FANTASY COMMENTATOR

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

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editor and publisher

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T H I S - 'N' - T H A T

Recently published books of fantasy fiction not hitherto noted in this column:

Barker, Shirley: Peace, My Daughters (Crown, $3). The devil in 17th century Salem. Poignant and gripping.

Bell, Josephine: Death in Clairvoyance (Longmans, 9/6). Murder mystery with supernatural touches.

Brown, Hilton: Stands My House (Methuen 12/6). Prophecy about a doomed house.

Burnshaw, Stanley: The Sunless Sea (Dial, $2½). Borderline allegory.

Butler, Evan: Talk of the Devil (Maxon, 7/6). Rather dizzy account of the devil taking part in a British by-election.

Cabell, James Branch: The Devil's Own Son (Farrar, Straus, $2¾). The author's fiftieth published title.

Caldecott, Andrew: Fires Burn Blue (Arnold, 8/6). Supernatural tales.

Cammaerts, E.: The Devil Takes the Chair (Cresset, 7/6). Trite religious allegory.

Cerf, Bennett, ed.: The Unexpected (Bantam, 25¢). An excellent pocket book anthology.

Clewes, Howard: Mask of Wisdom (Dutton, $3½). Satirical drama.

Coward, Noel: Peace in Our Time: a Play (Doubleday, $2¾). World War II ends by the Nazis defeating Britain.

de Camp, L.S.: Divide and Rule and The Stolen Dormouse (Fantasy Press, $3). Two pleasant novelettes of the future.

---: The Wheels of If (Shasta, $3) Seven shorts plus the title novelette.

del Rey, Lester: ...And Some Were Human (Prime, $3). Collection of shorts ranking among the ten best in 1948!

Derleth, August: Not Long for this World (Arkham, $3). Supernatural trifles.

---, ed.: The Other Side of the Moon (Pellagrini & Cudahy, $3¾). 20 good s-f tales. Worth getting.

Duncan, David: The Madrone Tree (Macmillan, $3). Supernatural mystery---mundane ending. Good, however.

Eldershaw, M.B.: Tomorrow and Tomorrow (Phoenix, 12/6). Long account of the early and far future of Australia.

Fraser, Ronald: Sun in Scorpio (Cape, 10/6). Superficial touches of black magic. Not particularly good.

Gibran, Kahil: Nymphs of the Valley (Heinemann, 6/-). Three rambling tales, of which one deals with reincarnation.

Gilbert, Stephen: Monkeyface (Faber, 8/6). An ape learns to talk, goes to school.

Graves, Robert: Watch the Northwind Rise (Creative Age, $3). A pleasant, witty, often outrageously rowdy satire on other Utopias. Recommended.

Green, Julian: If I Were You (Harper, $3). A man is granted power by the devil to exchange personalities.

Greene, Leslie: He Lived in My Shoes (Australasian, 10/6). A very clever novel about an imaginary alter ego.

Kaufman, Lenard: Tender Mercy (Creative Age, $3). Creepy horror tale.

James, Henry: The Ghostly Tales of Henry James (Rutgers, $5). 18 entries. A highly recommended volume; get it.

Jameson, Storm: The Moment of Truth (Macmillan, $2½). A future England under Communist domination.

Kasack, Hermann: Die Stadt hinter dem Strom (Surkamp Verlag). German chronicle of the land of the dead.

Livingston, Marjorie: Delphic Echo (Dakers, 12/6). The third volume of the Atlantis trilogy; the scene: Rome.

McCarthy, Mary: The Oasis (Horizon, Feb. 1949, 2/6). Prize-winning novel; a political allegory of an experimental colony in the United States.

Pudney, John: Shuffley Wanderers (Bodley Head, 8/6). Amusing extravaganza of a football star transplanted into an iron curtain country of Klotia.

Satre, Jean-Paul: The Chips Are Down (Lear, $2¾). Life after death.

Smith, E.E.: The Skylark of Valeron (Fantasy Press, $3). More space opera.

Sturgeon, Theodore: Without Sorcery (Prime, $3). 13 shorts plus an introduction by Ray Bradbury. Pretty good.

Tallant, Robert: Angel in the Wardrobe (Doubleday, $3). Borderline but nice.

Taine, John: Cosmic Geoids (FPCI, $3). Reviewed on page 44.

Vilmorin, Louise de: Erica's Return (Random, $2½). Return from the dead.

(concluded on page 59)

ENCORES IN THE WILDERNESS

by
Paul Spencer

Since writing "Music in the Wilderness" (Fantasy Commentator, Summer, 1948) I have been privileged to read several more manuscripts of David H. Keller. These have confirmed my opinion that much of his unpublished work not only equals but in some ways surpasses that which has been already given the public. Even those stories which are not suited for publication are extraordinarily interesting from an associational standpoint.

For example, Shadows and Realities (1899) gives the lie to critics who claim Keller uses a simple, concise style because he is unable to write in any other way. This, his first novel, was written under the influence of Ike Marvel. It is a very skillful reproduction of the latter's style: discursive, rhetorical, highly sentimental. The usual short sentences, simple constructions and other characteristics of the Keller prose are notable for their absence. Just as in Marvel's Reveries of a Bachelor, Keller's hero sits by his fire and dreams idly, in sonorous, cadenced sentences. The plot is thin: a man is writing a book about the girls he has known; and while engaged in this pastime, he is visited by his mother, who perceives that he is in love with one of these dream-sweethearts. Her shrewd and kindly advice helps him win the girl. Little else happens in the story, which is largely composed of lengthy excerpts from the hero's Girls I Have Known, very much in the sentimental Marvel manner.

The general effect of Shadows and Realities is pleasant, in its mixture of whimsy and the saccharine, but it is highly imitative and clearly the work of a beginning writer. I very much doubt if Keller would claim for it any great degree of merit, and I am certain it will never be published. Its chief interest is as a sidelight on his career, an indication of his early interests and tendencies. Without being autobiographical, it does have certain personal adumbrations. In this regard it is noteworthy to recall Keller's own review of the story, incorporated in his very fine novel The Fighting Woman, where it is credited to the protagonist Paul Heisler.

Somewhat later in his career, but still among his earlier efforts, came The Gentle Pirate (1924). The style of this entertaining novel is more or less an imitation of the eighteenth century novelists---in whose time the story takes place. Long, formal sentences, archaic words and formal phraseology lend atmosphere without begetting dullness. At the same time, this old-fashioned style tends to water down the dramatic effects by excessive wordiness. The story is at its best when the simpler, more economical style of the later Keller comes to the surface, as happens now and then.

Indeed, The Gentle Pirate has many of the admirable characteristics of the author's more mature works, and a charm of its own besides. Though not fantasy, it does demonstrate Keller's originality and his flair for the unusual. It is about a young man named S. H. Strong (being puny in build, he refuses to divulge the incongruous names of heroes for which his initials stand). His father, a stern Cornish gentlemen, orders the youth to take up the life of a sailor; but S.H., who is frankly and ecstatically a bookworm, runs away from home rather than face such a career. He hates the smell of the sea, cannot abide the rough language of sailors, and is prone to seasickness. After tramping to London, he finds a position in a book shop, and on the death of his master becomes its owner. This life suits him ideally, but his father is not so easily thwarted. After the death of this iron parent, his will is found to specify that S. H. shall inherit the Strong lands and fortune only if he makes at least one successful voyage as a pi-

rate and brings back a treasure!

S. H. does not enjoy the prospect, but determines to overcome his natural tendencies and become a pirate---at least for the one voyage required. How he outfits a ship (which he names The Bookworm), replaces its guns with potted plants, acquires a non-drinking, non-smoking, non-swearing crew, and actually captures a Spanish ship makes a hilarious narrative. Its disingenuous madness is peculiarly Keller's.

As a sort of counterpoint to this plot runs the element of S.H.'s hatred and distrust of women, inculcated in him by his master. Keller's typical predatory female gets her man in the end, but S. H. puts up a good fight. The reader is left with the hope that the designing woman may, after all, have met her match in the plucky, ocean-going bookworm.

It is all light, fluffy reading, of course---nothing profound or deeply moving (though there are interesting psychological implications), but decidedly pleasant. And there is at least one touch of the horror so admired in Keller by readers of the old Weird Tales. As it stands, The Gentle Pirate is too wordy and at times too amateurish in handling to be completely successful; but it is enjoyable. If written a few years later it might have been delightful indeed.

The Feminine World (1939) is more in the tradition of the fantasy pulps' familiar "Kelleryarns," and deserves to take its place beside the best of them. It has the simplicity and subtlety of style, the ingenuity, the human interest that are so characteristic of Keller at his best. The matriarchy theme has been used before, never with spectacular results, but Keller handles the subject with striking originality and skill. Most writers have taken the easy way out, simply plunging the reader into a civilization dominated by women with no preliminaries. Keller, however, is more concerned with the process of overthrowing male supremacy. His novel is, in part, a vast, panoramic epic of the United States in the throes of a war between the sexes, but it is personalized by focusing attention chiefly on Lillian Lemoine, "the Dreamer," leader of the rebellious women and first female president of the country.

Keller shows in a fascinating manner the way in which Lillian Lemoine organizes the women of America, founds a new feminine religion, and by leading women into a single voting bloc, gets elected president. The men do not take this lying down, and bloody warfare results. The culmination is a country almost devoid of men, with artificial insemination and ultimately feminine parthenogenesis looked to for continuation of the race. Just as the women are at the peak of their triumph, however, a new factor is introduced: a strange blight is sterilizing all life---reproduction has ceased throughout the world, and in a short time Earth will be devoid of living things! How this menace is overcome, and how the sexes are reunited in the process, makes a gripping and exciting story.

The Feminine World is packed with mystery and thrills, and was probably written with periodical serialization in mind. Probably its frank discussions of the problems of human reproduction disqualify it for appearance in a magazine, but it definitely deserves publication in book form. For it is not only a fascinating yarn, but a thought-provoking sociological nightmare; and it has passages of deeply moving drama, profound insight and warm humanity that lift it at times to the level of true literature. It has also its full complement of faults. Coincidence is stretched to the limit, and the introduction of the sterility theme in the middle of the story destroys both its unity and some of its dramatic power. Indeed, the novel falls into two separate parts, distinct in plot and mood; each part is excellent in itself, but (in the early draft I have read, at least) the division is somewhat disconcerting. There are also touches of sentimentality that some may find mawkish, and both the blight and its cure are presented in a vague, somewhat mystical manner.

However, these shortcomings---some of which may have been overcome in the revised version---do not amount to much beside the general effect, which is extremely powerful. It is definitely above the level of the usual science-fiction story, and compares very favorably with many accepted classics in that field, including some of Keller's own.

Dream Journey (1939) is a novelette of the most extravagantly fanciful character. Keller casts aside all barriers of common sense and natural law, and writes in a grotesque and flamboyant vein blended of the psychopathic, the erotic, the satirical, the nightmarish and the merely whimsical. Imagination and a sense of humor are required for enjoyment of this story, which---in a strictly Kellerish way---reminds one of both Lewis Carroll and James Branch Cabell.

It is the saga of Dr. John Smith, editor of a health magazine, who receives a letter from a princess of the Far East. She desires to become a mother without stooping to associate with men. Her insistent letters begin to prey on Smith's mind; his subconscious grapples with her problem in curious dreams. In one of these he interviews Paracelsus, the ancient mystic, who tells him how to create a homunculus in a bottle (a theme later developed by Keller for his as-yet unpublished novel The Homunculus). In another dream, he visits a sanitarium of the future, where women are impregnated artificially. Finally Smith sets out to meet the princess in person. He buys a whale in San Francisco, sets up living quarters inside it, and makes a Jonah-like voyage across the Pacific. Arriving in Asia, he purchases an elephant (carefully selecting one that can keep up a stimulating conversation), and on her back travels to India. Thence he makes his way to the Himalayan valley where the princess dwells. There also he finds a variety of fabulous creatures out of the world's mythologies. He marries the princess, but she changes him into a dog, then herself into a tiger. In the end, Smith gets back to human form and returns to his home in America.

Such a bare outline gives no idea of the countless imaginative embellishments which adorn the tale, of the dragons, centaurs, harpies crowding its pages. More important, no review can do more than suggest the story's peculiar charm, a charm of which Keller alone is the master. The best pages of Dream Journey have the selfsame tender whimsicality that made The Devil and the Doctor so delightful, and the whole story seethes and bubbles with a vigorous, yeasty Rabelaisian humor. God help anyone who takes it seriously, but the reader who can tuck tongue in cheek and accompany Smith on his wild voyage will have plenty of fun along the way.

At the same time, the story is far from a one hundred percent success. To be completely satisfying, its exuberant fantasy should be tied in some way to reality, even if only by the frayed cord of a dreamer awakening on the last page. (Unless, that is, I've missed the whole point---which Keller assures me I have.) Furthermore, the style is badly in need of polishing---a multitude of tiny improvements in phraseology would smooth it noticeably. The opening hasn't much of a "hook," and towards the end the incidents become rushed and crowded; it would have been better had they been developed in more detail.

Keller has more important projects to attend to than the revision of Dream Journey, and I venture to predict that in its present form it will never be sold. However, some sort of limited edition seems desirable, for the story's best pages are truly delightful, and it forms a most interesting addition to Keller's richly diversified work.

Through the Back Door (1940-41; revised 1948) is not fiction. It is the factual account of Keller's twenty-five years as a psychiatrist with the abnormals of society, and is more fascinating than many a novel. His longest work (124,000 words in the first draft), it gives an intimate and often shocking picture of what goes on in our institutions for the mentally afflicted.

