat humorous and reasonably fantastic.

"The Twisted Tapers"---'from the Russian of Larrovitch' (by Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"In the Shadows of Race" by J. Hampton Bishop (part 1 of 3) (9pp)
This tells of a race of huge African gorillas who have savages for slaves and are ruled by a white queen. They are stumbled on by explorers, one of whom falls in love with the woman. The expected trouble occurs, and the yarn is capped by an indecisive ending. It could appear in a Ziff-Davis pulp today.

March 15, 1919---vol. 1, no. 2

"The Web of Death" by Clare Douglas Stuart (cover story) (5pp)
Murder by spiders in an atmosphere of psychological horror; the tale is good, but the theme might have been developed better.

"Miladi" by Charles Kiproy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"A Hooting, Tooting Son of a Gun" by Howard Dwight Smiley (16pp)
A not overly humorous western.
"My Lovely" by Albert Owens (verse) (1p)
"In the Shadows of Race" by J. Hampton Bishop (part 2 of 3) (10pp)
"The Jeweled Ibis" by J. C. Kofoed (part 2 of 2) (10pp)
"The Broken Idol" by Ezra Putnam, pseud (Greye la Spina) (1/2p)
A short parable about one who destroys the gods of another without replacing another object of worship.

April 1, 1919---vol. 1, no. 3

"The Hank of Yarn" by Perley Poore Sheehan (6pp)
Winder is almost killed, and while he lies on the brink of death his spirit visits his family. While not up to Sheehan's usual standard, and certainly not comparing with his Munsey masterpieces, this is still a good story.
"Captain George Guynemer" by Harold Hersey (verse) (1p)
"Courage" by Andrew Soutar (7pp)
A mundane tale of high finance.
"Flowerlight" by Philip Kennedy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (1p) (verse)
"In the Shadows of Race" by J. Hampton Bishop (part 3 of 3) (7pp)
"The Clasp of Rank" by S. Carleton (7pp)
A so-so ghost story of the north.
"At the End of the Wires" by Athelstane Hicks (14pp)
A mystery-adventure yarn.
"The Living Dead"by Seymour Le Moyne, pseud (probably Harold Hersey) (1p)
About a mad painter and his hallucinations.
"The Death of Columbine" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

April 15, 1919---vol. 1, no. 4

"Down the Coast of Shadows" by Perley Poore Sheehan (12pp)
A much better Sheehan story about possession of a man by his dead brother.
"The Thing that Wept" by Charles Fulton Oursler (1p)
An undertaker's assistant is frightened---by a telephone.
"Profit by Loss" by Clarence L. Andrews (42pp)
Mysterious adventures on a transcontinental train; not fantasy.
"The Haunted House" by Harry Kemp (verse) (1p)
"The Hidden Emperor" by George C. Hull (cover story) (6pp)
Oriental intrigue.
"Alpheus Bings---Thrill Hound: 1. The Death's Head Mystery" by Roland Oliphant (2pp) A ghost-hoax, somewhat humorous, in verse.
"The King" by Vail Vernon (verse) (1p)
"Freedom" by Arnold Tyson, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

May 1, 1919---vol. 1, no. 5

"Down the Coast of Shadows" by Perley Poore Sheehan (part 2 of 2) (10pp)
"The Devil's Own" by Chester L. Saxby (part 1 of 2) (13pp)
Just a sea story.
"The Inefficient Ghost" by Ezra Putnam, pseud (Greye la Spina) (1/2p)
Another little storiette, more fantastic this time.
"The Dummy and the Ventriloquist" by Harold Hersey (verse) (1p)
"Life" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"The Stone Image" by Seabury Grandin Quinn (8pp)
A stone god comes to life and possesses a young woman; the result is a good, standard Weird Tales story. The real point of interest is that it introduces a certain Dr. Troubridge of a city which remains unnamed, yet which easily

could be that one which rivals Arkham for ghostly happenings. The clincher, though, is that the young victim had a cook, Nora McGinnis, who was frightened away, and who next turns up as the cook supreme of Dr. Trowbridge. This, then, is probably the very first of the de Grandin stories, the famous Jules being in the wings, waiting for his cue.

"The Battle" by Arnold Tyson, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"Alpheus Bings---Thrill Hound: 2. The Inanition Cure" by Ronald Oliphant (1p)
Verse---in praise of The Thrill Book.

"Nothing but Dust" by Frederick Booth (cover story) (8pp)
A mystery solved by the murderer's guilty conscience plus some stage setting.

"The One-Man Log Drive" by Raymond S. Spears (4pp)
A mundane logging tale.

May 15, 1919---vol. 1, no. 6

"Crawling Hands" by P. A. Connolly (part 1 of 2) (5pp)
A haunted room, featuring spirit hands. Rather good.

"After" by Charles Kiproy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"Magic in Manhattan" by Robert W. Sneddon (11pp)
Occult Hindu magic is found and lost, because the uses to which it is put are trivial---as is the story.

"The Devil's Own" by Chester L. Saxby (part 2 of 2) (cover story) (13pp)

"Marca" by Carl Buxton, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"Out of Our Hands' Reach" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"When Basset Forgot" by Harcourt Farmer (3pp)
A spider story of medium worth.

"From over the Border" by Greye la Spina (5pp)
A ghost story---that may be a hoax.

"Romance" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"The Rim of the World" by Duffield Osborne (4pp)
Medium grade fantasy about a ghostly moth.

"Alpheus Bings---Thrill Hound: 3. The Purple Tear Ray" by Roland Oliphant (1p)
This satire on rays, in verse, is of little worth.

June 1, 1919---vol. 1, no. 7

"Strasbourg Rose" by John R. Coryell (part 1 of 4) (16pp)
A rather good spy story of World War I.

"Crawling Hands" (part 2 of 2) (5pp)

"The Street without a Name" by Harold Hersey (cover story) (9pp)
Mystery in Chinatown.

"The Fatal Chord" by Harry C. Douglas (7pp)
Spies and mysterious music mixed reasonably well.

"Old Lovers" by Albert Owens (verse) (1p)

"Those Gray Streets" by Philip Kennedy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"The Haunted Landscape" by Greye La Spina (4pp)
A picture shows the true facts of a mysterious death. Quite good.

June 15, 1919---vol. 1, no. 8

"The Vengeance of Vishnu" by George C. Jenks (8pp)
A fair mystery complicated by an Oriental curse.

"Aglaia" by Arnold Tyson, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"The Unseen Seventh" by Sophie Louise Wenzel (4pp)
A ghost returns to kill his murderer. Good.

"The Strasbourg Rose" by John R. Coryell (part 2 of 4) (cover story) (15pp)

"Prayer" by Mary Carolyn Davies (verse) (1p)

"This Way Out" by Will Gage Carey (3pp) A sea story.

"The Sargasso Sea" by Chester L. Saxby (7pp)
A sea story with considerable overtones of weird atmosphere.
"Shafts of Light" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"The Borderland Bridge" by Charles T. Jordan (7pp)
An experiment in "soul sending" goes wrong. Quite interesting.

July 1, 1919---vol. 2, no. 1 (now 160pp, small size)

"Vanishing Gold" by Clarence L. Andrews (47pp)
A mystery story of gold mining
"The Opium Ship" by H. Bedford-Jones (part 1 of 4) (cover story) (20pp)
The usual swashbuckling adventures, this time with China Sea pirates.
"Strasbourg Rose" by John R. Coryell (part 3 of 4) (31pp)
"The Curtain" by Nina W. Putnam (verse) (1p)
"The Tenth Crisis" by L. J. Beeston (5pp)
An entertaining (but non-fantasy) account of how a thief met an unexpected event---and lost his life.
"The Dance" by Charles Kiproy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"The Bibulous Baby" by Tod Robbins (4pp)
A man, born 85years old physically, lives his life backwards. He tells his story, while tippling in his baby buggy, to a chance friend when he has only four weeks to live. This is one of the earliest examples of the use of this theme.
"The Seventh Glass" by J. U. Giesy (18pp)
A well-written spy tale.
"The Conqueror" by Robert W. Sneddon (4pp)
Madmen have strange hallucinations; here, they are those of a man who thinks he can conquer death personified. Quite unusual.
"When Ghosts Walked" by Christopher Bannister (11pp)
Two lovers commit suicide in a hotel dining-room. Their ghosts seem to return a year later, but the author provides a mundane explanation.