Five mental hospitals are entered "through the back door," by-passing the impressive facades shown to visitors. Scenes of squalor, neglect and cruelty are depicted with vivid restraint. Countless individual cases are described---many horrifying, some amusing, all pitiful. Keller's medical experiences, too, are narrated with all the art of his novels and short stories.

Though indicated only in general terms, enough of Keller's very interesting life is told to provide valuable background for the study of his fiction ---which is exceedingly autobiographical. Hence Through the Back Door is required reading for fantasy fans---in its pages will be found the factual germs of the author's works of fiction. But apart from that, it is extraordinarily fascinating. I have not perused the revised version, but even the early draft is written with wonderful, unobtrusive skill; and the material worked with is so exceptional that even mediocre handling would make it a gripping book.

The work has its faults, of course, and some of them have probably been eliminated in the revision. The first draft is repetitious; frequently passages are repeated almost word for word. Here and there it might be condensed. Some of the comments are rather sanctimonious in tone. But on the whole, even this initial version is enormously successful---one of Keller's best and most important works.

I predict that Through the Back Door will be published, and will have excellent sales both in and out of fantasy fandom.

Thinking over the whole series of unpublished Keller manuscripts, I am dismayed at the thought of so much beauty, wit and fine writing lying beyond the grasp of the general public or even the more restricted circle of fantasy hobbyists. Not all of Keller's unpublished work deserves to see print, but much of it, as I have indicated, is real literature. I sincerely hope the day is not too distant when the best of those stories will be given to the world.

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A PAIR OF SATIRES: EAST AND WEST

by
Francis T. Laney

Despite Kipling's advice to the contrary, it seems not totally inappropriate to notice these two volumes* in a joint review---if for no other reason because neither really deserves an article of its own. In any case, each is a satire on the civilization of its author: Kappa dealing with prewar Japan, and Zotz! with wartime America.

Kappa is of considerably greater scope, while Zotz! is vastly more detailed. And neither one is primarily a fantasy, though those strange people who require that a volume be safely fantastic before they allow it shelfroom may legitimately admit both volumes to their collections. Both authors, evidently, had a few things they wished to get off their chests, and both chose to use a fantastic stepping stone as the easiest path to this end.

Akutagawa chose to set up a kingdom of kappas. The kappa, according to the translator's preface and notes, is a water being who has been an integral part of Japanese folklore since ancient times. He is a small, humanoid creature, amphibious of habit, whose most remarkable feature is a sunken place on top of

* Ryunosuke Akutagawa: Kappa. (Translated by Seiichi Shiojiri.) 154pp. Akitaya, Abeno, Osaka, Japan, 1947. Walter Karig: Zotz!. 268pp. Rinehart & Co., Toronto and New York, 1947.

the head. When this hollow is filled with water, the kappa is of supernal strength, but if the water be spilled he is weak and helpless. In the main, the kappa seems to be the Nipponese equivalent of the vampire, possessed of a horrid habit of capturing land creatures, such as men, and picking their vital organs out through their anuses. But basically, the kappa does not seem particularly dreadful; though indeed many of the legends show them as fearful bogeys, in the main they appear to be rather innocuous, and prone to mind their own business. In fact, there are instances quoted from ancient Japanese encyclopedias in which the kappas acted as beneficial allies of men, as for example in sharing medical knowledge. (This brief notice of the kappa is derived from the prefatory essay "The Kappa in Japanese Folklore," which incidentally is by far the best part of the book.) In any event, Akutagawa uses a mythical kappa kingdom as the basis for a rather sophomoric and feckless satire on various phases of Japanese society.

Karig did not have any overall gripe at civilization. A captain, USNR, he was evidently annoyed at the workings of bureaucracy and red tape during the war, and chose satire and ridicule as the best means of compensating for his own intimate connection therewith. So he has his protagonist discover a secret weapon of such import that he feels it should be presented to the highest authority, and spends a novel showing this man getting the royal runaround in Washington. And while he is at it, Karig also gives a convincing horselaugh to academic life and its exponents.

The protagonist in Kappa falls through a pit in the earth while chasing a kappa ands lands in kappaville, where he leads a colorless life describing the customs of the kappa and satirizing modern Nipponese culture thereby. This reviewer found the narrative remarkably dull, though much of this no doubt stems from his profound ignorance of Japanese life and some of it may be due to a loss in translation. Certainly, the English text is anything but good writing. The entire book reflects the pessimism and lack of humor which eventually led Akutagawa to take his own life a very few months after he finished writing the book (in 1927). One cannot but wonder what a sense of humor would have done for both Kappa and its author. It certaibly would have strengthened the book immeasurably, for as it stands, Kappa is little more than a querulous plaint, a sick soul faintly damning a sick culture.

In Zotz! we find a college professor, immensely rich in useless ancient lore and dead languages, quite accidentally becoming endowed with the power to stun or slay at a distance. If he points his finger at any living thing it is momentarily stunned; if he couples this action with uttering the esoteric word "Zotz!" the creature or plant at which he is pointing is killed. And this, dear fantasy lovers, is the sum total of the fantastic element in this book. Anyone buying Zotz! as a fantasy is the type of person who would buy an expensive cigar in order to put the band from it in his collection.

But as a rich, realistic novel---loaded with chuckles and belly-laughs, and not without its moments of pathos---Zotz! is worth reading. As a satire on the cloistered life of a small college faculty and as a sardonic thumb thrust in the ribs of the church, it also merits consideration. And as a veiled warning of the evil wrought by fuzzleheads in places of power, Zotz! even carries a moral lesson, albeit so well sugar-coated that it does not detract from the book as a work of entertainment.

Karig laughs at himself, his contemporaries, his navy, his country---nice, barbed laughs in which the reader finds himself joining unreservedly. Few people can read this volume without finding one or more friends or acquaintances strutting through it. You set the volume down with a last fond chuckle, a nostalgic regret at having finished a delightful piece of reading. Then, a day or so later, there comes a sudden realization that you, the whilom reader of Zotz!,

feel very strongly indeed about such matters as unification of the armed services, the pruning of topheavy bureaucracy, the revitalization of higher education, the application of a modicum of brains to national and international affairs, and other needful reforms which this novel has driven home to you far harder than reams of cogent reasoning could have done.

As a piece of entertainment, Zotz! is top-flight; as a bit of righteous propaganda it is anything but weak. It is too bad that so many of its readers will cling blindly to the relatively unimportant elements of fantasy in it, and resolutely close their eyes to the book as a novel, or as a highly successful, sugar-coated preachment on matters of importance to us all.

And if your reviewer might make a further, totally fanciful comparison ---perhaps it is not altogether without significance that the melancholy and tedious Akutagawa wrote a dull book and took his own life, while the lusty and witty Karig not only rang the bell both as a novelist and a propagandist but is today still going strong, producing such widely divergent things as children's stories and the official history of the United States Navy in the late war. Who won that war, anyway---gloomy Japan or the jolly U.S.A.?

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TIMLIN, William M.

The Ship That Sailed to Mars: a fantasy

London: Geo. G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1923. 96pp. 31 cm. 42/-.

Review: "Perhaps the most beautifully illustrated fantasy ever published."

These words do not originate with me. Some years ago, while looking over a dealer's price-list, I encountered them used in describing William M. Timlin's book. Since then two other dealers and one prominent collector who has the volume have echoed the opinion. And when, about a year ago, I was myself fortunate enough to obtain a copy, I found myself enthusiastically declaring that nothing as lovely had ever before been issued in the genre.

Correspondence with the publisher (Harrap is noted for fine work in color printing, by the way) elicited few more facts than those given in the heading of this review. It is known, however, that of the two thousand copies printed in November, 1923, 350 were purchased by the Frederick Stokes Company for distribution in America.

The Ship That Sailed to Mars is a large volume, quarto. It is bound in heavy dark gray boards with a backstrip of pure white vellum. This backstrip bears not only the title, author and publisher, but is entirely covered, from top to bottom, with fanciful incidental decorations. The pages are dark gray. The pictures are reproduced on fine white coated paper and mounted separately, one to a page. The text, too, is separately printed and mounted, and has been set from special type. The resultant effect is extremely striking, and is enhanced by alternating a page of text with one of pictorial.

In all there are forty-eight gorgeously colored illustrations. While I do not have the background to criticize them from a technical standpoint, my impression is that I have never seen their equal---in fantasy or out of it. If pressed for a stylistic comparison, I would nominate Arthur Rackham, adding hastily that they show a wider and brighter range of color than Rackham's frequently somber scenes display. I have exhibited these pictures to several collectors of fantasy, and without exception they too have viewed them with amazed enthusi- One, indeed, spent over two hours examining Timlin's work minutely!

But let me tell the story which this book relates.

Once upon a time there was an Old Man who, in his youth, had dreamed of building a ship that would bear him afar to the planet Mars. Years passed, and old age crept upon him with his great dream unrealized, since the astronomers and other learned scientists all laughed at his hopes. But the Old Man had never lost faith in the existence of Fairies; and one day the Fairies came to him, and told him they would bring his dream to fulfillment.

So they set to work. Plans were drawn, and then the building itself began; and at last it was completed in the form of a lovely sailing ship. Ten Fairies were chosen to accompany the Old Man on his interplanetary voyage. Away the ship sailed, up through the sky and away from the Earth into the void.

What a journey it was! What entities, beautiful and terrible, the voyagers spied on planets which they passed---on one, strange monsters with eager fanged jaws; on others, strange and incomprehensible beauties. There was wonderment on every hand as the ship sped on, but there was danger, too. And at last an air sprite came to guide the ship through the nameless perils and bring it safely to its destination.

The voyagers are royally greeted by the king when they disembark near the planet's capitol city. The Martians proved to be an odd, though pleasant people. They were of Fairy---or half-Fairy---stock, and had once inhabited the moon. But when the moon turned to ice, ages ago, they had all migrated to Mars, where they rebuilt their glorious cities. And there the Old Man viewed the wonders---the cities, the temples, the zoo, where all the remaining wild animals of the planet were caged.

Now the king of Mars had a fair daughter, and this princess was sad and mournful. She was betrothed to a prince, and a partly completed castle that was to be their home stood in the capitol city. But over the mountains, just beyond a dark forest of mighty growths, was a grim place known as the Thunder City, set amid the Iron Hills. And strange lightnings always played about this place, although never was there rain. There was an evil, compelling charm about these baleful lightnings, so that one who wandered within their influence could never tear himself away. The Prince had journeyed through curiosity to Thunder City, and had never returned.

The princess believes that the Old Man, being from another world, may not be subject to the city's strange compulsion, and she begs him to try to rescue her betrothed. He consents, and is loaned a dragon, on which he flies easily over the huge, impenetrable forest.

The Old Man slyly suggests to the prince and the others entranced in the Thunder City that they construct a tower, according to plans he will furnish, which will concentrate the lightnings and increase the melancholy which binds them---for one of the consequences of this charmed condition is to create desire for even deeper sadness and melancholy. Eagerly the plan is agreed to, and the mighty tower is erected. This, of course, merely acts as a gigantic lightning-rod, so that the magical energies of the lightnings are dissipated into the soil.

At once the aura of compulsion vanishes, the city's inhabitants realize their situation, and all are eager to return to the outside world. Happy indeed is the homeward trip, led by the prince. Joy fills the Martian capitol, the lovers' castle is completed, and serenity reigns over the planet.

Yet this description that I have given really can convey but a fraction of the book's charm, for the pictures constitute a vital, inseparable part of the very text, and one cannot convey their nature by more words. And yet one may hint at their rich beauty: the grim monsters; the glorious fairy-buildings, with far-flung cobwebby spans and towers; the dim hugeness of the forests; the gloomy halls of Thunder City, with corridors lit only by fitful gleams of lightning; a

strange zoo of odd and impossible creatures; the color-rampant gardens of the royal Martian palace; the golden beaches, where mermaids play. There are scenes of interplanetary space as well---the flaming meteor that almost engulfs the voyagers' ship; a huge serpent of space; the Sorrowful Planet, where wormlike monstrosities ooze their fearful lengths from the sodden soil. Forty-eight fantastic adventures in a maze of color!

There is utter enchantment from cover to cover in The Ship that Sailed to Mars. It is a book of beauty, one to both read and see, something truly unique in fantasy. ---Thyril L. Ladd.

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LITTLE KNOWN FANTASY

by
Darrell C. Richardson

II -- The "Kioga" Stories

One of the more fascinating series of out-of-the-way fantasy tales is William L. Chester's stories about Kioga, the Hawk of the Wilderness. All appeared in Blue Book magazine, but only the first novel of the group was ever put into book form. This one, Hawk of the Wilderness, was published by Harpers in 1936, and later reprinted in a cheap edition by Grosset and Dunlap.

"Hawk of the Wilderness" lays a background for the tales (Blue Book, April to October, 1935). Dr. Lincoln Rand in his staunch vessel The Cherokee is cruising in the North Pacific. With him are his young wife Helena and his educated Indian aide and friend, Mokuyi. Then a succession of storms drivesthe vessel farther and farther off its course; eventually the party is cast ashore on a distant northern headland. This proves to be a strange land indeed---an Arctic oasis somewhere north of Siberia, warmed by unknown ocean currents and the fires of a great volcanic region that smoulders beyond the horizon. Evergreens wood the land thickly, and it supports a varied, teeming wild-life of buffalos, bears, panthers and huge shaggy tigers. Stranger still is its human population. Unquestionably they are of the same stock as the American Indian, and possibly this is the land whence the first prehistoric Americans came.