July 15, 1919---vol. 2, no. 2

"A Thousand Degrees below Zero" by Murray Leinster (38pp)
The author introduces a device which will remove all the heat from surrounding bodies, leaving them at a temperature of "-1000°" (an error caused partly by using -460°, the Fahrenheit absolute zero, as the Centigrade value and converting that to Fahrenheit). The inventor uses it to attack the United States, and is of course defeated in the end. This is true science-fiction by an old master who still contributes good stories to the field.
"The Mate" by May Froud Dickonson (4pp)
To cure his wife's fear of snakes, an Englishman in India kills a cobra and places its body in the dark of his wife's bedroom. During the evening he sends her there on a pretext; she meets the snake's live mate, who kills her. (Was this story reprinted in Weird Tales under another title or author?)
"The Opium Ship" by H. Bedford-Jones (part 2 of 4) (21pp)
"The Strasbourg Rose" by John R. Coryell (part 4 of 4) (27pp)
"The Lost Empire" by Frank Wall (part 1 of 2) (14pp)
A colony of descendents of the Pilgrims is discovered in the Sargasso Sea by an American, who falls in love with one of the girls there, escapes, and finally returns happily to civilization. An average story.
"The Ballad of the Living Dead" by Harry Kemp (verse) (1p)
"A Voice from Beyond" by Tod Robbins (2pp)
A ghost tells about the joke he played on his lazy nephew---making him work for nothing; it isn't particularly humorous.
"Tales of the Double Man: 1. The Double Man" by Clyde Broadwell (4pp)
A man who lives two lives---or is two people, if you will---in two places is introduced: one operates by day in New York, the other by night (during his

sleep) in Cape Town. This is the first of a series, stating the problem.

"The Whispering from the Ground" by Don Mark Lemon (3pp)
A confession is extracted from a murderer by a mysterious voice from the grave of his victim, which turns out to be a hoax.

"The Dead Book" by Harold Hersey (6pp)
An atmospheric tale about a mysterious book that brought death to readers.

"Back to Earth" by R. Ray Baker (5pp)
A drowning man's spirit leaves his body temporarily, but it returns and he recovers.

"The Poniard of Charlotte Corday" by Francois de Vallient (5pp)
The cursed dagger continues to wield its influence.

August 1, 1919---vol. 2, no. 3

"The Opium Ship" by H. Bedford-Jones (part 3 of 4) (14pp)

"The Lost Empire" by Frank Wall (part 2 of 2) (cover story) (16pp)

"The Unknown Revolution" by Denby Brixton (45pp)
Revolt and intrigue in Mexico.

"When Dead Lips Speak" by Anna Alice Chapin (10pp)
A device to let the dead speak---works!

"The Wax Doll" by Ezra Putnam, pseud (Greye la Spina) (8pp)
The ghost of a child comes back for its doll. Very good.

"The Crystal Ball" by James Cary Hawes (21pp)
A queer mystery that turns out to be a hoax.

"Hidden Pathways" by Albert Owens (1p) (verse)

"Tales of the Double Man: 2. Death by Duplicate" by Clyde Broadwell (8pp)
What happens when one of the two men with one personality dies.

"The Spider and the Fly" by Don Mark Lemon (3pp)
A good horror story about a woman who, after being bitten by a spider, takes on the attributes of a spider and finally kills her husband.

"The Lost Days" by Trainor Lansing (part 1 of 2) (17pp)
New York gains one, then two, days on the rest of the country, which leads to great confusion. There is no actual loss of time, but merely a psychological change. The explanation turns out to be a mad scientist, who poisoned the water supply with a rare chemical. The story is somewhat annoying, representing as it does a fine idea poorly handled.

August 15, 1919---vol. 2, no. 4

"The Heads of Cerberus" by Francis Stevens (part 1 of 5) (27pp) (cover story)
A strange dust in an ancient vial, known as "the Heads of Cerberus", sends several people into a strange, medieval world, out of space and time. They return to Philadelphia, in the future, a very strange place with an equally strange government that abhors the past. They return to the present after numerous adventures in this city. This novel, probably the best story ever published in The Thrill Book, has an indefinable, dream-like atmosphere in its writing that reminds me somewhat of Jurgen. Read it if ever you can!

"The Opium Ship" by H. Bedford-Jones (part 4 of 4) (12pp)

"The Lost Days" by Trainor Lansing (part 2 of 2) (16pp)

"An Ancient Pathway" by Freeman Harrison (verse) (1p)

"The Man from Thebes" by William Wallace Cook (61pp)
A mummified priest of ancient Thebes is revived in modern America. He possesses a marvellous cure-all that actually works, and falls in with a patent medicine crowd. Several people are after the secret, but the 'Frisco earthquake ends the intrigue, the priest disappearing. Very entertaining.

"Simple Flowers" by Charles Kiproy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"The Conquerers" by Tod Robbins (3pp)
The last composition of a famous composer is a funeral march that brings up visions of ancient Rome. Unusual.

"The Terror of the Rats" by Craydon Heath (part 1 of 2) (12pp)
Mysterious adventure in America and China
"Tales of the Double Man: 3. My Duo-Ego Sweetheart" by Clyde Broadwell (9pp)
Complications of love enter the life of the double man.
"Theophany" by Harry Kemp (verse) (1p)
"The Heart's Horizon" by Philip Kennedy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

September 1, 1919---vol. 2, no. 5

"The Heads of Cerberus" by Francis Stevens (part 2 of 5) (16pp)
"The Terror of the Rats" (part 2 of 2) (17pp)
"The Silver Menace" by Murray Leinster (part 1 of 2) (17pp)
A sequel to "1000 Degrees Below Zero," with the same central characters. A little silver animacule covers the oceans and encroaches on the land, imperilling the world, until at last a remedy is found. A bit dated, but readable.
"Cobra Girl" by Rothvin Wallace (33pp)
A mediocre tale of adventure in India, with a white girl controlling snakes in a native temple; the hero rescues her in the usual fashion.
"When Wires Are Down" by Lillian Beynon Thomas (11pp)
This ghost story is of the usual sort, but it has good atmosphere.
"Fragments" by Tod Robbins (2pp)
A strange little plotless atmospheric piece.
"Life's Last Song" by Arnold Tyson, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"Unexpected" by Junius B. Smith (5pp)
A plot to bilk the state of money for unjust impris.onment backfires.
"Burnt Bridges" by Clarence L. Andrews (8pp)
Aviation thrills and chases---in a dying man's brain during his last few seconds.
"A Mystery Downstairs" by Francisco Curtis (9pp)
A corpse in the morgue comes to life---apparently. So-so.
"Tales of the Double Man: 4. Disentombed to Wed" by Clyde Broadwell (8pp)
Events become still more complex, with one of the two egos recalled to life.
"Among the Stars" by Albert Owens (verse) (1p)
"Gifts" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"The Kiss of the Silver Flask" by Evangeline Weir (7pp)
A so-so detective story.
"Mortier's Duel" by Jean Joseph-Renaud (3pp)
A duel with a ghost crouching on the sidelines.
"Green Eye" by Augustine Lurdy (9pp)
The story of a man who is dominated, almost hypnotized, by his aunt. Worth reading.
"The Fear" by Carleton W. Kendall (7pp)
A very unusual tale of a man suffering from a malady that attacks the sense organs.
"Cut of the Night" by Philip Kennedy, pseud (Harold Hersey)(verse)(1p)

September 15, 1919---vol. 2, no. 6

"The Red Lure" by Frank L. Packard (47pp)
Adventures in Borneo---and an immense ruby. Of average quality, with well-kept suspense.
"The Heads of Cerberus" by Francis Stevens (part 3 of 5) (23pp)
"The Silver Menace" by Murray Leinster (part 2 of 2) (16pp)
"Undying Hatred" by Tod Robbins (4pp)
A ghost story of revenge. Above average.
"The Temple" by Alphonse de la Ferte (1p)
A prose poem.
"The House of the Nightmare" by Edward Lucas White (6pp)
A haunted house with ghosts. Good, despite its common plot.
"The Love that Stirs Me So" by Carl Buxton, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

"The Gift Wife" by Rupert Hughes (part 1 of 4) (cover story) (35pp)
Adventure in the Near East, with plenty of Oriental intrigue and harems.
"To Spend with Ease" by Charles Kiproy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"Let Them Tip Tables" by Harry Kemp (verse) (1p)
"The Case of the Man Blind" by T. E. Transeau (7pp)
A ghost returns to murder, leaving various relics---but it's only a hoax.
"A Ballade of the Sea" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"Tales of the Double Man: 5. The Itching Link of Destinty" by Clyde Broadwell(7pp)
The end of the series, as an operation clears up the trouble.
"Dissonance" by Clark Ashton Smith (verse) (1p)
"Filbert's Grand Final" by Bernard Gilber Priestley (7pp)
A humorous rube in baseball.
"Living Memories" by Carl Buxton, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)

October 1, 1919---vol. 3, no. 1

"Mr. Shen of Shensi" by H. Bedford-Jones (cover story) (25pp)
A Chinese scientist, armed with a "black-ray" of invisibility and some Chinese occult secrets, comes to America to stir up a red revolt. He is finally foiled. This semi-science-fiction tale was reprinted from All-Story, August 18, 1917.
"The Gift Wife" by Rupert Hughes (part 2 of 4) (20pp)
"The Heads of Cerberus" by Francis Stevens (part 4 of 5)
"Recoiling Sparks" by Roy W. Hinds (15pp)
A madman who is interested in electric chairs.
"Such Beauty" by Roy Le Moyne, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"Between Two Worlds" by Ada Louvie Evans (8pp)
A werewolf story of the North that is no better than average.
"A Thousand Miles" by Charles Kiproy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"Love's Silence" by Arnold Tyson, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"An Eccentric" by Roy Leslie (3pp)
An eerie story of a madman who imagines he has killed his brother.
"Dim Unknown" by Carl Buxton, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"Step and a Half" by Harry Golden (22pp)
A good western story---told by a madman!
"Ghosts of Chaacmol" by Anthony J. Lorenz (7pp)
A madman in Maya ruins acts like a ghost.
"One Like Yourself" by Alphonse de la Ferte (verse) (1p)
"The Distant Stars" by Francois de Vallient (verse) (1p)
"Beyond a Single Day" by Philip Kennedy, pseud (Harold Hersey) (verse) (1p)
"The Mouse and the Cheese" by Will H. Greenfield (4pp)
The story of a mean little crime.
"The Perfect Melody" by Newton A. Fuessle (6pp)
Adventure in the north.
"Violets?" by Harold de Polo (1p)
A dying woman wants to see her violets---and the nurse smells them.
"Words that Came Alive" by Mary Caroline Davies (4pp)
How a poet is driven to dispair by words he has written. Good.
"Crimson Flowers" by Tod Robbins (1p)
Madness in a fragment.
"At the Hands of the Master" by Everett McNeil (12pp)
An Indian mystic brings about possession of one body by the ego of another at a distance. A very much out of the ordinary tale.
"The Escape" by Mordaunt Hall (8pp)
There is wonderful atmosphere in this account of murder in a Paris cafe.
"The Song from the Dead" by Pearl Bragg (1p)
A musician, haunted by the ghost of his mad wife, goes insane. Poor.

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"The Heads of Cerberus" (part 5 of 5) (21pp)
"Juju" by Murray Leinster (cover story) (42pp)
Interesting west African adventures with natives and gorillas.
"The Ultimate Ingredient" by Greye la Spina (11pp)
A typical mad scientist tale about invisibility brought about by a secret salve. Trying to discover one that will reverse the process, the scientist drainshis sister and secretary of blood.
"Concerning the Pithecanthropus Erectus" by W. B. Horner (verse) (1p)
"Amarstite" by Ralph Roeder (5pp)
A method for coating humans with flexible steel is discovered and used in a South American revolution, which loses.
"The Gift Wife" by Rupert Hughes (part 3 of 4) (26pp)
"Like Princess" by Eugene A. Clancy (7pp)
A semi-humorous New York tugboat story.
"The Mystery of the Timber Tract" by Francis Metcalfe (9pp)
A haunted forest---and a madman
"A Ballade of Morgan" by William Van Wyck (verse) (1p)
"Figure Nine" by Horatio Winslow (6pp)
Dull tale of hallucinations in the mind of a little bookeeper.
"A Recruit for the Lambs" by L. R. Ridge (4pp)
Adventure in the Phillipines.
"Hands Invisible" by William H. Kofoed (21pp)
Mystery in South American revolutions; the invisible man isn't really invisible.

In the above number it was announced that the magazine would become a monthly with the next issue, to be labelled December. In addition to the conclusion of "The Gift Wife" the following stories, among others, were said to be scheduled for appearance:

"For Art's Sake" by Tod Robbins (2-part serial)
"Impulse" by Francis Stevens
"Gifts of Tsin Loe" by Leslie Burton Blades
"John Jones 1748-1788" by Reba R. Cornell
"Medusa's Venom" by H. Bedford Jones

This issue never appeared. Whether any of the stories listed above ever were published in other Street and Smith magazines I do not know; it may be possible to trace some of them to Top-Notch, Popular, or other magazines of the chain that occasionally published fantasy. Since I am undertaking a survey of these magazines, I may find them. If anyone else has information on them, or sees any errors in this list, I would greatly appreciate their contacting me.

---oOo---

Open House---concluded from page 146

thesis are predominant in the whole mood of the book regardless of how many extraneous currents flow through it also. In spite of the sketchy descriptions of the machine used, there is really no attempt at reasonable or logical explanation at the end. The denoument is brought about by blind circumstance; the outside powers are victorious, and there is no mealy-mouthed attempt to turn the whole off as a hoax or a dream. One of the cardinal principles of the detective story is that it have a logical explanation---even if only in psychological terms. Supernatural "touches" must be laboriously explained away in the last chapter.

Detection and processes of logical deduction are always of secondary importance in The Edge of Running Water; and events of apparent dramatic importance (as Elora Marcy's death) are always keyed to presage the grim finale.

MOORE, Ward

Greener Than You Think

New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1947. 358pp. 21.5 cm. $3.50.

Review: When Albert Weener sprayed the Metamorphizer on an unkempt, half-dead, California lawn I doubt if he looked beyond the five dollars he received for the work. Probably Josephine Spencer Francis, the chemist who invented the spray, looked little further ahead than he. But the Metamorphizer's action very soon made them look. It made everyone else look, too. For the dried-up devil grass promptly came to life---and grew. It grew with terrific speed, attaining a lush height that turned back scythes, power-mowers, weed-burners and explosives that tried to curb it. Worse, the grass spread---while so far as Miss Francis knew, there was no way to stop it.

Greener Than You Think, then, is a story of mankind's battle with the grass, as chronicled by Albert Weener. Before the public realizes the danger of the situation devil grass thirty feet high waves over most of Los Angeles. Thanks to the new fertility provided by the Metamorphizer, it spreads equally well over sand, concrete and river barriers. Then it is discovered that common salt, long since known as a garden weed-killer, can be used to combat the menace. All available salt is shipped westward and dumped in a vast band around the rampant vegetation. The grass reaches the barrier---and stops.

But the respite is brief. New patches spring up outside the salt band and flow into a green tide that sweeps on toward the Rockies. The atomic bomb, tried as a last resort, succeeds only in creating a mutant form of the grass which has good resistance to salt water and tufted, dandelion-like seeds that winds blow everywhere. As a final resort fifty miles of Central America between the Panama Canal and Lake Nicaragua is blown up. Gigantic fans are then set in operation on the southern shore to blow chance seedlings back to abandoned North America.

Through these scenes of world destruction---with mob violence, national economic collapse, revolution and a Russo-American war tossed in as counter-irritants---move Mr. Moore's characters. They are a strange lot, memorable more for surface idiosyncrasies than authentic psychological depth (which is for the most part lacking). Most interesting is William Rufus Le ffaçase, vehement newspaper editor with a better assortment of florid invective at his tongue's end than any one of his employees plus an unabridged Webster could assemble in a week. He is certainly human enough. But the author's attempt to foist on us Josephine Spencer Francis---barrel-shaped, sloppily dressed, with the sex appeal of a hippopotamus---as a chemist with an intelligent social outlook gets off to a rather ragged start in book one. There the reader learns that she has let her invention be used at random with full knowledge that she has no way to counteract its effects. Admittedly, had she done otherwise Greener Than You Think might never have been written. Still, such action does not make one very sympathetic with her sensible (if unoriginal) actions in books two to six. Reporter Jacson Gootes is an irritating bore. I was grateful to see him brought to a merciful end early in the novel. General Thario's alcoholic capacity makes him mildy interesting, but his son George would have made a better religious fanatic than a composer. Even Albert Weener himself does not emerge in clear perspective. By his writings one can see him, albeit dimly, as a sort of pulp magazine Pecksniff, grasping or fawning as the furthering of his own interests dictates. But neither he nor the majority of the other characters have been stamped from a sharp enough die to wear well.

Into all this Mr. Moore has stirred a liberal quantity of satire and some word-twisting tricks a little above the Ackermanese level. The satire varies from broad and slapstick to the subtly fine, but all of it is unfortunately

spread too thin to be more than momentarily effective. By taking a crack at almost everything instead of reserving telling blows for a few major subjects, the author defeats his own aim. The grammar-flaunting consists of omitting apostrophes in contractions part of the time, and habitually running together small words to make larger ones, as "financecompany," "onceandforall," "dogsbody," and so on. Le ffaçeso's own remarks on "...futile, lecherous pawings at the chastity of the English language..." come to mind at the sight of such purposeless, adolescent smart-Aleckisms, but perhaps, after all, they are too strong for the occasion. A little too strong, anyway.

Barring those lapses, the prose flows along with a smooth vigor made light by welcome touches of humor. There are some descriptions of the advancing grass that are extremely well done. Among the most vivid is the account of its island-hopping progress through Micronesia to the Asian mainland. Circumstantial narration like this keeps the menace from ever seeming unreal.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Moore is familiar with pulp fantasy. There are side references on pages 33 and 306; and the advent of the grass brings forth this lengthier passage (page 81):

> Contributors to scientifiction magazines burst bloodvessels happily turning out ten thousand words a day describing their heroes' adventures amid the red grass of Mars or the blue grass of Venus after they had singlehanded---with the help of a deathray and the heroine's pure love---conquered the green grass of Tellus.