Here the newcomers live, and here also is Helena's baby born. Short weeks later tragedy strikes---the natives from the plains make a raiding foray, and both Rand and Helena are killed. Mokuyi adopts the little infant. He is called Kioga, the Snow Hawk. At the age of six he is lost in the wilderness and reared by a huge she-bear. When grown to young manhood, he returns to the tribe and becomes a great warrior. By chance he comes upon the hulk of a wrecked and deserted vessel disintegrating on the shore rocks, boards her, and finds a steel knife and an armful of books. He is thus enabled to learn English.

Romance enters the story when a yacht collecting specimens for an American museum is blown off its course and drifts to this unknown land. Allan Kendle, his fiancée Beth LaSalle and her brother Dan are among those on the boat. Kioga rescues them when their crew mutiny. He comes to love Beth, and, to save Kendle, incurs the enmity of his Indian allies. This leads him to decide to return to America with the party in the repaired ship.

The boat is wrecked, however, and the party is castaway on the ice floes. Kioga becomes separated from the rest, who are picked up by a boat sent in search for the expedition, they believing Kioga dead, he thinking he has been abandoned. By a series of unique coincidences Kioga is rescued by a friend of

his long-dead father, and the two return to the United States. Beth learns that Kioga is alive and in New York, but before she can reach him, he has fled civilization and set out for the Arctic oasis. The novel ends with Dr. Munro forming an expedition to seek out Kioga. Beth will accompany him.

In "Kioga of the Wilderness" (Blue Book, April to October, 1936) Kioga returns to the unknown land, accompanied by several American Indians whom he has befriended. Meanwhile Beth LaSalle, her brother and Dr. Munro have set out after him. Kioga has numerous exciting adventures en route, and it is not until late in the story that he learns of the plans and whereabouts of Beth and Dr. Munro. The shipwreck of another party, a great battle between natives and Munro's men, and the final reunion of Beth and Kioga all make for a thrilling climax. Nevertheless, the story ends with suspense like a Burroughs novel, with Kioga beseiged by the enemy. Will they be saved? "The answer is written in the tight-wrapped scroll of things to come."

Events mark time in "One Against the Wilderness" (Blue Book, March to August, 1937) in a series of six novelettes which take us back to Kioga's youth and tell of many incidental adventures not treated in detail in "The Hawk of the Wilderness." Mr. Chester uses here the same literary device employed by Edgar Rice Burroughs in The Jungle Tales of Tarzan: the series is headed by an editor's note---"'Kioga of the Wilderness' left its hero lost in far Nato'wa. An expedition has sailed to the rescue; but while we wait, let us enjoy these new stories of Kioga's boyhood." This series contains some of the best and fantastic Kioga tales, especially that entitled "The Dire-Wolves' Prey."

"Kioga of the Unknown Land" (Blue Book, March to August, 1938) concludes the saga of Kioga with the most fantastic adventures of all. The tale takes up where "Kioga of the Wilderness" left off, and eventually carries Kioga through the strange forest region north of Siberia that is warmed by volcanic fires, and beyond the gigantic mountain range where live the blue-eyed people of Tusk. Here is a mighty and ancient civilization where men use prehistoric mastodons for beasts of burden. Kioga saves the life of the Princess Loalli, ruler of this legendary country, and of course gets involved in the expected court intrigue. In the end, however, everything works out for the best, the party escaping back to Nato'wa and Kioga being reunited with Beth, the two then returning to America.

For those readers who like plenty of adventure mixed with their fantasy, I heartily recommend this series.

---oOo---

MIDSUMMER'S EVE

by
Joseph Schaumburger

The Moon wanes and the month dies,
  And the wind calls through the waving grass;
  The slow parades of shadows pass,
The soft-sung chants and whispered cries,
A tortured squirrel's gasping sighs,
  Faint cymbals sound, and trembling brass
  Wakes echoes sharp as tinkling glass.
The ravens drift past graying skies
And quiet dawn sends silver light
  In patterns calm and cool and clear
That rend the curtain of the night
  And end once more the ancient fear;
And nothing mars the pleasant morn
But a stain of red on a broken thorn.

Taine, John, pseud. (Eric Temple Bell)

The Cosmic Geoids and One Other

Los Angeles: Fantasy Publishing Co., 1948. 179pp. 23½ cm. $3.

Further information: The book's jacket and four interior illustrations are the work of Louis Goldstone.

Review: Frustration is certainly one of the most damning emotions however and whenever it is encountered, and there are few things as conducive to frustration as an exhibition of great possibilities coupled with a general failure to realize those possibilities. Conversely, satisfaction may nearly always be achieved by a general fulfillment of whatever is promised, even if the limited scope of what is promised also limits the depth of the satisfaction. Both cases are admirably illustrated in John Taine's most recently published book. "The Cosmic Geoids" portends more and greater things than Taine has ever before attempted (quite a large order, by the way!), but succeeds in delivering only frustration and unlimited quantities of confusion. Its companion piece, "The Black Goldfish," aims to be little more than an enjoyable, easily-read short novel, and fulfills this aim completely.

One of the main reasons for high expectations for "The Cosmic Geoids" comes from the author's new and different concept of a "life spectrum." This idea, closely related to the everyday phenomenon observed when ordinary white light is passed through a prism, postulates that all life is part of a spectrum, and includes in its lowest orders many forms which we consider inanimate. Drawing an analogy with complementary colors, Taine visualizes a disturbance at any part of the life spectrum causing a like disturbance at another, complementary, part.

Another striking feature of the plot involves the cosmic geoids themselves. These are strange hollow metal spheres that, over a period of many years, have been collected from all over the Earth. Immeasurably hard, they resist all attempts to open them until a simple torque is applied----whereupon they fall apart cleanly into two hemispheres. In their cores are found metal plates covered with writing; and this writing, when finally interpreted, reveals the history and science of a race separated from the solar system by thousands of millions of years, both in time and space. Shortly before the last of these plates is translated, and immediately following the end of Earth's seventh world war, the novel begins.

The narration at first deals with the history of the last five million years of the planet Eos's very advanced civilization. (Here it should be noted that although Taine used the name "Eos" for the planet and civilization in his novel The Time Stream, the two planets and races bear no apparent relationship.) Through observing disturbances in their world's life spectrum, the Eosians discover that their central sun will shortly become a super-nova. At first these disturbances affect only a low order of life; but soon they cause a great percentage of the Eosians themselves to be mutated into "the living dead." These are a decadent type of Eosian having high physical but low mental development. Thus the Eosian episode of the story deals with the race's struggle with its decadent compatriots and with nature itself as it attempts to find a method of arresting entropy. Suffice it to reveal that the key to the problem is discovered ---but too late. Unable to save themselves, the Eosians' last act is to disperse through space billions of the geoids bearing their history, and telling the way whereby another race may save itself if faced with a similar disaster.

Since plausibility is a fundamental necessity for good science-fiction, let us consider the plausibility of these concepts. Plaudits are due the author

for his handling of the method of translating the plates in the geoids. Instead of utilizing some improbable mechanical device such as a "thought helmet" or the like, Taine goes to great lengths to be logical. Along with the plates is sent a rosetta stone affair relating the conventional symbols of the unknown language to pictures. It is even pointed out that many of the pictured objects would lack earthly counterparts and therefore be unrecognizable; thus hundreds of years elapse before the concerted efforts of investigators make anything approaching a complete translation. Not quite so adroitly handled, however, is another problem concerning the geoids. Roughly fifty of them are needed to produce one complete record. About forty of them, all different, are discovered. Now, the probability of the Earth's intercepting as many as forty geoids dispatched from a point thousands of millions of light years away is vanishingly small. Moreover, the probability of receiveing forty that did not duplicate one another is virtually zero. This seems a rather strange blunder in plausibility for a mathematician to make. Of passing interest is a mathematician's apparent fascination by a multiple-sun planetary system: in the only two novels utilizing a solar system different from our own, double and triple sun systems have been employed.

However, to return to the story itself, the Earth is in imminent danger of suffering the same extinction that overtook the Eosians. This is discovered by careful study of the "September madness," a periodic occurrence of temporary mass insanity. It is traced to disturbances in the sun's radiation. From here on the plot would seem fairly clear-cut, but the author promptly attempts to superimpose a third motif on the two already existing. Here, too, is the point at which the story begins to get confused, for instead of following through the salvation of Earth, Taine drags in personalities at the last moment and tries to shift the story's emphasis to them. Prior to this everything has been depicted impersonally---and then, all of a sudden, the reader finds himself concerned with the fates of three individuals, while that of the Earth is jettisoned completely.

"The Cosmic Geoids" strikes one as a combination of Last and First Men and Last Men in London. The scope is almost as vast. And yet what Stapledon accomplished in nearly a thousand pages Taine has attempted to cover in less than one hundred---with predictable consequences. If the story had been developed in the length and with the care of Stapledon's two novels, I feel it would have made a work of comparable stature. As it stands now it is a diamond in the rough that needs considerable cutting and polishing to make of it a valuable gem.

On the basis of the rapid changes in pace and emphasis, I would hazard the guess that the work was written during two different periods that were separated by a considerable gap of time. The first three chapters proceed at the same leisurely pace expected of the usual 400-page Taine novel. Probably the manuscript was then laid aside, to be resurrected on the call of an excited fan publishing house and given a hastily written, tacked-on conclusion. Certainly "The Cosmic Geoids" does not correspond to the description of any unpublished Taine novel we have been told of. But whether these suppositions are true or not, the work needs rewriting more than any novel I have read recently; here, for the first time, the adjective "crude" can justifiably be given to a Taine work.

"The Black Goldfish" has a plot as simple, clear and concise as that of "The Cosmic Geoids" is confused, complex and incomplete. Those who have read "The Ultimate Catalyst" will find its central idea by no means new. In fact, this story seems almost a reworking of the earlier one in a slightly different style. Instead of a "greenbeefo," the marvellous pear that substituted for proteins, the pure vitamins alpha and omega appear. Both are powerful stimulants, and one has the interesting property of---but that, really, is Taine's plot.

The main strength of this plot rises from the characterization, which is extremely well handled. Though she is not too often encountered, the most in-

teresting character is the "black goldfish" herself; this is the nickname given his Nubian cook Cleo by Klaup, a fumbling biochemist. This insulting appelation, which has as its source the beautiful goldfish Cleo in Disney's film "Pinocchio," is one of the major factors leading to Klaup's downfall. Another factor is his swindling the hero Jones, the rightful synthesizer of vitamins alpha and omega, out of his discovery and his laboratories as well. Posing as a refugee, he in reality maintains connections with certain totalitarian countries, and the plot revolves about his exposure.

In "The Black Goldfish" Taine seems to be trying to recapture the informal, bright style of Before the Dawn. In passages like the following he succeeds admirably:

> "To make sure he was too dumb to understand anything I gave him a crate of standardized white rats to play with. The man knows as much about biology as I know about the kingdom of heaven. He couldn't stick a needle into a pillow. He never got a drop of alpha or omega into one of them. But he did accumulate one of the nicest collection of ratbites I ever hope to see."

Unfortunately passages like these do not occur with the frequency they do in Before the Dawn. Considering overall the effect of plot in "The Ultimate Catalyst" plus style in Before the Dawn, the author seems to have established that one and one can make one-half, for "The Black Goldfish" rises to the standard of neither. Yet even though all the effects striven for did not come off, the effort is still above the norm of most fantasy in limited editions, where quality is non-existent or nearly so.

The heaviness of the first story and the lightness of the second actually balance well. Therefore,I recommend The Cosmic Geoids and One Other, with the reservations already noted, and also with the hope that John Taine will some day be stimulated to write us the novel we should have had as the book's titlepiece.

---oOo--- ---Richard Witter.

Keller, David Henry

The Solitary Hunters and The Abyss: Two Fantastic Novels

Philadelphia: New Era Publishers, 1948. 265pp. 20 cm. $3.

Review: I think this newest of Keller's published books shows quite plainly the extreme phases of his writing: one, the adventure type of fantasy which made the Keller, M.D. byline an almost certain guarantee of a fine action story; two, the concern for humanity as a whole, the mass instead of the individual, as seen through a doctor's penetrating eyes.

The reader familiar with Keller will recognize "The Solitary Hunters" as typical of his action fantasies, as Keller at his best with the play, not the actors, being the thing. The suspense is good; I doubt if any reader can go beyond the first page without becoming interested, for the rapid-order unfolding of events build up to a perplexing mystery, and from there on this writer can assure the reader of some pleasant moments of reading fun. Other than mentioning that "The Solitary Hunters" is an oldish but very popular Weird Tales reprint I shall pass over any further resume of it.

"The Abyss" is an altogether different thing. It is the account of a descent into "the misty mid region of Weir"---that mid region, so little explored, which lies between sanity and madness, or, in other words, into the devious

and grotesque bypaths of the human mind stripped of its taboos and hurled without preparation into the savagery that we may assume existed several thousand years ago, before science laid too thick a veneer of civilization over man's vortexes of passions.

By means of a drug two men carry out an experiment upon the entire city of New York. Their experiment in effect, they begin a study that carries the reader hither and yon among examples of madness, lust and the downright silliness of which men and women are capable under the influence of the drug used here that rips away their sense of conventions. Harlem is held in the sway of a fiendish and quite mad negress; the white upper caste turns to the worship of the female body, divine or no; the laboring masses vent their pent-up hate on the luckless middle class; and a human leech realizes the advantage of his position as police chief and seizes power over greater New York City, declaring it an independant nation seceding from the union, his hostages the fallen mighty.