Probably because of this familiarity he tastefully avoids many of the clichés common to the field. Yet even so, I rather think I prefer "The Ivy War" to Greener Than You Think. Read the book yourself, however; there's a fair chance you might disagree with me.

---Charles Peter Brady.

Faunus Nocturnal

by
L. Blackledge Lippmann

Lonely, I roamed through the aisles of the shade-haunted woodland,
All was at rest, save the stream with its eddies and swirls;
Pale shone the moon, and the cob-webs and dew-drops around me
Wove a weird tissue of delicate laces and pearls.

Hushed was the wood. In the tree-tops no longer the breezes
Woke the soft leaves into tremulous ripples and swells.
Heavy the air, with the fragrance of fern-hidden flowers,
Sleeping, not dead, in the midst of enchantment and spells.

Then, without seeing, I felt the swift touch of a Presence,
Stirring the earth with a magical wand of release,
Wrapping my spirit in soft, indescribable cadence,
Such as pipes one time played on the hillsides of Greece.

I, who was lonely, at last shall be lonely no longer,
I have returned to the place where my spirit began.
Old gods have found me, and I have been claimed as a brother,
Blessed in the night with the mystical presence of Pan.

TIPS ON TALES

by
John C. Nitka

Alfred H. Bill's Wolf in the Garden (1931): A stranger comes to a sleepy little hamlet on the banks of the Hudson in the early 1800's, and shortly after his arrival the village miser is found dead, his throat gashed open horribly. The stranger buys the miser's home and settles himself there, hiding the will which he found hidden in the house. This will names a protege of the dead man as beneficiary of his entire estate and possessions. This young fellow promptly begins searching for the will, which he is certain exists. Meanwhile other people are found dead with similarly torn throats, and the young man himself is gashed in the arm by a wolf and makes a miraculous escape. The wolf is eventually run down and shot, whereupon the animal body disappears and becomes the stranger's. The will is found, and all ends happily. The plot, as can be seen from this resume, is pretty much an over-the-river melodrama, but the narration is well done, and there are moments of terrific suspense which make the novel well worth owning.

Maris Herrington Billings' An Egyptian Love Spell (1914): A young man buys a strange ring in a curio shop. As he examines it in his home he suddenly finds himself in alien surroundings. He is Magon, a royal messenger of ancient Assyria! He and some others have just returned from Egypt, and the spoils are being divided. To Magon's lot falls a Jewish dancing-girl, with whom he is much taken. Upon getting back to Babylon he tries to persuade her to fly with him, but is interrupted by Semiramis, the queen, who in turn desires Magon. But Magon, fearing life on an uneasy throne, wants no part of her. She retaliates by having his paramour done away with, and King Ninus, who all this time has been interested in the girl himself, accuses Magon of the deed and dooms him to death. Whereupon the queen spirits Magon away---and at this point the young man wakes up to find himself in the present, in a theater, the spell of the ring somehow dissipated. He immediately becomes infatuated with a girl in the theater, one whom the author (by a long stretch of coincidence) makes a reincarnation of the Egyptian Jewess. He meets her, and all ends in the approved fashion. This novel, in my opinion, could not very well be underrated.

Robert Lewis Taylor's Adrift in a Boneyard (1947): A small group of people are waylaid by an unexpected storm while motoring, and after setting out when it has abated suddenly discover roads littered with cars and manned by corpses. No indication as to cause of death is given, but their very existence is proof that almost all of the world's population---human population, that is, for animals seem unaffected---is dead. The group finds a place to live---a haven prepared by a crank who believed the end of the world was imminent---where they remain until it is fired through a prank of one of them. They locate a plane, fly to Europe, and discover there two more survivors, a girl and her grandfather. The grandfather dies, and the party takes the girl back to America with them. All concerned then settle down in Florida for the rest of their lives. After reading many tales of world destruction this one, with its satiric undertone, somehow didn't jell at all. Its humor was the only feature that induced me to keep on reading it to the end. For the reader who does not peruse fantasy regularly, it should be passably better, of course---but to the old-time collector, especially one who has become a little choosy about his fantasy diet, it cannot be recommended. Better novels of this theme than Mr. Taylor's have appeared before, and will again.

THE IMMORTAL STORM

A History of Science-Fiction Fandom

by
Sam Moskowitz

(part 9)

XXV
The Wollheim-Moskowitz Feud

Despite all disrupting forces, fandom was slowly progressing, holding fast to its gains as it achieved them. Let us examine the panorama of the 1938 fan field spread before us. There is a weekly newspaper, an amateur press group, a manuscript bureau. There are several regular monthly fan magazines and a half dozen regular bi-monthly periodicals. A national convention is being planned. Two large SFL chapters hold meetings at opposite ends of the country. Hitherto lethargic groups have been stirred into activity. The field is vital, alive, progressing; and then---conflict. Not merely a petty argument or heated debate, but a destructive feud that ran rampant and left shattered plans, broken friendships and dead inertia in its wake.

We have read of the Philadelphia convention and its introduction of Michelism. Accounts of this convention were written by various fans, among them Sykora, Wollheim and Moskowitz. Sykora's account, while it gave excellent coverage to the affair, naturally did not go out of its way to shower bouquets on the Michel-Wollheim speech. Wollheim's account covered the convention poorly, three-quarters of its bulk being quotations from or comments on the "Mutation or Death" talk. Moskowitz's account, titled "Convention Happenings," was published in the January 14, 1939 issue of The Science-Fiction Fan under the pseudonym of William M. Weiner. (Moskowitz had employed a nom de plume in order to facilitate writing of his own actions as well as others'.) "Convention Happenings" had this to say of the "Mutation or Death" speech:

> Then the bombshell of the evening was perpetrated by Donald A. Wollheim who expressed some very good arguments as written by John B. Michel but degenerated these arguments into a political issue. For over an hour pros and cons were rung on the subject by D. A. Kyle, J. Pearlman, J. B. Michel, D. A. Wollheim and L. Burg who were apparently talking about the possibilities of a world state. Mr. Eshbach squelched the discussion very effectively by proposing that a motion be made that the convention be adjourned. He came, he said, to listen to a science-fiction discussion and not a pseudo-political argument. The motion was carried and the meeting was called to an end.

This account was referred to by Newe-Letter editor Richard Wilson as "the first unbiased views of the Third Eastern Science Fiction Convention."

But Wollheim, in the next (January 21, 1938) issue of The Science-Fiction Fan, dubbed it "the most innaccurate piece of reporting" he had ever seen:

> There was not a single paragraph without at least one error, and I may add few sentences likewise. The most outrageous misreporting was the remarks about the final part of the con-

> vention which is almost 100% wrong. But without essaying the arduous task of pointing out all the errors, I will merely sum up by saying that the Weiner-Moskowitz account is final and conclusive proof of the utter stupidity of a large portion of the so-called fans. The speech made by Michel hit deep into those shallow fans, which is probably why they refrain from giving any account of the actual issues of Michel's speech. ... The account given by Moskowitz which ignores all the intellectual aspects of the convention for the purely inane and frivolous, gives perfect proof.

Back in Newark Moskowitz was in a quandry on reading these words. His "Convention Happenings" had been written in naive sincerity. He had had no axe to grind. Michel's statements had not "hit deep" into him---rather, he had been interminably bored. He had told the truth as he saw it, with no intention of antagonizing Wollheim or anyone else. He was aware of Wollheim's tendency to go to extremes even in supposedly mild critical articles. And, knowing his critic's past record of successful feuds, he had no particular desire to become embroiled with Wollheim. But---what did others think? In Moskowitz's mind the situation boiled down to this factor: Had fans reached the point where they too regarded Wollheim's attacks as meaningless outbursts of temper, or would lack of reply to this new assault cause him to lose face in their eyes?

Louis Kuslan of Connecticut answered the question when in a letter to Moskowitz he asked, "What are you going to do about Wollheim's attack in the last Fan?" This was the convincer. If Kuslan, at that time a very neutrally inclined fan, felt that action should be taken, then the entire fan field probably felt the same way.

In supplying additional motive for Moskowitz's decision to feud with this opponent, one must take into consideration his admitted initial dislike for the man, the earlier argument over the Conover-Stickney dispute, and, even more important, a visit by Wollheim, Pohl and Michel to the Moskowitz home shortly before the convention. At this meeting Wollheim stated that he was able, by the proper application of psychology, to "drive any fan from the field." He alluded with satisfaction to the George Gordon Clark incident. When Moskowitz attempted to change the subject it was reiterated with an emphasis that he took to mean "You'd better be a good little fan---or else!" And Moskowitz then and there determined that he would never be thus driven from the field. Lastly, in one of his "Fanfarade" columns, Wollheim had written that Moskowitz had ambitions of becoming a "fan hack," and that "four out of five" of the articles he wrote were rejected. Here he touched a point of extreme sensitivity, for Moskowitz was extremely proud of his writings, written as they were sheerly as a labor of love, and given to fan editors in urgent need of material. The falseness of this attack was unforgiveable.

Wollheim probably did not expect much of a reply from Moskowitz. And if he did not, he was doubtless unprepared for the "Reply to Donald A. Wollheim," which appeared in the February, 1938 Science Fiction Fan:

> "Convention Happenings" was elaborately checked after Wollheim saw fit to devote an entire page to slamming it. Errors were found---two or three. The major one consisted of stating that Pohl and Dockweiler accompanied Wollheim to a nearby automat: Correction---Wollheim proceeded to the automat...and Pohl and Dockweiler went to the home of Baltadonis. ... The other errors consisted of the heinous crime of exaggerating a point or two for the sake of humor.

> Wollheim's "Fanfarade" has since its inception been notorious for inaccurate statements and general fallacy. To name all such would be an exhausting task, but the writer is concerned with one involving himself. In the October, 1937 issue of the Fan, Wollheim stated as an unalterable fact that Sam Moskowitz gets four out of five articles rejected. I challenge him to produce even one proof of this statement with the signature of the editor. It goes without saying that he cannot.

Fandom was rocked by this unexpected resistance, and the unexpected occurred: opinion rallied to Moskowitz's side. Not unexpectedly, Wollheim's cutting comments and sharp criticisms in the past had stored up for him much resentment. Speer spurred Moskowitz on with the comment that his reply to Wollheim had been "well taken." And typical of the attitude among the younger clique of fans in which Moskowitz had become prominent was that of Robert A. Madle, who remarked in a letter: "Three cheers for Sam Moskowitz! He has really started the ball rolling---and I'm quite sure some fans are going to side with him. He has the sympathy of the Philadelphia fans, I know. DAW says what he pleases in his columns, and many of the readers think he is telling the truth."

Still, it was some time before the moral support of friends was transposed into action. And in the meantime Moskowitz desperately matched blows with a more experienced opponent. To the casual onlooker the odds seemed greatly in Wollheim's favor. He was six years older than Moskowitz. He had a better education and financial background. He was the victorious veteran of a number of fan feuds. He had a loyal circle of friends willing to follow his lead. And he was the top fan of the field.

Some time previously Moskowitz had initiated in The Science Fiction Fan a regular feature titled "As Others See Us." In this column, under the pseudonym of Fred Wollenover, he gave humorous resumes of other fans' characteristics. The subject of one of these write-ups was Frederick Pohl. Moskowitz alluded to Pohl's use of many pen-names; his habit of signing other fans' names in autograph books; his alleged inebriety; and so on. Wollheim, upon seeing these things, promptly mailed a protest to Wiggins, demanding that the real name of the "culprit" writing "As Others See Us" be revealed, and saying further that

> There are a number of very juvenile irresponsibles infesting science-fiction these months, who know nothing of the tradition of stf, nor of the ethics of writing and publishing. Their childish and wild antics are becoming a constant nuisance, and you as an editor will do well to keep an eye on them.

The dual nature of Wollheim's attack now led Moskowitz to believe that plans had been laid to drive him out of fandom. He felt, perhaps erroneously, that Wollheim was worried about his rising popularity. So when Wiggins forwarded to him a letter from Pohl expressing Pohl's suspicions that Moskowitz was Wollenover and threatening to sue Wiggins for libel, he felt that it would strengthen his position to have some one else revealed as the author of "As Others See Us." Alex Osheroff agreed to accept the "blame." And in a coached reply to critics he expressed amazement that Wollheim and Pohl should object to a column that was intended merely to provide a little "light entertainment for fans." He pointed out that Pohl was the only subject yet to take offense. He reminded his critics that Wollheim's past statements in "Arcturus," under the Willy-the-Wisp byline, had been far more malicious than anything in "As Others See Us," and that Wollheim had not revealed his identity until more than a year after he had dropped the column. In answer to Pohl's threatened suit he said, "I will not retract one

statement that I have made!" (And Pohl, as might be guessed, never made good his threatened legal action.)

The fans in general, it might be noted, were enthusiastic over the "As Others See Us" column, and Pohl was generally regarded as a "sore-head." Speer, Gillespie, Kuslan, Taurasi and Madle were among those who went on record as favoring it and denouncing its critics.

At this point Wiggins informed Moskowitz that both Wollheim and Lowndes had sent him long rebuttals of the "Reply to Wollheim." Moskowitz was startled to learn that Lowndes also had taken up the cudgel against him since he had had virtually no associations with the man save the Science Fiction Critic episode already mentioned (in chapter XX). He realized that his opposition was rallying and that, given a little time, he might well be smothered by its very volume. So he induced Wiggins to drop the feud in the Fan (although it was tremendously interesting to readers), hoping that Wollheim would find difficulty carrying on outside its pages. And when the editorial of the March, 1938 issue carried the statement "Inasmuch as it seems to be the combined opinions of all fan readers that this magazine should not become the arena for fan squabblings, no more of the Moskowitz-DAW-Pohl affair will be run" it meant that in his series of exchanges with Wollheim Moskowitz had taken the first round.

But this small victory was short-lived, for Wollheim, veteran campaigner that he was, mimeographed a four-page rebuttal himself, and mailed copies of it to Wiggins to be distributed with the Fan. Technically the material was not "in" the magazine, and Wiggins could supply eager readers with sidelights on the latest "feudings" without breaking his promise to Moskowitz. It was stretching principles a bit, but it worked.

In this "In Answer to Sam Moskowitz" Wollheim swung into the style that had crushed opponent after opponent in the past. He termed Moskowitz's reply "a thoroughly vicious article," and denied provoking cause for another "hymn of hate" campaign, saying:

> It is true that, along with many of the most progressive and intelligent fans, I have joined in an effort to raise science-fiction from being merely a childish puerile hobby to being an active force towards the realization of those things that science-fiction has always believed. In the course of this work it becomes necessary to expose such juvenility and puerility as raises its head. Since Mr. Moskowitz is one of the foremost advocates of childishness in the field today, he was one of the first to get his little tootsies tread on....

Wollheim them went on to list those portions of "Convention Happenings" which he considered false and misleading. This took up the bulk of the leaflet. He revealed that the erroneous information concerning fan magazine rejections had been given him by William Miller. The original attack on "the utter stupidity of a large portion of the so-called fans" was repeated. Moskowitz was accused of mud-slinging to evade the issue, and of being a "contemptible scoundrel" for writing the "As Others See Us" column under a pseudonym. Wollheim then went out of his way to drag poor, oft-maligned Will Sykora into the argument (on the excuse that Moskowitz had praised him in one of his columns), and spent a long paragraph rehashing the ISA fiasco. (This, of course, was in line with his tendency to harry a defeated foeman.) He concluded with this flattering play for popular support:

> I wish to again warn all intelligent and understanding fans, those who really think that science-fiction can be a force which will help the world, even a little bit, toward a brighter future, against those shallow minded ado-

> lescents who dabble in "fan activities" and find it a source of self-glorification. If science-fiction is ever to become such a force, these pseudo-fans must be kept down.

Probably Wollheim and his followers now felt that Moskowitz was completely squelched. The opinion of fans at large, however, was somewhat different. For when Wollheim attacked "shallow minded adolescents" and "pseudo-fans who must be kept down" he was attacking every one of them as surely as he was attacking Moskowitz, for the rank and file was little better or worse than he with respect to methods, motives or activities in the field. And Moskowitz's philosophy of fandom seemed to appeal to them more strongly than did politically-based Michelism. The average fan preferred to remain "intellectually bankrupt" and enjoy fandom about him rather than set off on a quixotic crusade, however inspiring the visions of its goal might be. Thus when Moskowitz prepared a second reply (entitled "Ho-Hum, or the Further Enlightening of Wollheim") it was evident that he would not wilt under a barrage of words, and material support for his stand was not long in appearing.

In this second reply he inquired why Wollheim bothered to associate with "us chillun." "Why not desert this field 'dead of intellectual bankruptcy' for fields of greater and finer intellect?" He contended that Wollheim had never benefited the field up to that time (which was somewhat exaggerated), but had been a destructive influence in driving many members from it (which was not). One by one he dealt with the "errors" Wollheim had pointed out in "Convention Happenings," and refused to concede a single one, referring interested parties to eye-witnesses for support. Most of the points involved were indeed trivial, and it became clear that Moskowitz's regarding them as excuses for an attack against him was by no means illogical.