This novel is obviously a frank and brutal scrutiny of man sans his petty but needful little rules; frank because a writer who is well versed in the study of insanity draws the curtain of his imagination and convictions aside, brutal because a story such as this one could not be told otherwise. While reading "The Abyss" I could not help noticing the manner in which the two experimenters conducted themselves: like passionless gods---as gods should be---with their interest only in their dissection of mass atavism. And I was rather pleased to find this story written without mawkish sympathy; only once does Keller lower himself to consider emotions in the perpetrator of his gigantic enterprise, and perhaps this slip, occurring as it does at the end, can be forgiven---yet it would seem to me that Keller would have done better to climax his story in the spirit it was written, rather than the maudlin ending we expected.

Though there is bound to be some little difference in a man's mode of writing in fifteen years, still the style is much the same in both novels, and, as almost always, deceptive. The first impression gained from reading Keller is of a leisurely narration. This, however, is not always true. Keller can compress as much action into one page, without appearing to do so, as many authors can in two or three. He is seldom verbose, writing as Mark Twain once said he wanted to, in a simple, straightforward manner with no thought for unnecessary adjectives to increase the wordage. One notes, too, a peculiarity in the narration that first passes for stiltedness. Gradually this feeling wears away as one becomes accustomed to the style. In part, I believe this conception of stiltedness is due to the near non-existent employment of contractions, especially in the dialogue; most of the characters talk alike, and differentiation as a result is not always easy; too, one might say Keller's method of writing is unique inasmuch as none of his contemporaries make use of this deceptive simplicity and this itself is prone to upset an unprepared reader's equilibrium.

Of the physical characteristics of the book I shall say little: the binding is of average quality black cloth with gold lettering; the jacket and two interior illustrations, executed by John V. Baltadonis, are good and pleasing to the eye. To the old-time reader I can say little more. To the newcomer who has not met the author before I say this: there is but one David H. Keller, and I am sure you will like him.

---Philip Gray.

---oOo---

BACK NUMBERS: The following back issues of this magazine are available in small supply at present: #9, 11, 20, 21; price 25¢ per copy, five for $1. As some of these will soon be out of print, we suggest you order now any you wish to add to your files.... IN THE NEXT ISSUE we'll have a critical review article on Bleiler's Checklist of Fantastic Literature that got crowded out of this number, plus other features.

THE IMMORTAL STORM

A HISTORY OF SCIENCE-FICTION FANDOM

by
Sam Moskowitz

(part 15)

XXXV
The New Fantasy Magazines and Their Influence on Fandom

The New Fandom group had as its objective the creation of a larger and more cooperative fandom, and aiding the realization of this objective were the economic factors then molding the science-fiction field.

From prosperous beginnings in the late twenties, professional fantasy magazines had suffered a series of set-backs that left them almost prostrate as the depression met its depths in 1933. By then there were but four titles being published, and these changed size and lapsed into irregular appearance occasionally in an effort to maintain themselves.

With the disappearance of its rival Ghost Stories in early 1932 and by dint of appealing to other readers through publishing science-fiction stories in its columns, Weird Tales, the lone purveyor of the supernatural, managed to keep its appearance of equilibrium best of all.

Wonder Stories, as we have already noted earlier, continued to hold on after changing ownership, editors and policy in mid-1936.

When Clayton Publications was sold to Street & Smith in 1933, Astounding Stories reappeared after a six-month hiatus under the editorship of F. Orlin Tremaine, whose reputation at that time was at its all-time high. A science-fiction fan himself, Tremaine managed within two years' time to rocket Astounding to the leading position among fantasy pulps, printing such a highly popular quality of fiction that his two competitors were almost forced out of the running.

With the April, 1938 issue, Teck Publications gave up the ghost of Amazing Stories, selling that title, along with the rest of their chain of periodicals, to the Ziff-Davis Company of Chicago. And through the intervention of Ralph Milne Farley, old-time fan Raymond A. Palmer obtained the job of editing the rejuvenated Amazing.

Palmer's progress was watched by the entire field with great interest. The type of story formerly printed in the magazine was discarded entirely. The covers and interior illustrations were enlivened. In short, Amazing Stories was made over into a pulp magazine in the usual sense of that phrase, every legitimate type of appeal being utilized to attract the largest possible group of readers. Though occasional stories of superior merit did appear, Palmer concentrated on stories that veteran fans considered "written down" and far too elementary and stereotyped in concept. But despite disappointing the old guard, the magazine's circulation rose in substantial jumps with every issue. Thus science-fiction, for the first time in many years, began to reach an expanding instead of a diminishing audience. Moreover Palmer, probably remembering his own fan days, was liberal in publishing free notices of various fan events and publications.

The brief 1937-38 recession experienced by the country managed, paradoxically enough, to stimulate fantasy publishing. Because even such standbys as detective and western story magazines showed slumps in sales, pulp chain executives were more than willing to investigate any medium showing possibilities of profit. The double precedent of Standard and Ziff-Davis entering the field and Astounding's circulation nosing over the 80,000 mark gave Red Circle Publications

the incentive to launch a fantasy magazine of their own. The first issue of the magazine, Marvel Science Stories, was dated August, 1938 and appeared in May. It featured Arthur J. Burks' "Survival," a complete novel considered by fans as one of the finest science-fiction stories of the year. Marvel also brought back to the field the artwork of Frank R. Paul, whose popular illustrations had not been seen since Wonder Stories changed hands over two years previously. As an added and probably experimental attraction, the publishers cagily included a couple of stories featuring the sex element in a crude and obvious fashion. This first issue sold in excess of 60,000 copies---considered very good for that time.

The flood was now on; an orgy of science-fiction publishing which refused to abate was under way.

Elated by their own success, Red Circle Publications cheerfully let it be known that they were issuing a companion to Marvel entitled Dynamic Science Stories, whose first number would feature a new novel by Stanton Coblentz.

Standard Magazines, which had long hinted at a companion magazine to Thrilling Wonder, now announced that the first issue of Startling Stories, featuring a previously unpublished novel by the late Stanley G. Weinbaum called "The Black Flame" would appear late in November and bear the date January, 1939.

Almost simultaneously Ziff-Davis announced that not only was Amazing Stories going to appear monthly (instead of bimonthly) as a result of its success, but that it, too, would have a companion named Fantastic Adventures. As an added attraction this was to be large-sized, like the earlier Amazings and Wonders.

Not to be outdone, Blue Ribbon Magazines hired Charles Hornig, the ex-editor of Gernsback's Wonder Stories, to direct their new pulp Science Fiction.

Finally, two new titles competing more or less directly with the hoary Weird Tales came into being. These were Strange Stories, put out by Standard, and Unknown, which John W. Campbell declared was being put out by Street & Smith solely because receipt of a sensational novel by Eric Frank Russell called for creation of an entirely new type of fantasy magazine. Both of these periodicals hit the newsstands early in 1939.

And as though fate had intended it that way, on Sunday, October 30, 1938 Orson Welles presented his memorable radio adaptation of Wells' War of the Worlds, which sent Americans screaming and scurrying into the streets, their heads wrapped in wet towels to protect them against Martian heat-rays. This was all that was needed to focus public attention openly on science-fiction, in which most people had long believed anyway.

The nerve center disseminating all these reports was Taurasi's weekly Fantasy News, which, by the aid of reporters Racic and Moskowitz, easily scooped its rival The Science Fiction News Letter and continued to gain prestige and circulation. Professional publishers were appreciative of the liberal space and bold headlines with which their ventures were publicized throughout fandom, and were in turn generous with their own help whenever it was solicited. As a result New Fandom, through Fantasy News, made good its promise to promote a more harmonious relationship between the fan field and the professionals. Doubtless this was in part responsible for the fact that almost without exception every new magazine featured numerous departments of chief interest to the fans themselves, printing letters and announcements with complete addresses. The most influential of these were the fan magazine review column in Startling Stories (which still operates today) and what amounted to a miniature fan magazine in every number of Hornig's Science Fiction.

It was inevitable that as a result of this coöperation there would be a great influx of new names into the fan field, and this indeed did come to pass. And New Fandom, which had set itself up as representing fans everywhere, found itself working towards the First World Science Fiction Convention with steadily

mounting membership, the wholehearted coöperation of almost all onlookers, and the complete good will of every publisher, who, without exception, promised help without stint---all in vivid contrast to the antagonism that had marked the condition of the field a year previously.

XXXVI
The Role of the Queens SFL

When Sykora and Taurasi hastily reorganized the Queens SFL chapter, it had been an action motivated by political expediency only; and certainly they, if anybody, had no illusions that the group would ever amount to anything. Indeed, it is nowhere recorded that anyone had the vision to predict a rosy future for the chapter. But destiny had rolled the dice---and in the short space of a few months the Queens SFL was to emerge as a power to be reckoned with in the field, and earn for itself an important seat in the roster of the great fan clubs.

The first meeting, as we have seen, took place on October 2, 1938, in Taurasi's home. A charter was applied for and received from league headquarters.

At the second meeting, held the following month, all those present signed the charter. The attendance was double that previously, and included no other special guest than Mortimer Weisinger, editor of Thrilling Wonder Stories.

Julius Schwartz, well known veteran fan and literary agent, was a guest at the December meeting, which again boasted an attendance of twenty.

These meetings were described in chamber of commerce style by Sam Moskowitz, whose glowing, multi-paged accounts made the club seem unquestionably on the road to success. Thus aided, the news quickly spread about that the Queens SFL was the place to spend the first Sunday of every month, and when the first meeting of 1939 found twenty-five enthusiasts cramming into Taurasi's home, members began to think in terms of more spacious quarters. It was at this meeting, with delegations from New England and Philadelphia on hand to hear guests Willy Ley and Charles Hornig, that the chapter gained its slogan of "a miniature convention at every meeting"---which, all press-agentry aside, was a fairly accurate description of what went on. Authors, editors and other leading lights in the field were either actual members or such frequent attendees that they might just as well have been. The average number of people at each gathering was over thirty, and included leading lights like John W. Campbell, Jr., Eando Binder, Thomas S. Gardner, John D. Clark, Eric Frank Russell, Jack Williamson, Willy Ley, C. H. Ruppert, Charles Hornig and many others.

The casual onlooker would scarcely have realized the political importance the Queens SFL was assuming because of the great whirl of celebrities and orgy of science-fiction discussion present, but it played a vital role. It was there that New Fandom wooed and won the support of the professionals of the field to its cause. A professional would be extended the most cordial possible invitation to attend a meeting, with travel instructions carefully detailed. At the meeting itself he would be treated with the greatest respect, feted as a celebrity; his words would be listened to carefully, he would be flooded with questions, his autograph would be solicited. If an editor, an issue of his magazine would be scheduled for oral review story by story, illustration by illustration, department by department. If at all possible, a friend of his would be invited to the same meeting so that he would have a companion and feel completely at home. If he were an author, a science-fiction quiz on the program would be sure to include questions alluding to some of his stories; if an artist, a key topic for discussion might be similarly slanted. A few days after the meeting, the celebrity would be thanked for his interest and asked to attend some future meeting. Within a week, while the memory was still pleasantly warm in his mind, an issue of Fantasy News would appear in his letter-box bearing his name in headlines and an account of his statements at the gathering. Shortly thereafter he would re-

ceive a letter from Sam Moskowitz telling him that his talk at the Queens meeting had been so popular it would be little less than a crime not to publish its text in New Fandom for the dissemination to the fan world. In New Fandom it would be presented in dignified tone, and often other articles of comment by professionals would be solicited and/or received regarding it.

In this fashion, though even many of its members scarcely realized the fact, the Queens SFL became an essential member, with New Fandom and Fantasy News, of a powerful trinity that was dominating and setting a tone for all of science-fiction fandom. Here was being created the good will that resulted in the wholehearted cooperation among professionals so necessary for a successful fan convention. Directly or indirectly everyone was benefited---for, even as the professionals received widespread publicity of the most favorable variety, so were the members of the Queens SFL and readers of New Fandom and Fantasy News receiving material that interested them greatly. As a result, too, fandom at large found it increasingly easy to gain access to and help from those very authors and editors who but a few months previously had been cold to every tentative advance.

It could be seen, too, that the Queens SFL would share with New Fandom the brunt of the work for putting on the convention the coming summer. All key men behind the project were members of both organizations, and every meeting of the Queens chapter (which was held in Bohemia Hall, Astoria after January, 1939) had as part of its program a report by either Sykora or Moskowitz on progress of convention preparations.

It is hard to apportion fair credit to individuals for the early success of the Queens group for this was, in many ways, due largely to selfless cooperation. Probably Sykora, the instigator, and Taurasi, the director, deserve the lion's share of credit for management of club affairs and program presentation. A powerful aide was Mario Racic, a capable and willing worker. Julius Schwartz was instrumental in persuading many celebrities to attend, and Sam Moskowitz's familiarity with their "pedigrees" and ability to warm them to the task at hand was as useful as his later published accounts of the meetings. Hyman Tiger's comprehensive knowledge of current science-fiction and contributions to the Queens library and various drives were all extremely helpful. And taken as a whole, these things, together with the group's location in the largest city of the country, made the Queens SFL as popular as it was influential.

XXXVII
Amateur Magazines of the Period

We have seen that New Fandom was to form a central hub about which all fan activities revolved. New Fandom preached the doctrine of improvement through cooperation instead of through anarchic effort. Instead of half a dozen fans publishing as many diverse titles, none of which had any great impact singly, New Fandom urged, and set by example, the consolidation of many small efforts into a a few big ones. New Fandom magazine itself was the result of merging the major resources of six smaller journals, one large club and a manuscript bureau. Fantasy News became a success because several fans, each capable of gathering material for and publishing a newspaper, forswore this course in the interest of unity and were willing to work constructively together to produce a single superior effort.

Fandom as a whole was not unaffected by the example set by New Fandom, and as a result early 1939 saw appearance of a comparatively small number of fan magazines of better quality; moreover, these magazines adopted a more serious attitude toward professional publications than they had done previously.