> 'y account of the speech was given as I saw it. That is most certainly my right and obviously the reason for Wollheim's attack. What does DAW expect me to do, make a good lively account of a convention dead and uninteresting by reprinting a communistic speech that some way found itself away from its Astor Park soap box? Michel makes no bones over the fact that he is a communist, and his speech was without a trace of a doubt an attempt to get new converts....

The end of the second round saw neither opponent decisively beaten, but what started as a feud was beginning to shape into a veritable fan war, with fans rapidly choosing sides and priming for the encounters that it could be seen were soon to take place. More, the tide of battle was shifting gradually from an attack on Wollheim to one upon Michelism, from the time of the convention the basic cause of all the squabbling. And in his attempt to chastise Moskowitz for his disregard for Michelism, Wollheim was creating the nucleus of an active resistance against the movement, where little had originally existed.

Wollheim's next move was in a totally different quarter. In his FAPA publication The FAPA Fan he printed an article titled "Manuscript Bureau." Here he urged members to recognize the necessity of a centralized manuscript bureau in the association, citing other amateur journalistic groups where such bureaus had proved of genuine worth. Now, the nearest thing to this that had so far appeared in fandom was the Moskowitz Manuscript Bureau. This, however, functioned only with respect to subscription (non-FAPA) journals, and its stock---in a time when such submissions were at a premium---could scarcely be stretched to cover fan periodicals in FAPA as well as out. And if it were diverted to FAPA exclusively Moskowitz would lose the "pull" he had gained from the editors that he was already supplying. Wollheim, of course, knew these facts. He then announced

in his article that Moskowitz, the only one in fandom with experience along such lines, was the logical choice to head such a FAPA bureau. He further inferred that Moskowitz would be double-crossing his friends should he refuse the post. Moskowitz realized immediately that he had been put in a position where, regardless of his decision, he would surely displease some group of fans.

His reply was to circulate in FAPA an open letter, in which he agreed to accept the post if offered him, but only upon acceptance of three conditions:

1.) That I am not made the object of further slander in FAPA mailings.

2.) That the FAPA members are willing to cooperate by sending in material.

3.) That I may keep my independant organization functioning.

(The first condition was engendered by Wollheim's having circulated "In Answer to Sam Moskowitz" in the previous mailing.) It seemed a reasonable set of conditions, asking as it did that FAPA members cooperate for their own best interests and that he be allowed to continue aiding independant publications as usual. In addition, Moskowitz promised to help the bureau by writing material himself. He also wrote a letter to Wollheim, stating his suspicions openly of the latter's actions in the matter.

Wollheim sent abbreviated quotations from this letter, a defense of the accusations, and a copy of the open letter to Daniel McPhail, the vice-president of FAPA, requesting that he exercise his constitutional powers and rule thereon. McPhail, without contacting Moskowitz for further information, rendered a verdict against him on every point brought up by Wollheim. He even decided that "the existence of two bureaus run by the same person would be mutually destructive and otherwise irrational," and that his "careful search...of the three mailings to date fail to reveal any slander against Mr. Moskowitz's name." By this short-sighted procedure McPhail settled none of FAPA's problems and effectively cancelled its last hope of possessing a manuscript bureau. This round was quite definitely Wollheim's.

When Lowndes learned of Wiggins' intention to soft-pedal the feud in The Science Fiction Fan he too published the rebuttal he had sent himself. Moskowitz's original reply to Wollheim had been four paragraphs in length, taking less than half a typewritten page. Wollheim had found it necessary to use four pages to reply to it. Lowndes needed eight. In fact, he devoted the entire issue of his magazine The Vagrant to the fight. Indeed, so much material in two FAPA mailings was devoted to the feud that the fan Walter E. Marconette brought out The Protestant, a small sheet that begged for a sane ending to the squabble. Lowndes attempted an extremely pseudo impartial-intellectual approach. How impartial it was may be judged from such statements as this: "...despite the fact that Moskowitz's accusations are all besides the point we must examine them...." In summation, Lowndes offered two alternatives. Either Moskowitz suffered from "mental poverty," or he was "a mental pervert, a literary whore, or, what is worse, a would-be literary prostitute." He hoped for Moskowitz's own sake, he said, that it was the former. It is amusing to recall now how, with lines such as these to their credit, Micholists in later quitting the argument deplored the the fans' "inability" to meet them "on intellectual grounds."

Jack Gillespie, who had fallen in with the Micholist crowd, contributed to the feud Just Things; the only original remark in this leaflet, which was printed upon different-sized pieces of yellow second-sheets, was a query as to how Moskowitz "ever got the idea that Michel's was a Communistic speech."

The variety of anti-Moskowitz material emanating from Wollheim's circle of friends prompted Moskowitz to coin the nickname "Wollheim's stooges" for

them. This nickname stuck---probably because fans truly began to believe that there was no other explanation for entrance into the fray on Wollheim's side of people who had previously held no enmity against Moskowitz.

The abrupt entrance into the feud on Moskowitz's side of Jack Speer came as a surprise to both contestants. And Speer was a potent ally indeed, for he was strong on every point where Moskowitz was weak. This was especially noticable in the matter of written statements; Moskowitz was often careless in their preparation, leaving himself open to various interpretations, while Speer's wording was meticulously correct and unambiguous. Speer called for fans to consider charges and counter-charges carefully, pointing out that contentions lacking concrete proof were worthless. He cited several errors in "Fanfarade," and reminded readers that Wilson, an admitted "friend and admirer" of Wollheim, had called Moskowitz's report of the convention the only unbiased one. He then reprimanded Lowndes for the use of improper language, and challenged him to find a grammatical error in his own writings (Lowndes having previously advised both Speer and Moskowitz to look to their grammar). He stated that the demand was for writers rather than publishers in FAPA, thus inferring that the organization had blundered in so quickly casting away prospects for a manuscript bureau.

Shortly after this the oft-provoked Philadelphia fans directed their fire against Wollheim, and the latter's days of easy victory were soon over. But there are other threads to trace before that story is continued.

XXVI
The Background in Early 1938

In order the better to understand the explosive-packed events which transpired during the late spring and early summer of 1938, further description of the field during the early months of that year is essential.

Corwin Stickney's Amateur Correspondent collapsed with its November-December, 1937 issue. Due to the many advertisements it carried the magazine had never lost money, but just as surely it had never made any. Little praise for the effort had been forthcoming from fandom, and even omission from the last number of the hated "Hobbyana" column, the inclusion of a new amateur story contest, and a generally stronger slanting toward fan-interests had elicited only faint approval. With the effects of a national economic recession deepening, Stickney was obliged to drop The Amateur Correspondent in favor of his home town weekly, Topic News, which at least showed a profit, though its fantasy content was nil.

In California, Claire Beck was faring as badly with his Science Fiction Critic, which had just merged with Miller's Phantastique. With this combination he was enabled to publish several letters from H. P. Lovecraft, which gave the magazine a literary as well as critical tone. But, as has been stated before, Beck specialized less in carefully thought-out analyses than in destructive criticism, and did not hesitate to edit submissions to fit the latter description. When Moskowitz sent him an article analyzing the state of cooperation between American and British fans of the time, for example, Beck deleted almost all of its interpretive, explanatory and mitigating phrases, reducing it in print to a string of insults offering neither hope nor suggestion for improvement in international fan relations. Typical of the more rabid tirades appearing in the magazine were the effusions of Peter Duncan. In his many, interminable good-byes to fandom Duncan expressed himself so succinctly on the failings of science-fiction authors, editors and fans as to make himself cordially disliked throughout the field:

> But, nevertheless and despite the fact that I am fully aware of the horrendous penalties awaiting the errant

> heretic, I hereby propose to do that very thing; to boot the sacrosanct fan in his doubly sacrosanct rump; to do a little stamping on his consecrated toes. For the scientific-fiction fan is no god, no intellectual colossus, and no paragon. He is, as a matter of fact, no kind of superior being at all, but merely a stupid imbecile and buffoon, unworthy of anything but scorn and contumely. The very fact that he believes all the buncombe that is editorialized about him is sufficient to reveal him as a gullible simpleton ready to lap up any flatulent metaphor just so long as it intumesces his already overgrown cranium.

Beck's last worthwhile contribution to fandom was the completing of R. H. Barlow's literary publication Leaves. In May, 1937 Barlow had published the first number of Leaves, a superb amateur fantasy publication that ran to fifty large-sized mimeographed pages. It featured such things as a reprint of A. Merritt's "People of the Pit," letters written by Lovecraft under his pseudonym of Lewis Theobold, Jr., fiction and poetry by Clark Ashton Smith and a reprinting of Vandrei's "Red Brain" with its theretofore unpublished ending and sequel. Stencils for the second number had been prepared by Barlow, and Beck's contribution was the actual mimeographing. This second (and last) issue is noted for a Northwest Smith story by C. L. Moore that has never appeared elsewhere, a Henry Whitehead tale reprinted from Weird Tales, original contributions by Lovecraft and literary work in a similar vein. Virtually ignored when it appeared, Leaves today is a collector's item of extreme rarity, and easily holds a prominent place among the finest journals ever to be turned out by the fan field.