One of the leading amateur journals of this period was Spaceways, published in Hagerstown, Maryland by Harry Warner, Jr. Warner had been a follower

mounting membership, the wholehearted coöperation of almost all onlookers, and the complete good will of every publisher, who, without exception, promised help without stint---all in vivid contrast to the antagonism that had marked the condition of the field a year previously.

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Julius Schwartz, well known veteran fan and literary agent, was a guest at the December meeting, which again boasted an attendance of twenty.

These meetings were described in chamber of commerce style by Sam Moskowitz, whose glowing, multi-paged accounts made the club seem unquestionably on the road to success. Thus aided, the news quickly spread about that the Queens SFL was the place to spend the first Sunday of every month, and when the first meeting of 1939 found twenty-five enthusiasts cramming into Taurasi's home, members began to think in terms of more spacious quarters. It was at this meeting, with delegations from New England and Philadelphia on hand to hear guests Willy Ley and Charles Hornig, that the chapter gained its slogan of "a miniature convention at every meeting"---which, all press-agentry aside, was a fairly accurate description of what went on. Authors, editors and other leading lights in the field were either actual members or such frequent attendees that they might just as well have been. The average number of people at each gathering was over thirty, and included leading lights like John W. Campbell, Jr., Eando Binder, Thomas S. Gardner, John D. Clark, Eric Frank Russell, Jack Williamson, Willy Ley, C. H. Ruppert, Charles Hornig and many others.

The casual onlooker would scarcely have realized the political importance the Queens SFL was assuming because of the great whirl of celebrities and orgy of science-fiction discussion present, but it played a vital role. It was there that New Fandom wooed and won the support of the professionals of the field to its cause. A professional would be extended the most cordial possible invitation to attend a meeting, with travel instructions carefully detailed. At the meeting itself he would be treated with the greatest respect, feted as a celebrity; his words would be listened to carefully, he would be flooded with questions, his autograph would be solicited. If an editor, an issue of his magazine would be scheduled for oral review story by story, illustration by illustration, department by department. If at all possible, a friend of his would be invited to the same meeting so that he would have a companion and feel completely at home. If he were an author, a science-fiction quiz on the program would be sure to include questions alluding to some of his stories; if an artist, a key topic for discussion might be similarly slanted. A few days after the meeting, the celebrity would be thanked for his interest and asked to attend some future meeting. Within a week, while the memory was still pleasantly warm in his mind, an issue of Fantasy News would appear in his letter-box bearing his name in headlines and an account of his statements at the gathering. Shortly thereafter he would re-

ceive a letter from Sam Moskowitz telling him that his talk at the Queens meeting had been so popular it would be little less than a crime not to publish its text in New Fandom for the dissemination to the fan world. In New Fandom it would be presented in dignified tone, and often other articles of comment by professionals would be solicited and/or received regarding it.

In this fashion, though even many of its members scarcely realized the fact, the Queens SFL became an essential member, with New Fandom and Fantasy News, of a powerful trinity that was dominating and setting a tone for all of science-fiction fandom. Here was being created the good will that resulted in the wholehearted cooperation among professionals so necessary for a successful fan convention. Directly or indirectly everyone was benefited---for, even as the professionals received widespread publicity of the most favorable variety, so were the members of the Queens SFL and readers of New Fandom and Fantasy News receiving material that interested them greatly. As a result, too, fandom at large found it increasingly easy to gain access to and help from those very authors and editors who but a few months previously had been cold to every tentative advance.

It could be seen, too, that the Queens SFL would share with New Fandom the brunt of the work for putting on the convention the coming summer. All key men behind the project were members of both organizations, and every meeting of the Queens chapter (which was held in Bohemia Hall, Astoria after January, 1939) had as part of its program a report by either Sykora or Moskowitz on progress of convention preparations.

It is hard to apportion fair credit to individuals for the early success of the Queens group for this was, in many ways, due largely to selfless cooperation. Probably Sykora, the instigator, and Taurasi, the director, deserve the lion's share of credit for management of club affairs and program presentation. A powerful aide was Mario Racic, a capable and willing worker. Julius Schwartz was instrumental in persuading many celebrities to attend, and Sam Moskowitz's familiarity with their "pedigrees" and ability to warm them to the task at hand was as useful as his later published accounts of the meetings. Hyman Tiger's comprehensive knowledge of current science-fiction and contributions to the Queens library and various drives were all extremely helpful. And taken as a whole, these things, together with the group's location in the largest city of the country, made the Queens SFL as popular as it was influential.

XXXVII
Amateur Magazines of the Period

We have seen that New Fandom was to form a central hub about which all fan activities revolved. New Fandom preached the doctrine of improvement through cooperation instead of through anarchic effort. Instead of half a dozen fans publishing as many diverse titles, none of which had any great impact singly, New Fandom urged, and set by example, the consolidation of many small efforts into a a few big ones. New Fandom magazine itself was the result of merging the major resources of six smaller journals, one large club and a manuscript bureau. Fantasy News became a success because several fans, each capable of gathering material for and publishing a newspaper, forswore this course in the interest of unity and were willing to work constructively together to produce a single superior effort.

Fandom as a whole was not unaffected by the example set by New Fandom, and as a result early 1939 saw appearance of a comparatively small number of fan magazines of better quality; moreover, these magazines adopted a more serious attitude toward professional publications than they had done previously.

One of the leading amateur journals of this period was Spaceways, published in Hagerstown, Maryland by Harry Warner, Jr. Warner had been a follower

of science-fiction since 1933, but his interest had not been aroused intensely until early 1938, when subscriptions to fan journals and a correspondence with James S. Avery, a young man living in Maine, decided him to launch into publishing his own amateur effort. A cooperative effort between the two in a hektograph medium proved abortive. But nothing daunted, Warner then went ahead on his own, producing a letter-sized mimeographed publication of twenty pages, the first issue of which was dated November, 1938. This number contained a story by the professional fantasy writer Amelia Reynolds Long, a biography of author E. E. Smith, and other material of general fan interest. Spaceways was begun as a bi-monthly, but proved so popular that Warner soon averaged an issue every six weeks.

The quality and variety of material in Spaceways was commendable. The early numbers carried such names as H. P. Lovecraft, Jack Williamson, Cyril Mand, Thomas P. Kelley, Ralph Milne Farley, Thomas S. Gardner, Robert W. Lowndes, Bob Tucker, Frederick Pohl, Larry B. Farsaci, F. J. Ackerman, Sam Moskowitz and many others. Two of its most popular features were "Stardust," a gossip column by "The Star Treader" (J. Chapman Miske) and "What They Are About," J. Michael Rosenblum's column of British book reviews, both of which appeared regularly. As nearly as possible Warner tried to remain outwardly neutral in fan politics and disagreements, barring from publication insofar as possible unnecessarily personal material. Though at times chided for excessive caution in this respect, he made few enemies and many friends, and rapidly assumed a popular position during that period. Warner was frequently visited by passing fans, but he himself made virtually no known fan excursions of importance outside his native city, thus earning the nickname "The Hermit of Hagerstown"---an appelation he richly deserved, since he frequently refused offers of free transportation to these excursions by others. His action may in part have been due to poor health, for he was alleged to suffer from painful and repetitious headaches of long duration. Whatever the motivation, however, this stay-at-home attitude was widely commented upon before fans became reconciled to it.

Robert A. Madle's Fantascience Digest had led an up-and-down existence until it assumed a mimeographed format with its January, 1939 number. Up until then, too, he had had the help of Willis Conover and John Baltadonis. But these two slumped into inactivity, leaving Madle only Jack Agnew. Paradoxically, such losses served only to prove that Madle was a top-ranking editor in the field. He solicited and obtained material of high reader-interest, and gathered about him such staff writers as Mark Reinsberg, Milton A. Rothman, Harry Warner, Sam Moskowitz and Fred W. Fischer, a long-standing reader of the old Munsey magazines who wrote copiously about fantasy stories published there. Other well-known names that contributed were Henry Kuttner, Ray Bradbury, Ralph Milne Farley, Donald A. Wollheim, John Giunta, Cyril Mand and Oswald Train. Like Fantasy News, New Fandom and Spaceways, Fantascience Digest had a paid circulation list of over a hundred; and it was apparent from this that in the short period of six months marked by a policy of friendly cooperation with the professionals the number of active inner circle fans had actually doubled.

Under the capable editorship of Gertrude and Louis Kuslan, Cosmic Tales had quietly become a neatly mimeographed publication featuring a higher quality of fan-written fiction than had appeared in some years. In addition to stories by Taurasi, Sykora, Farsaci, Giunta, Avery, Speer, Frome and Moskowitz, the magazine managed to obtain items from such professionals as David H. Keller, Thomas S. Gardner and J. Harvey Haggard. It featured work by such British writers as J. F. Burke, Christopher Youd and David McIllwain as well, which lent an agreeable international tone to its pages. But Cosmic Tales' most popular feature was a regular column by Jack Speer, whose title had a curious origin. Speer, who lived in Washington, D.C., borrowed his brother's car and started out for New Haven, Connecticut, where he planned to spend a Thanksgiving week-end with the Kuslans.

Only a fraction of a mile from his destination he fell asleep at the wheel and hit a telephone pole. Speer himself suffered little more than a shaking-up, but the severe damage to the car caused him expenses that forced him to cut down his fan activities drastically. Thus the appropriately titled Cosmic Tales column called "Thots from Exile." This was one of the earliest columns devoted to political commentary on fan feuds and similar controversial topics, and this novelty lent it wide popularity and influence.

Walter Marconette published four quarterly issues of Scienti-Snaps in 1938, not including the special number for the First National Science-Fiction Convention. His companion publication, Science-Fantasy Movie Review, also appeared five times during the year. Following the trend of the times, the former title became a mimeographed journal with its February, 1939 number, and combined with the latter with the following April issue. Marconette's mimeography, like his hektography, was a paragon of neatness; and his magazine continued to increase in popularity through the first half of 1939, featuring a medley of fiction, articles and columns by well known names of the day. In August J. Chapman Miske was added to its staff, and he aided in producing the finest chapters of its history.

As can be seen, the day of the hektograph was virtually past; with expanded horizons before them fan editors had either to publish larger editions or keep them limited if they refused to abandon the hektograph. Thus every journal of importance was switching to the medium of the mimeograph. There were, however, a few important exceptions to the trend. One of them was Fantasy Digest, a title published in Fort Wayne, Indiana by Thaddeus E. Dikty, known today as co-owner of Shasta Publishers. Fantasy Digest published material by many leading fans of the day, but its pride and joy was the work of its discovery, artist Bernard Maskwitz. Maskwitz's style closely resembled that of Alex Raymond, who drew the "Flash Gordon" comic strips, and was so effective that Standard Publications attempted to solicit work from him for Thrilling Wonder Stories. However Maskwitz, with whom drawing was but a spare-time hobby, refused on the grounds that such work would intrude on his regular vocational duties.

These, then, were the leading American fan publications of early 1939, and with the exception of The Science Fiction News-Letter and The Science Fiction Fan (whose histories have been outlined in previous chapters) they all followed in general the New Fandom policies, and worked in close, harmonious accord. The field for the first time in some years was not glutted with titles, and titles that were being published appeared with commendable regularity. With increased professional publicity drawing more and more fans into activity, circulation and general quality rose steadily higher, and fan magazines once more became items that were worth collecting.

XXXVIII
Minor Dissensions

Roughly three years had passed since Arthur W. ("Bob") Tucker had perpetrated his infamous death hoax on the editor of Astounding Stories. In this period little or nothing had been heard out of Bloomington, Illinois. In the interim, however, F. Orlin Tremaine had left Street and Smith, and Astounding Stories, now retitled Astounding Science-Fiction, came under the editorship of John W. Campbell, Jr. Even before Tremaine left, the harsh edict to abolish "Brass Tacks" (a column devoted to readers' letters) had been relaxed, and its succeeding "Science Discussions" became diluted with general comments from subscribers. The June, 1938 issue carried a letter from James S. Avery which bemoaned, among many other things, the fact that readers' letters published in Astounding were no longer either intelligent or clever. Whether it was pure chance that Tucker decided to reply to this point, or whether he was looking for an opportunity to re-

turn to the fold and would have picked another had not this one appeared is an interesting subject for speculation. At any rate, Tucker's letter defending the current wit of readers' letters appeared in the August, 1938 Astounding; and like Al Jolson after a long layoff Tucker went joyously into his old song and dance, ending his communication with a humorous parody on the letters of old. Perhaps as a result Tucker received letters asking him to return to activity once more, as during the fall of 1938 fans began receiving letters and subscriptions from him. In any event, Bob Tucker was back in the swim of things again.

Among others, he contacted James Taurasi, and when late in 1938 Tucker issued a little four-paged hektographed leaflet titled Science Fiction Advertiser the legend "A Cosmic Publication" was prominently displayed on its masthead. The Advertiser was the earliest serious attempt at a fan magazine devoted solely to advertising, being preceded only by Moskowitz's Science Fiction Circular earlier that year, the latter being of purposely limited circulation. The second Advertiser boasted a distribution of two hundred (very high in those times), and underwent a slight change in title. The third issue of Science & Fantasy Advertiser was letter-sized, and carried an announcement of the forthcoming Unknown. Thereafter it passed into the hands of one Sully Roberds (believed by many to be Tucker under a pseudonym), and though forecasted to appear as a professionally printed publication never did.

Probably Tucker's failure to do anything with this effort can be traced to a wish to write and publish humorous works which had long been his forte. To facilitate this he first reestablished his D'Journal, abandoned since 1935, and followed its success with a new title, Le Zombie. Both were Cosmic Publications and the latter was distributed at first as a free supplement to Taurasi's Fantasy News. D'Journal featured humorous articles and squibs by Tucker and others, including "Poor Pong's Almanac," "On the Care and Feeding of Vampires," etc. Le Zombie carried advertising as well, and short, satirical, cynical paragraphs departmentalized in The New Yorker fashion like "Subtle Advertising Dept.," "Terrible Secrets Dept." and the like. An attempt was made to give such comments a homey, plain-spoken twang, and Tucker impartially sank their barbs into foe and friend alike. His humorous articles, whether signed by himself or his cognomen "Hoy Ping Pong" were generally burlesques or satires of the fantasy field. This was relatively new to science-fiction fan magazines, and Tucker barred few holds in displaying his undeniable talent for it.

Sam Moskowitz, because of his intense fan activity, had been himself a favorite target for many of these quips and burlesques. Like most others he had let them pass in silence. Like others, too, he realized that such commentaries could be extremely effective weapons for attack: Tucker could ridicule what and whom he pleased, and if a victim objected he would be told everything was being offered in the spirit of good fun and that only a sorehead could not take a joke. Now, Moskowitz had had an article titled "The World Changes" published in Spaceways for February, 1939. In this piece (which, it might be noted, had been written some time before it appeared in print) he tried to show that a new era of fandom was coming about through the influx of new professional magazines and the creation of New Fandom. He maintained that the field was almost quadruple its former size and still growing. Past fan eras were briefly reviewed, and the article was ended on the prediction of a bright future for fans. There were few points of controversy in the article: it simply covered events that had for the most part actually happened since its composition. But it was enough to evoke from Tucker in the next Spaceways a parody entitled "The Moon Changes Too." "Of course history repeats itself!" he declared therein, "Moskowitz has written another ar-tikle on old times, that's history repeating itself!" He went on to burlesque the idea that Moskowitz was writing to any large new group of fans, and then presented a

mock history of fan eras. "Cad zooks, but eras were thick in those days!"

Moskowitz realized that when people laughed at something they would no longer take it seriously; and to him, these articles on fan history were serious things indeed. Therefore he wrote a reply to Tucker for Spaceways, in which he stated that he believed Tucker was using humor as a weapon, not merely for humor's sake alone. He maintained that Tucker was fostering an erroneous impression by belittling the fact that the fan field was made up of many new faces, and questioned his opponent's ability to make such critcisms after being so long out of touch with happenings in fandom. He pointed out that neither Tucker nor anyone else had so far found any errors of fact in "The World Changes," and intimated that the genesis of Tucker's burlesque might well be annoyance over an uncomplimentary piece printed in the November, 1938 New Fandom.

This last was a reference to an article by "Loki" (Peter Duncan) which was written in the belief that Tucker's "death" had been genuine and which went to vitriolic lengths to lambaste his reputation as a humorist. So strong was the adverse opinion of subscribers to this and other writings of Loki that they were thenceforth not published in the magazine. Moskowitz reminded Tucker that he had been written about the column in advance, and that no reply had been received to an offer to withdraw it. Actually, Tucker may have been irked for another reason entirely: in "The World Changes" Moskowitz had inadvertantly omitted his name and that of Robert Madle (who made specific objection to this) in listing several "old time" fans. Credence for this viewpoint is lent by the fact that in a following issue of Le Zombie the editor remarked, "Altho Tucker (yeh, me) was not mentioned by Moskowitz in his Spaceways 'old-timer' article, he lays a few claims to being one anyway."

In the past the agile mind of Jack Speer had proved of powerful aid to Moskowitz in his clashes with the Futurians. In this case, being on friendly terms with both parties concerned, he might have made an effective mediator, but it so happened that he, too, had a bone to pick with "The World Changes," and it did not deal with accuracy of detail. Apparently Speer had been secretly writing a history of science-fiction fandom which he intended to spring as a surprise on everyone when completed. He seemed to see in Moskowitz's short article an annoying anticipation of his own, and was forced to reveal his project ahead of time because of it. He gently deplored Tucker's attempt to disguise the fact that there had been distinct eras in fandom, but beyond that took no reconciliatory action.

To add fuel to the fire another Tucker article was published in Fantasy Digest almost concurrently with the burlesque in Spaceways. The content of "Procession of Yesterdays or Are You a Veteran Too?" is obvious from the title, and Moskowitz felt that Tucker was making undue issue out of the points he stated. He therefore wrote to Tucker about that and other matters; the tone of the reply was calculated to assure Moskowitz that everything really was being done in good fun, with no malice intended. Undoubtedly this would have smoothed over the tiff had not Tucker's "A Little Lesson in Tuckerology" (Spaceways, August, 1938) come out shortly thereafter. Here he took a serious, mature viewpoint, saying that he deplored people misunderstanding his purposes, which were to create a little fun and laughter. Fans took life too seriously, he felt, and denied any personal animus because of Loki's tirade in New Fandom. This was all very well, but when he then proceeded to refer to Moskowitz as "a big-headed little punk trying to act as if he knows what it's all about" he could scarcely be accused to attempting a rapprochement. This virtually assured fandom that regardless of what developed in the near future, Tucker and Moskowitz would not be aligned in the same camp---and that this was more important than it seems will later be shown.

Tucker was responsible for several other items in the 1938-1939 publishing field. As a FAPA member, he produced Science Fiction Variety, a small

journal composed of odds and ends of advertising, wit and art. During early 1939 he produced The Year Book of 1938, which listed and cross-indexed all stories that had appeared in fantasy magazines during 1938. He repeated this publication in 1940 (for 1939 issues), and both numbers have since become valuable items in the eyes of collectors. Tucker had also struck up a friendship with James Avery as a result of answering his Astounding letter and the two produced several fan publications together.

Early in 1938 he organized the Vulcan Manuscript Bureau, which contributed largely to Vulcan Publications, a new publishing chain which he had organized. The pride of Vulcan Publications was a fan magazine called Nova. It was intended to be something entirely new in the realm of fan journalism, being five separate and distinct titles bound together. Three of these five were new: Nova, Science Fiction Esquire and Science Fiction Times. Two, D'Journal and Le Zombie, were of course regularly-appearing Tucker productions. Probably in order to keep peace with Taurasi for the loss of these two to the Vulcan fold, Tucker tactfully labelled Nova a Cosmic-Vulcan publication. (Of special interest in the Science Fiction Esquire portion was a column called "The Battleground," in which Tucker appealed to Robert Lowndes to drop the onus of "decadism" and "Marxism" featured so prominently in most of his articles, and return to the strong, undiluted science-fictional flavor that had in past years made him one of the most popular of fan writers. Lowndes replied to the effect that he would try to write occasional efforts in his former vein, but that because of his newly-acquired Marxist outlook he could not be held responsible for any propaganda that inadvertantly crept into the lines.) Moskowitz predicted that because of its very nature Nova would probably never see a second issue. And when Tucker did indeed find it necessary to dissolve it after the initial number he made wry allusion to the prophecy of "Merlin Moskowitz," which naturally brought the two fans no closer together.

From the foregoing one can see the welter of abrupt activity that pushed Bob Tucker back into prominence in a relatively short time. As the date of the coming world science-fiction convention approached, he had become a powerful figure destined to be a leader in the growth of mid-western fandom.

In Chicago, dormant since late 1936 when the city's SFL chapter had given up the ghost, there were stirrings of new activities. A new circle of fans had formed in which the leading figures were such names as Mark Reinsberg, Melvin Korshak, Richard I. Meyer and William L. Hamling. The rejuvenation of Amazing Stories by the local firm of Ziff-Davis was especially propitious for the growth of this circle, who found editor Raymond Palmer a source of almost every variety of help needed for forwarding their activities. Mark Reinsberg was the most active of the group, his columns on Amazing Stories having appeared regularly for more than a year in Fantascience Digest. Melvin Korshak had dabbled a bit in fantasy book dealing, being one of the first fans to garner profitable returns from their hobby.

With Amazing's Julian S. Krupa as art editor, the above four collaborated to produce a new fan magazine, Ad Astra. Its first issue was dated May, 1939, and sported a pictorial mimeographed cover by Krupa. Generally speaking, the magazine had a sloppy appearance, but the material and editing was flashy. In addition to an interview with Raymond Palmer, the editors had managed to concentrate between their covers contributions from E. E. Smith, John W. Campbell, Hugo Gernsback, Robert Madle, Harry Warner and William Hamling. A second number appeared before convention time, material by Clifford Simak and Jack Williamson in the featured roles.

But Reinsberg, Korshak and Meyer had a misunderstanding with Hamling, whom they accused of being temperamental, and Hamling in return resorted to name calling which included anti-Semitic phrases. Chicago was thus divided into two camps, though news of the schism was kept out of circulation for many months.

Even after the news leaked out, however, both factions attempted to appear to be working together.

And against this troubled background Reinsberg and Korshak planned to make a bid for a 1940 Chicago science-fiction convention at the forthcoming New York affair. History was once more in the making.

(to be continued)

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TIPS ON TALES

by
John C. Nitka

Willis George Emerson's Smoky God (1908): After hearing much about this short novel from collectors I found myself disappointed when actually reading it. Apparently this is one of those books which have acquired legendary fame by virtue of scarcity rather than quality. In any event, the story begins by introducing Olaf Jensen, a Norseman, who with his father has set out in their small sailing ship in search of walrus tusks. After being at sea but a few days they are caught in a storm and driven into unknown seas. The two are then met by a huge vessel manned by humans of correspondingly huge stature. They are treated royally, and taken to the strangers' home, which turns out to be a land in the interior of the earth (a la Symmes), this being entered via the North Polar opening. They remain there two years before deciding to return homeward. The Jensens, burdened by gifts of gold (a common element of the inner world) set out from the South Polar exit, it being winter in the northern hemisphere at the time. Their trip is uneventful until their ship is hemmed in by icebergs and crushed; Olaf manages to save himself by clambering on the berg itself, whence he is later rescued by a passing whaler. Eventually he gets home. His story is of course not believed by anyone, and he is in fact committed to an asylum as a result of insisting on its truth.... There are many footnotes in the book which become annoying on the occasions when they occupy more space on pages than the story itself. At times I wasn't sure that I was not reading a textbook. Despite its numerous illustrations in color The Smoky God was certainly as dry as one.

Prospero and Caliban's Weird of the Wanderer (1912): This volume, which is also a rarity of the first water, turns out to deal with Greek mythology. It appears that the hero, an Englishman, is a reincarnation of "King Odysseys" of ancient Greece. He is also a student of the occult, and manages to accumulate much hidden knowledge through old manuscripts that tell him how to invoke elder gods by incantations, spells and charms. Because of these feats he is recalled by the gods of Olympus, invades Hades, and brings back Helen of Troy, who was exiled in that domain. He is welcomed at Olympus, and there enjoys a honeymoon with Helen. He also manages to play an important part in the pitched battle between the gods of Olympus and those of ancient Rome, who are disputing for power in the heavens. This ends in victory for the former, and the establishment of everlasting peace.

Edwin Pallender's Across the Zodiac (1896): This is an old-timer that remains as good now as the day it appeared. Though some of its idioms and scientific facts are a bit out of date, it nevertheless is as fictionally sound as modern fantasy novels, and much more readable than many. Three scientists studying an active volcanic crater in Iceland get in serious trouble when their balloon is about to fall into the pit of lava. Two of them are rescued in the nick of time by the personnel of a rocket which is making its maiden voyage into outer space. Anti-

gravity effects are obtained by "revolving discs," which free the ship from the earth's attraction. The rocket visits the moon and several of the planets before the two rescued scientists are returned to earth. There is considerable excitement in the story, too, what with a mutinous crew and a near-collision of the ship with the sun itself. All in all, a worthwhile novel well ahead of its time.

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CHECKLIST OF "AVON FANTASY READER"

compiled by
J. Russell Mars

Note: Avon Fantasy Reader magazine is published irregularly by the Avon Publishing Company, Inc., 119 West 57th Street, New York 19, N. Y. It is edited by Donald A. Wollheim. Since it is undated save by copyright date (the first five numbers were copyrighted in 1947, the sixth in 1948), it is best identified by issue number. In the index below the words "the" and "a" have been dropped from all titles which they prefix.

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Wall, Mervyn: The Return of Fursey (Pilot, 9/6). Delightful account of a monk apprenticed to a sorceror. Get it.

Wells, Basil: Planets of Adventure (FPCI, $3). 15 space-opera shorts. Not so hot.

Wheatley, Dennis: The Haunting of Toby Jugg (Hutchinson, 12/6). Giant spiders no less! Pretty sad stuff.

Williamson, Jack: Darker than you Think (Fantasy Press, $3). Lengthened version of an entertaining though not outstanding novel from Unknown Worlds.

Williams, Charles: All Hallows' Eve and Descent into Hell (Pellagrini & Cudahy each $2½); Shadows of Ecstasy (Faber, 8/6). All worthwhile reprints.--A.L.S.