The collapse of The Amateur Correspondent and The Science-Fiction Critic left but one printed journal in the field. This was Unique Tales, which was published by Russell A. Leadabrand of Dinuba, California. The first number was dated June, 1937, but the magazine was circulated so poorly that few fans heard about it until early 1938. In all, three issues appeared, the last being dated April, 1938. Unique Tales published mostly fiction (the majority of it editorially written), and was of no great worth, its neat format being its chief asset.

The disappearance of Unique Tales left what has been called the hektographing era of fandom in full swing. The two leading journals of the time were The Science Fiction Fan and The Science Fiction Collector. Other ranking titles were Helios, The Science Fiction News-Letter, Cosmic Tales, Fantascience Digest and Imagination!. Of these only the last was mimeographed, at that time no mean distinction.

The comparatively large number of regularly appearing fan magazines, coupled with the quarterly FAPA mailings and numerous "one-shot" pamphlets, gave the impression that a tremendous number of fans were engaging in a welter of activity. In a sense this was true, for the early months of 1938 probably saw more per capita activity than at any other time, before or since. Yet the field had gained few new fans since its emergence from the chaos of 1937. There was virtually no medium other than personal contact for recruiting new members to its ranks. And there was little or no cooperation between fans and professionals except occasional notices in six-point type that appeared in the SFL column of Thrilling Wonder Stories.

Thus when in January, 1938 a new fan named Walter Earl Marconette made his appearance with a new magazine, Scienti-Snaps, it was an event indeed. Possibly Marconette thought that financial and material support would be speedily forthcoming---but if so, he was greatly in error. Were it not for his own abilities along literary and artistic lines, plus a prompt transfusion from the Moskowitz Manuscript Bureau, his demise might have been rapid. But the combination

proved fruitful. Scienti-Snaps boasted meticulously neat hektographing, and was as carefully illustrated. One would sooner have suspected its editor of being a timid aesthete than one of the physically biggest fans on record. Along with Scienti-Snaps Marconette issued five numbers of Science-Fantasy Movie Review, a tiny journal that contained illustrated reviews and synopses of "scientifilms."

Late in 1937 Taurasi, Wiggins and Kuslan had attempted to establish an American counterpart of the British Science Fiction Association. This they called the American Fantasy Association. Tentatively Wiggins took the director's post, Taurasi that of vice-director, and Kuslan became secretary-treasurer. Immediately Taurasi began work on The American Fantasy Magazine, a small hektographed publication that was planned as the club's official organ. Only four pages of it were ever completed. Kuslan advertised the organization in almost every leading fan magazine, but cooperation was weak and sporadic and its leaders were inexperienced, so that within less than a year it died in embyro.

Taurasi, however, was the earliest popularizer of another type of organization which was successful. This was a series of publishing groups, which within a short time virtually divided fandom into something like an interconnected series of feudal castles. Taurasi marked his early numbers of Cosmic Tales, Junior Science Fiction, Weird and Fantasy Fiction, etc., as Taurasi Publications. This metamorphosed into the more general house-title Cosmic Publications, which allowed leeway for newcomers to join the circle. Most of the publications listed under this banner never actually appeared at all, and there are so many of these that it would take up too much space to list all of their titles. But in November, 1937, Wiggins made a commendable effort to concentrate his energies and those of his friends upon a single project. This was in the form of a proclamation to all at large that he, Gillespie and Thompson would pool all of their projects (the latter two had never thus far completed any of their planned journals) and issue a single publication to be titled Cosmic Tales.

The extravagance of the plans for this new Cosmic Tales knew no bounds. Illustrations were hektographed, and Taurasi borrowed Kyle's mimeograph for reproducing the rest of the magazine. It ran to forty large-sized pages, truly an unheard-of thickness for a 1938 fan effort. But the tremendous task of assembling material and allocating work efficiently; the extreme youth and mechanical ineptitude of Thompson; the constant prodding necessary before creative effort could be derived from Gillespie; and Taurasi's own lack of grammar and spelling---these things added up to a general mess. By the time the fourth number of Cosmic Tales appeared the magazine had been so roundly criticized by fans in general (and by Richard Wilson in particular) that Gillespie quit in disgust. Completely overlooked by readers were the time, effort and money involved, and the better than average quality of articles and fiction published. These latter included reviews of the professional fantasy publications, "scientifilm" reviews by Mario Racic, Jr. (his first printed work), a debate on religion between Fein and Wollheim, an article on rocketry, and a summary of fan activity during the past year by Moskowitz. Cosmic Tales, moreover, was the magazine which introduced artists John Giunta and Jack Agnew to the field. It had all the ingredients needed for success except experience, which could have been gained with perseverance.

Shortly after this Taurasi suffered a nervous breakdown because of overwork at his place of employment, and was forced on medical orders to drop Cosmic Tales. (The rights to the title went to Thompson.) Upon being asked, the doctor said he could see no harm, however, in his patient's publishing occasional minor efforts for relaxation, so Taurasi, instead of issuing one large magazine, promptly brought out fifteen or twenty small ones.

Once he had regained his health Taurasi lost no time in reestablishing Cosmic Publications. With this second series, what had started as mere affectation grew until it was by far the most powerful interconnected group of fan mag-

azines in the history of the field. When he founded Fantasy News it became the nucleus of the Cosmic group, which at one time or another included Cosmic Tales, Helios, The Science Fiction Fan, Scienti-Tales, D'Journal, Le Zombie and many, many others. The weight of its opinions in fan circles was pronounced, and by late 1938 it became the virtual center of activities.

Were it not for its local character, Comet Publications, whose nucleus was Baltadonis' Science Fiction Collector, might well have overshadowed Cosmic Publications. Composed almost entirely of Philadelphia publishers, it encompassed Wadle's Fantascience Digest, which later become a leading journal in the field, and Train's Science Adventure Stories among others. The latter was a mammoth publication for its day, running to sixty-two pages, and being illustrated in color by Baltadonis and Rothman; it featured material from the pens of such well known fans and professionals as Eshbach, Saari, Chapman, Farley, Wilson and Rothman. Both of its two issues are well worth owning. PSFS News, which started as the official organ of the Philadelphia Science-Fiction Society, gradually became of more general tone. From the date of its establishment in the Fall of 1937 it has never ceased to appear, and remains a valuable source of the society's history. Publications of lesser importance, such as Fantasy Herald, Imaginative Fiction, Fantasy Fiction Telegram and Fantasy Pictorial were likewise members of the Comet chain. The result of this powerful concentration of published matter in one city has been one of the most harmoniously run and continuously active of all science-fiction clubs. Easy-going generally, the PSFS has presented a united front to all opposition, and never has suffered disruption from internal or external pressure.

Though Cosmic and Comet were by far the most powerful, there were other groups not without similar importance that followed the trend. One of these was Empress Publications, which represented the efforts of Richard Wilson and of Walter Marconette. These two had many things in common. They attempted to be punctiliously correct in their grammar and spelling, extending extra efforts to produce neat publications---and usually succeeding. Their organization was announced in the August 6, 1938 issue of The Science Fiction News-Letter, one periodical of the group. Marconette's Scienti-Snaps, which was steadily building a reputation for itself, was the other strong partner. Included under the banner were also such minor titles as Science-Fantasy Movie Review, Queer Tales, Incredible, et al.

Perhaps the most individualistic of all was Wiggins' Galactic Publications, under which masthead were published The Science Fiction Fan, Galaxy, The Technocrat. It was untypical in that it did not represent a pooling of resources by more than one person, as did the others.

In April, 1938 the Los Angeles-New York Cooperative Publications (LANY) was formed. This is how it came to be established: Some time before, in his Phantagraph, Wollheim had begun (but never completed) serialization of Robert E. Howard's story "The Hyborian Age." Howard's death revived interest both in this story and in the author's background, and the time was ripe for issuance of a memorial pamphlet on the subject. Wollheim contributed some of the material and several Los Angeles fans (Ackerman, Douglas and Hodgkins, who, because of their socialistic, esperantic or technocratic interests, felt some kinship with Wollheim's and Michel's ideals, as expressed by Michelism) contributed more as well as the actual publishing of such a pamphlet. It appeared in an edition limited to one hundred copies, and was LANY's most notable achievement.

If we attempt to trace the concept of fan publishing groups back into the past, we come first upon Kyle's Phantasy Legion, which had a similar idea in mind, but which never brought it to fruition. Earlier still we encounter Pohl's EGO-Cooperative Publishers Association, formed in late 1936 and publicized in The

International Observer. This group announced titles by many publishers, of which The Mind of Man, The Mutant and Legion Parade actually appeared. They were of no more than passing interest.