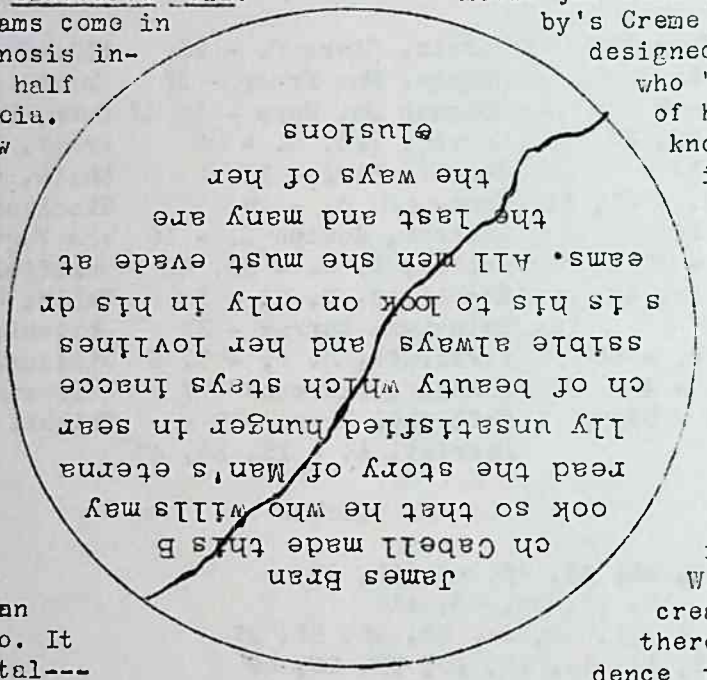
THE SIGIL OF SCOTEIA

by
David H. Keller, M. D.

The Cream of the Jest by James Branch Cabell is the story of man's quest for beauty. Felix Kennaston, whose life is narrated by Fentnor Harrowby, adventures into the past and finds there many lovely ladies who, at the end of each dream, become Ettarre, the Wonder Woman.

From these dreams he secures material for a novel, Men Who Loved Alison, which becomes a best-seller after the various vicissitudes detailed in chapter twelve of The Cream of the Jest. After that, from similar dream material, Kennaston wrote The Tinctured Veil.

These dreams come in periods of self-hypnosis induced by looking at half of the Sigil of Scoteia. Kennaston first saw this gleaming on the breast of Ettarre. He told himself that she gave it to him---though in reality he found it in the garden of his estate Alcluid. It is described as "almost an exact half of a disk, not quite three inches in diameter which somehow had been broken or cut in two. It was of burnished metal---lead---he thought, about a sixteenth of an inch in thickness, and its single notable feature was the tiny characters with which one surface was inscribed." Kennaston was unable to read these characters.



A picture of the half of the Sigil is on page 51 of the 1927 McBride edition of The Cream of the Jest, illustrated by Papé, but later Cabell gives credit to another in an effort to conceal the identity of the actual artist.

Finally Kennaston finds the other half of the Sigil in his wife's bathroom. He fits the two halves together and finds they form a perfect Sigil, "just as he had once seen it upon the brow of Mother Isis." He leaves the completed Sigil on his wife's dressing table in the hope that she will understand and tell him that she also has had her dreams; but she throws the two pieces into her scrap-basket and Kennaston dreams no more, nor can he write any more beautiful books.

Finally Kennaston finds that the Sigil is merely the top of a cosmetic jar that once held Harrowby's Creme Cleopatre. It was designed by P.W.Flaherty, who "just made it out of his head---in no known alphabet, blending meaningless curliques, dots and circles with an irresponsible hand and sketching a crack across all to make it look ancient-like."

In spite of Cabell's insistence that P. W. Flaherty is the creator of the Sigil there is ample evidence that the actual artist was none other than the author of The Cream of the Jest himself.

On page 233 is the picture of the completed Sigil. Perhaps few have deciphered it---but it can be read without too great difficulty. The page has to be turned upside-down. Additional difficulties are found in the division of words at the ends of lines without regard to syllables, and in the substitution of odd characters for some of the letters.

Thus has Cabell placed in a hidden device the reason for writing

(concluded on page 62)

THUMBING THE MUNSEY FILES

with William H. Evans

(continuing the summaries of fantasy fiction from the pages of Allstory. ---ed.)

1907

Jan. "The Sound-Absorber" by Dudley Davis & Edgar Franklin (24pp): Professor von Baumschwager invents a gadget that absorbs the spoken word, producing silence. Its use is mainly humorous. Slapstick, but readable.

Apr. "The Celestial Perfume" by Richard F. Woods (10pp): The arm of a dead Chinaman haunts the doctor who severed it. An average ghost story.

July "A Madman's Tale" by Sinclair Reeve (4pp): A crystal beetle sucks out the life of the woman who wears it.

Aug. "The Burden of the Billions" by Edgar Franklin (5 parts:13,13,14,13,8pp): Gilvan receives a device that enables him to control people mentally. He attempts to do good via high finance. Finally, however, the device is destroyed. A good idea marred by poor development.

Dec. "The Squadron of the Air" by Walter Hackett (5 parts: 14,14,13,10,5pp): In the fall of 1918 a Mr. X, who has invented an airship of unusual power, as well as a ray that melts things, undertakes to straighten out things in Russia. He prevents---or rather brings about by peaceful means---the revolution, which makes the czar president. So-so.

1908

Feb. "The Ghost at the Telephone" by Gertson Schaeffer (4pp): His dead sweetheart calls him on the telephone. An interesting tale of hallucinations.

Mar. "When Ghosts Walk" by Edgar Franklin (3 parts: 14,20,12pp): A "haunted" house leads to a mystery with kidnapping and burglaries. Pass it by.

May "The Skyscrapers" by George B. Rodney (5pp): War with Japan. The enemy lands, and is spotted by plane. Rather trivial.

June "The Devil's Signature" by A. Ellis Heneberger (12pp): An unusual mystery about a woman murdered in a locked room, in her blood the print of a cloven hoof.

July "The Haggard Man" by Marie Beldon James (3pp): A painting that puts people to sleep is used to commit robberies.

Aug. "The Breath of Death" by Stephen Chalmers (5pp): A young bride is put into a cataleptic trance by perfume, buried, and dug up just in time.

Sep. "The House of the Green Flame" by George Allan England (25pp): Despite all rumors to the contrary, this tale is mainly one of adventure and romance with fantasy playing a minor role of atmosphere and dressing except for a mystic once going into a trance.

"Beyond Which None May Dare" by Stanton Tierman (6pp): Educating an ape---that turns out to be mad. So-so.

Oct. "The Master of the World" by Charles Francis Burke (6pp): A way of storing electricity and shooting it in a shell. An accident eleminates the menace, fortunately. Medium in quality.

Nov. "The Planet Juggler" by J. George Frederick (26pp): Interplanetary adventures that you will find reprinted in Famous Fantastic Mysteries, 3/40.

Dec. "Gull Feathers" by Horace Hazeltine (11pp): A naive little tale about anti-gravity that I rather liked.

1909

Jan. "A Columbus of Space" by Garrett Putman Serviss (6 parts: 16,20,14,14,11, 12pp): An excellent novel of a pioneer flight to Venus and the explorers' adventures there. Reprinted in Amazing Stories (Aug.-Oct. 1928)as well as in book form (1911).

"The Steeps of Sleep" by Helen Tomkins (31pp): A revolution of anarchists

in the United States in 1930 and a drug to make a person susceptible to suggestion combine to make a moderately entertaining story.

Mar. "The Whitmore Mysteries" by Eustace Seth Carroll (22pp): Invisibility used for crime. Rather good.

Apr. "The Plunge of the 'Knupfen'" by Leonard Grover (10pp): To the center of the earth, where immortals live in a Utopian community. Republished in the February, 1940 Famous Fantastic Mysteries.

"Silver Fox" by Will Livingston Agnew (10pp): A standard weird tale about reincarnation and therianthropy.

"The Thing He Saw" by Helen Tompkins (7pp): A tramp in a deserted house is scared to death by his own imagination.

May "The Cataclysm" by Stephen Chalmers (5 parts: 21,15,17,19,18pp): A band of adventurers penetrate to the heart of the Sargasso Sea and find an island ruled by a beautiful woman with strange powers, who intends to make peace throughout the world. On another nearby island are the villains, who take over navies of the world. After the expected adventurous episodes they are destroyed and peace reigns on the earth. Good.

June "The Soul-Stealer" by Payson Irwin (6pp): An average tale of possession and mind-transferring.

"My Time Annihilator" by George Allan England (8pp): A mad scientist's tale of a device for annihilating time and thus enabling him to live forever. So-so.

Aug. "When the World Stood Still" by Johnston McCulley (5 parts: 16,14,11,16, 13pp): A future war between this country and Japan is stopped temporarily. To prevent the truce being broken, one Professor Selesti stops the rotation of the earth, and the sun doesn't rise or set. There are lots of spies and intrigues, and eventually the dispute is settled.

Sep. "'If a Man Die---'" by Bannister Merwin (3 parts: 13,15,14pp): An executed man is revived after death, with rather disastrous results.

Oct. "The Ghost Trust" by Frank Condon (29pp): To make a perpetual motion device operate, its inventor invokes aid from the spirit world. However, the spooks eventually get tired of turning the wheels. I didn't like this despite the tongue-in-cheek attitude with which it was written.

"Beyond the Banyans" by Epes Winthrop Sergeant (21pp): A mysterious valley in Africa and a device to transfer life force. The fantasy is mainly atmosphere, however.

Dec. "Beyond White Seas" by George Allan England (6 parts: 23,21,11,24,23,22pp) An acceptable adventure novel of the north on ship and land, where explorers encounter a race of beast men possessing an elixir of life.

1910

Jan. "The Baron's Armor" by Charles Ulrich (5pp): A sensitive person discovers a missing document through the influence of an ancient coat of armor.

May "My Friend George" by Robert E. Bush (29pp): An interesting, humorous account of a friendly ghost appearing and stirring things up. Quite good.

"The Devil's Mirror" by Charles Ulrich (7pp): By faking his own death a man is able to commit a crime unsuspected. Medium.

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The Sigil of Scoteia---concluded from page 60

one of his most beautiful books. Those who have enjoyed The Cream of the Jest will see in it new meanings, and will gain a finer appreciation of the quest of beauty when they read the message the sigil of Scoteia holds for all dreamers in the world of fantasy.

FOR SALE

FANTASY BOOKS

FOR SALE

Please send orders for items on this page to A.L.Searles, 7 East 235th St., New York 66, N.Y. All orders postpaid. Books are in good condition unless otherwise described.

Two rare British lost race fantasies: THE KINGDOM THAT WAS (paper covers) and THE SECOND LEOPARD (London, 1936, cloth) by John Lambourne. One is a sequel to the other. Intelligent civilization in the heart of Africa made up of animals. Both for: $ 2.50

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LIFE IN A THOUSAND WORLDS by W.S.Harris (1905). An extremely scarce novel, sold by subscription only, of a journey to all the planets of the solar system and to neighboring stars. Illus.

UPSIDONIA by A. Marshall NY, 1917. Unusual utopian fantasy 3.50

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THE LEGION OF SPACE by Jack Williamson (out of print) mint, d/w 3.50

MIND PRODUCTS LIMITED by Charles Duff Wraps. 1st edn, mint. The Hague, 1932. A play of the future; very scarce item 2.75

GREEN THOUGHTS AND OTHER STRANGE TALES by John Collier Armed Services edn, quite hard to get collection of short stories 2.50

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ZARLAH THE MARTIAN by R.N.Griswood 1st edn with frontispiece (1909). An extremely scarce early interplanetary novel 1.75

STRANGE NEWS FROM HEAVEN by A.Griffiths Illus, 1st. A riot! 3.75

THE FLYING VISIT by Peter Fleming. 1st edn, d/w. Uproarious novel of Hitler's abortive visit to England. Illus. by Low 1.00

BUT GENTLY DAY by Robert Nathan. NY, 1945. Beautiful fantasy throughout. A very fine, seldom seene prehistoric novel 1.25

THE STORY OF AB by S.Waterloo NY, 1903. Profusely illustrated .75

THE DIAMOND MASTER by Jacques Futrelle. 1st edn, 1909. Scarce 1.50

THE OMNIBUS OF CRIME ed. by D.L.Sayers. Nearly 1200pp, of which 600 pages are devoted to fantasy, witchcraft, ghost stories 1.75

THE WOMAN WHO COULDN'T DIE by Arthur Stringer. 1st edn (1929), new with d/w. Startling tale of reviving a human being of a vanished civilization who has been frozen centuries in ice 1.25

WARRIOR OF THE DAWN by Howard Browne Chicago, 1943, 1st edn. A reprint from early Amazing Stories; novel of the prehistoric 2.50

THE END OF A WORLD by Cranet NY, 1927; illus. Also prehistoric 1.25

THE HOLY TERROR by H.G.Wells 1st Am. edn (1939) 1.25

MORE GREAT GHOST STORIES ed. By Harrison Dale. London, 1932 (1st edn). Scarce collection of 12 uncanny tales. Mint with d/w .75

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FANTASY COMMENTATOR

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

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C O N T E N T S

This is the twenty-third number of Fantasy Commentator, an amateur, non-profit periodical of limited circulation appearing at approximately quarterly intervals. Subscription rates: 25¢ per copy, five issues for $1. This magazine exchanges subscriptions with other publications only by specific arrangement. All opinions expressed herein are the individual contributors' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of staff members. Although Fantasy Commentator publishes no fiction, manuscripts dealing with any phase of imaginative literature are always welcome. Please address communications to the editor at 7 East 235th St., New York 66, N.Y.

THIS-'N'-THAT

Recently published books of fantasy fiction not hitherto noted in this column:

Ayme, Marcel: The Fable and the Flesh (Bodley Head, 9/6). Satire of a rural French community. Acceptable.

Bebbington, W.G., ed.: Fancy Free (Allen & Unwin, 3/-). Brief collection of fantastic shorts. Worth the price.

Bernanos, Georges: Under the Sun of Satan (Pantheon, $3). Reprint. Dull.

Binder, Eando: Lords of Creation (Prime, $3). Low-grade, hackneyed s-f.

Bleiler, E.F. & Dikty, T.E., eds: The Best Science-Fiction Stories: 1949 (Fell, $2.95). There are twelve good stories in this collection.