The large number of fan publishing houses that existed in 1938 were an attempt by fans to form cliques with others of similar temperament and group their energies for greater achievements. They were far from being failures and the influence of their psychology in the framework of national fan organizations will later become apparent.

(to be continued)

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LYTLE, Andrew

A Name for Evil

Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1947. 215pp. 19 cm. $2½.

Review: Readers are going to disagree violently over this novel according to their respective predilections. Whereas the recent Arkham House catalog refers to it as "a fine novel of a house of dread," the New York Times calls it a "crashing bore" and complains because of the lack of action, damning it also because of its Poesque leanings---and snobbishly referring to it as a "carbon copy (dim) of 'The Fall of the House of Usher.'" On the other hand, The Saturday Review of Literature lists it as detective fiction but characterizes the volume as "begins as an out-and-out ghost story, then undergoes some strange changes and winds up spookier than ever"---with a final capsule verdict of "puzzling."

An aficionado of the weird with the advantage of his specialized knowledge and background sees the work in a somewhat different light, of course. The basic premise of this story is a modern reworking of the ghastly and blasphemous myth of the Eternal Bridegroom. Variants of the noxious bit of lore can be traced down in many ancient cultures, but essentially they agree: He is ever potent, ever lusting, indeath as in life. Proud and pitiless, he demands the sacrifice of the pure and meek. Evil incarnate, his dim shadow hovers down the eons.

The setting for this grim tale is an ancient Southern manor house known as The Grove. Abused and wrecked by generations of indifferent tenants since the passing of the original Major Brent, it appears but a shell, unfit for decent habitation. Henry is drawn to it, however, because he sees its lines of former greatness and realizes that they can be restored. His wife, Ellen, is not so enthusiastic but goes along with his wishes. From the first Henry has forbodings: the great entrance door opens easily for Ellen as though welcoming her, but Henry finds it impossible to enter until the negro servant Johnny unlocks it with a key. Then, the house seems to absorb Ellen so readily---she disappears into far distant dusty rooms and ignores her husband's frantic callings.

The room Henry selects as his study turns out to be old Major Brent's bedroom, and none of the servants will enter it until it is seen that the new master is apparently unmolested there. He knows, however, that he is not welcome: he senses a brooding menace and finally one night a gray face is glimpsed peering through the study window. Ellen complains that she no longer feels private even in their bedroom---eyes seem to bore through the blackness at her.

Bit by bit from the reluctant Johnny the whole horrid legend of Major Brent is revealed. Married six times, all six of his wives had mysteriously died at The Grove (ostensibly from childbirth---but darker suspicions seem justified). All six were buried, like spokes radiating from the hub of a wheel, in the major's miasmatic and weed-choked garden adjoining The Grove. Before he died, when the house and its surrounding plantation were at the zenith of their beauty and opu-

lence, he swore that no heir would ever take over such utter perfection and forbade his only sister to marry. Consequently the manor thereupon passed into decay and destruction through the uncaring hands of sharecroppers and tenants.

Henry is at first annoyed and then staggered by the fact that all the colored workers, even to the sophisticated Johnny, regard the major as still alive. Certain fields cannot be plowed because the major wouldn't like it and others are sown according to Henry and Ellen's plans only because that happens to to be just the way he used to do it. The Grove becomes more and more obnoxious to Henry---especially when on one harrowing night of terror he sees the figure of Major Brent in his ancient costume trying to open the door to Ellen's bedroom. He drives the major away, but finds to his horror that Ellen had been sleep-walking and about to open the bedroom door on her side. She has dim memories of ghastly dreams upon being awakened.

As the author tells us: sometimes just before the final and irrevocable plunge into the abyss the potential victim is given one last chance by fate to withdraw and save his soul; if disregarded, his doom is sealed. Such a parallel turns up when a buyer appears for the plantation---Henry is hysterical in his eagerness to accept, but Ellen smiles complacently and says they must stay because she is happy there. In one blinding flash of intuition he realizes that his wife no longer belongs to him---she has become the creature of the manor and its evil founder. His fears are confirmed when he discovers Ellen secretly working to restore the long dead and neglected flower garden which was Major Brent's greatest pride. The final, crushing blow comes when she announces that she is with child. Attempts at parenthood had proved fruitless for them through the years---yet here, in this place of all places! His mind reels with the awful and blasphemous suspicions bursting from it. His spirit is sick and trembling with the hellish implications. As he sees Ellen contentedly working in the garden with the ecstatic, rapt expression of a devotee awaiting the call to sacrifice, he knows that all meaning in life has ended for him. The tale moves on inevitably to its grim and tragic denoument which is fully as shocking as the reader has expected from the preceding portents.

The author writes at times in a manner quite reminiscent of the obtuse indirection of Henry James in his famed "Turn of the Screw" and lesser known "Jolly Corner." There are flashes of true poetic fantasy and some of the metaphysical overtones are quite striking. It can best be described as a disturbing piece of writing: an uneasy feeling of mental oppression and unrest will be conveyed to the sensitive reader. Yet the preoccupation with elements of perverse decadence may prove unsupportable to some. Grotesque hints of the Bluebeard and Spectre Bridegroom legends hover ominously. Some of the author's phraseology is turgid, some of his meanings are obscure, and in places the tale does move a little too slowly for comfort. I think, however, it will amply repay a careful perusal by those who have been forwarned. Somehow I think, too, that Howard Lovecraft would have liked this book, and perhaps it is fitting that it should have seen publication on the tenth anniversary of his death---a year which seems to presage a golden age for fantasy, if we can judge by the deluge of books in the genre that are scheduled to appear.

---Matthew H. Onderdonk.

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This-'n'-That---concluded from page 112

Spectorsky (Doubleday, $3¾). More for the completist than the connoisseur is a new collection from Arkham House: Carl Jacobi's Revelations in Black ($3). Zotz! by Walter Karig (Rinehart, $2¾) tells, with satirical overtones, of a man having an evil eye-like power. Recommended also is The Collected Tales of E. M. Forster (Knopf, $2½), which contains some of the best fantasy ever written. ---A.L.S.

OPEN HOUSE

(letters from our readers)

Stanley Mullen, a Denver subscriber, remarks:

I disagree with Kuttner's squib in the last issue of Commentator. I thought he was too busy grinding 'em out for Thrilling Wonder and Startling Stories to write for an amateur magazine. I do like his work; at least he writes well, even though the stories of his in the magazines mentioned are pure formula. Those in Astounding are as a rule more carefully thought out. In my opinion editors prefer formula stories as a rule, and print off-trail work only when they run short of the sausage-machine stuff ground out by the old favorite hacks. And I insist on a sharp line of distinction between genuine science-fiction and outright fantasy---although many of the best things done are mixed forms. A masterful exception does not disprove a rule.

A formula yarn, if well written and entertaining, needs no justification, but if a story means enough to me, for example, that I want to write it in a certain way (and would rather not sell it than make any unjustified changes), then it obviously means too much to mutilate or distort into a cheap, assembly-line product to please some moronic editor. Of the fantasy I myself have written, I hastily admit much to have been stinkers composed under the fond delusion that they were good. However, I am narrow enough and determined enough to feel that I would prefer to leave the field of fantasy writing altogether rather than write junk acceptable to the average editor of any of the present-day magazines in the field. I write fantasy or science-fiction because I love it; if it has to become day labor, I will turn to something else. And I still say this after selling four stories this year---three of which were frankly space-opera thrillers, of which I am not ashamed, since they were written merely to entertain, without any profound overtones on the future of mankind in the universe.

August Derleth furnishes a correction:

The correct version of conditions mentioned by Sam Moskowitz on pages 87-8 of the last Fantasy Commentator is as follows: First, at no time have I claimed possession or acquisition of the rights to H.P.Lovecraft's work. Donald Wandrei, R. H. Barlow, the estate of Lovecraft (and, later, of Mrs. Gamwell) and myself have worked in concert; Arkham House has control of the Lovecraft works, working with the estate and Barlow. Second, a majority of the poems and pieces published in fan publications under HPL's byline appeared previously in other magazines unknown to fan editors, and many of them were and are under copyright. We have never restricted publication of certain of Lovecraft's things, but we have held the line on the stories and on the Weird Tales-copyrighted poems specifically. Third, my permission to publish is the permission of the four people concerned who are mentioned above.

Contributing editor Matt Onderdonk comments:

...Naturally I do not agree with Solomon's estimate of the Sloane book. Granted, it is inferior to the author's first effort, but certainly it is head and shoulders above any of the so-called "detective-mystery stories." First and foremost because of the odd psychic atmosphere it builds up. I think it is indisputable that there is an almost Lovecraftean preoccupation with the Outside. Some readers may become confused because romance and more mundane affairs are given considerable space, but this is merely a humanization of the too cold and abstract all-out attitude of genuine HPL writing. Nor can I agree that this novel is "a detective-mystery" with a "touch of the supernatural." Echoes of the supernormal

(concluded on page 130)