Bond, Nelson S.: Exiles of Time (Prime, $3). Fairly good s-f novel reprinted from the 1940 Blue Book magazine.

---: The Thirty-first of February (Gnome, $3). 13 fantasies, all of them well above the usual pulp average. Get it.

Borodin, George: The Man of Kerioth (Laurie, 10/6). The story of Judas, before and after his death.

Bowen, Marjorie: The Bishop of Hell (Lane, 8/6). 12 excellent weirds.

Brace, Gerald Warren: A Summer's Tale (Norton, $3). A well-written, borderline novel of an imaginary island off the Maine coast.

Bridge, Ann, pseud: And Then You Came (Macmillan, $3½). Metaphysical time-travel to the first century A.D. from modern rural Scotland.

Burke, J. F.: Swift Summer (Laurie, 9/6). Moon rockets.

Campbell, J.W., Jr.: The Incredible Planet (Fantasy Press, $3). Sequels to previously published s-f yarns.

Christie, Robert: Inherit the Night (Farrar, $3). Borderline allegory.

Coblentz, Stanton A., ed.: Unseen Wings (Beechurst, $4½). This anthology of fantastic poetry is not as good as the previous two by Derleth and Widdemer.

Davies, Valentine: It Happens every Spring (Farrar, $2½). Brisk, delightful, if superficial, fantasy based on the popular movie.

de Camp, L. S.: Lest Darkness Fall (Prime, $3). Reprint.

Delmartia, Astron, pseud (J. R. Fearn): The Trembling World (1/6). British s-f pocket book. Very unimpressive.

Desmond, Hugh: The Terrible Awakening (Wright & Brown, 7/6). Cosmic collision involving the earth. So-so.

Ehrlich, Max: The Big Eye (Doubleday, $2½). Almost the same thing. Better.

Farjeon, J.J.: Death of a World (Collins, 8/6). Atomic explosion.

Fearn, John Russell: The Golden Amazon Returns (World's Work, 5/-). She should have stayed where she was.

Friend, Oscar J.: The Kid from Mars (Fell, $2½). Finlay illustrations add to this light, pleasant time-killer.

Fyfe, Hamilton: A History of the Next Hundred Years---Unless (Allen & Unwin, 3/6). A "warning" book.

Girl with the Hungry Eyes, The (Avon $1¼). Six short fantasies. Just fair.

Gould, Maggy: The Dowry (Morrow, $2¾). A horror tale of a man who has a curse laid upon him.

Grant, Joan: The Laird and the Lady (Methuen, 12/6). Psychometry and a haunted English castle.

Hamilton, Edmond: The Star Kings (Fell, $2½). Trite s-f adventure novel.

Hanlin, Tom: Miracle at Cardewigg (Random, $2¾, Collancz, 9/-). A miracle.

Haynes, Dorothy K.: Thou Shalt Not Suffer a Witch (Methuen, 9/6). 26 shorts, some borderline, some fantasy, all of them off-trail.

Hearn, Lafcadio: Some Chinese Ghosts (New Collector's, $2). Overpriced rpt.

Heinlein, Robert: The Red Planet (Scribner's, $2½). Juvenile interplanetary.

Hesse, Hermann: Magister Ludi (Holt, $5; Aldus, 15/-). An extremely good novel of Europe in 2000 A.D. Recommended.

Hubbard, L. Ron: The Kingslayer (FPCI, $3). A new novel plus three shorts.

---: The Triton (FPCI, $3). A novel reprinted from Unknown Worlds. Pleasant.

Jaeger, C. K.: The Man in the Top Hat (Grey Walls, 10/6). A silly fantasy.

Keller, David H.: The Homunculus (Prime, $3). Reviewed on page 86.

(continued on page 69)

CHAUCER AND SCIENCE-FICTION

by
Samuel Sackett

Probably the first fictional work concerning science in what was to become the English language was the "Chanouns Yemannes Tale," one of the Canterbury Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer. Written late in the Canterbury period, around 1399 in all probability, this story may be based on a real experience in the poet's life.

The tale seems to have been an afterthought on Chaucer's part, unscheduled in the original plan, since neither the canon nor his yeoman is mentioned in the General Prolog. The thirty pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas a Becket at Canterbury are joined near Boghton by a canon---a "philosopher" or alchemist ---and his servant, or yeoman. This canon is so powerful, his yeoman tells us, that he can turn the town of Canterbury upside down and pave it with silver and gold.

The yeoman has been taken on by the canon as an apprentice, to do such odd jobs as blowing the fire. Although he had been with his master for seven years, the yeoman still knows nothing about the alchemistic art, and, disgruntled, is willing to tell all about behind-the-scenes practices. Even the sharp command of his master does not stop him.

The first part of the canon's yeoman's tale is taken up by a discourse on the methods of alchemists; the second is an account of how a former employer cheated a priest out of forty pounds---a fabulous sum in those days of low living costs, and equivalent to over $6000 in our purchasing power.

This earlier master of the yeoman, also a canon, borrowed some gold of a priest. When he repaid the sum---about a hundred dollars---he offered to show the priest some "philosophy," or alchemy, out of gratitude.

The canon took an ounce of mercury and promised to make it silver by putting it in a fire and adding powder. The alchemist then set the priest blowing the fire and

> Out of his bosom took a bechen [beech-wood] cole,
> In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,
> And ther-in put was of silver lymaille [filings],
> An ounce, and stopped was, with-outen fayle,
> The hole with wax, to kepe the lymail in.

When the silver was melted, he collected it in a mold put in water to cool. Then he repeated the trick twice, fooling the priest the second time by secreting the silver in a hollow stick used to stir the fire, and on the third occasion by secreting the silver in his sleeve.

The priest and canon took these three ounces of silver to a goldsmith, who pronounced them good. Because the priest was such a good friend, the canon sold him the recipe for the powder for only $6000---and then left town.

Besides its interest as showing the antiquity of the gold-brick racket used by more modern bunco men, this tale is full of interesting comments on the state of science in the Fourteenth Century.

The yeoman recounts one experiment performed by his current master. The canon put orpiment (arsenic trisulfide), ground burned bones, iron filings, salt and pepper in an earthenware pot covered with glass. The mixture was heated but nothing happened. Such a failure occasioned a post-mortem examination:

> Som seyde, it was long on [owing to] the fyr-making,
> Som seyde, nay! it was on the blowing;

(Than was I fered, for that was myn office);
'Straw!' quod the thridde, 'ye been lewed and nyce [ignorant and foolish]
It was nat tempred as it oghte be.'
'Nay!' quod the ferthe, 'stint [stop], and herkne me;
By-cause our fyr ne was nat maad of beech,
That is the cause, and other noon no other , so theech!'

Gases and vapors were called "spirits," and the four elemental spirits were mercury, arsenic trisulfide, ammonium chloride and sulfur:

The firste spirit quik-silver called is,
The second orpiment, the thridde, y-wis,
Sal armoniak, and the ferthe brimstoon.

There must have been some complicated series of relationships among these elements: sulfur is referred to as mercury's brother.

In addition to those four elemental spirits, there were seven elemental "bodies," each connected with a planet, or the sun or moon:

Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe [assert],
Mars yron, Mercurie quik-silver we clepe [call],
Saturnus leed, and Jupiter is tin,
And Venus coper, by my fader kin!

It must have been easier to learn chemistry then than now; instead of nearly ninety elements there were only eleven, and one of these, mercury, counted twice. Absorption was called "enbibing," and solution seems to have been meant by "encorporing," or incorporation. Hardening was "induration," and washing, "ablution." When one submitted something to chemical change, one "mortified" it. And when success was about to be reached in the search for the philosopher's stone, the ingredients used were supposed to turn a citron color--- a process called "citrinacioun."

These alchemists used such processes as sublimation, calcination, fermentation and cementing. They knew how to amalgamate mercury. There were also processes known as "watres rubifying" and "watres albification," or the reddening and whitening of water.

Among the equipment of the alchemists were "...urinales and... descensories, violes, croslets, and sublymatiories, cucurbites, and alembykes..." These vessels were all made of earthenware or glass. The philosophers also used a bag, apparently made of some cloth, sealed with wax.

Only eigth items of organic nature are mentioned by Chaucer in his lists of materials used. (Included among these are what he calls "dong" and "pisse.") Against this figure there are twenty-seven items of inorganic nature. Among them are sal tartre (potassium carbonate), resalgar (arsenic disulfide), vitriol (sulfuric acid), corosive waters (perhaps hydrochloric acid) and "bodies of mollification" (whatever they were).

Two medieval authorities are quoted, both at some length, so it may be assumed that Chaucer knew quite a lot about this medieval "science." The books are Rosarium Philosophorum, by Arnoldus de Villa Nova, and Theatrum Chemicum (also called Senioris Zadith Tabula Chemica), by a man named Zetzner, who claimed to be a disciple of Plato. Both of these treatises were in Latin, a language with which Chaucer was wholly familiar.

The bitterness with which the story was written, together with the poet's obvious knowledge of and interest in alchemy, has led some modern scholars to feel that Chaucer was swindled in much the same way he describes here.

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THE LOGIC OF THE KELLER CYCLE

by
Alex Osheroff

It is not unseemly that the inner circle we term fandom, running the gamut from one literary cycle to another within its own close confines, should choose to clasp to its collective bosom yet another idol. Nor, moreover, is it departing from the norm when, with an eye to maturity and an understandable longing for outside acceptance, fandom finally produces a token of an era, the limited edition science-fiction and fantasy volumes.

That the publishers of these volumes must consider sales potential before printing goes without saying; but that they possess altruism coupled with the true spirit of the amateur is also a fact---albeit one sometimes taken for granted. The latter is borne out by the early memorial volumes Dawn of Flame and The Outsider, as well as the more recent Life Everlasting. These books saw the light of day because of amatours' love for the authors and their works and the hope (still small hope at that) that the financial losses of production would not be overly great. Too, it is often shown by the many frills and "extras" with which publishers embellish their books in the interest of turning out something a little better than just another commercial product.

That these publishers, as opposed to their ultimate judges, the purchasers, sometimes follow individual literary dictates and judgements blindly cannot be gainsaid, considering the fact that two or three of them are financially unstable at this writing. Nevertheless, the majority are diligent in searching out and publishing what their readers want. Such efforts are productive of desirable individual works, some of them loosely termed "classic", though most need no excuse of "historical value" to withstand inspection. They are also productive of series or "runs" of volumes by the same author---as Weinbaum, van Vogt and E. E. Smith.

When several volumes by one author are supplemented by a mass of associational material---myriad reviews of the books in fan and professional press, a large amount of critical commentary on the author and his writings, dedicated issues of fan publications, and sometimes raging, heated controversy on the merits of the issues at hand---then we are certainly wont to believe that a cycle has arisen. Equally certainly we cannot mention these distinguishing characteristics without thinking of David H. Keller, M.D.; nor can we look around us today without realizing that another cycle has arisen, or rather rearisen: and that is the Keller cycle.

In regards to precedent, it is interesting to compare the Keller cycle with the Lovecraft cycle. Limited edition books did not establish interest in Howard P. Lovecraft, for Weird Tales readers, early fan journals and Lovecraft's own correspondence circle did that; The Outsider and Beyond the Wall of Sleep served rather as an accelerating impulse, a literary shot in the arm. Even now, interest in this author, only just beginning to wane, is kept from falling rapidly by occasional articles in fan magazines, by the Lovecraftean-slanted Arkham Sampler and The Lovecraft Collector of August Derleth and Ray H. Zorn, and by the imminent appearance of Something About Cats and Selected Letters. Indeed, these two titles may even cause a resurgence in attention.

The general similarity with the case of Dr. Keller is meaningful. From the high acclaim greeting his first contributions to fantasy fiction in 1928-29, David H. Keller rose in five years to the position of "top" author in the field, even beating A. Merritt and equally famous names, and moreover holding his position in readers' polls for two consecutive years.

An easing off period commenced in 1935, and a year later Dr. Keller's first fantasy book appeared, followed closely by three more. This quartet has already been elaborated upon elsewhere, so for our present purposes a short commentary will suffice. La Guerre du Lierre was printed in France during 1936 and comprises three longish short stories: "The Ivy War," "The Stenographer's Hands" and "The Psychophonic Nurse"; it is considered a valuable collector's item in the field because of its historical and literary value as well as its intrinsic rarity. Unlike this is The Waters of Lethe (1937), which, though entertaining, does not rise to the author's usual heights; in the true sense of the word it is less a book than a rather thick pamphlet. It is in The Sign of the Burning Hart and The Devil and the Doctor (1938 and 1940), however, that Dr. Keller's prose does soar to its heights. These two works definitely span the wide literary gap that all too often lies between fans' usual reading fare and the literary world without. Both may be read many times for the sheer beauty that has been captured and held on the printed page. While The Sign of the Burning Hart is still a rarity (both French and American editions total only 350 copies), The Devil and the Doctor is much more readily obtainable. Both lend themselves perfectly to fan missionaries bent on introducing families and friends to the pleasures of fantasy.

This, then, is the logic of precedence. We see not a new cycle, but a renaissance, a rebirth. And the appearance of Life Everlasting, The Homunculus and The Solitary Hunters and The Abyss augurs well for vigorous survival.

It is possible to write about Dr. Keller's literary output. It is also possible to discuss Keller the man apart from his writings. Actually, even an attempt at a comprehensive article cannot be undertaken unless the parts are assembled into a whole and stated as a sort of equation: the man, his works and the combined effects of the two on the often not-too-detached observer.

One must first realize that the man and his writings are virtually the same---and that is a statement to be taken literally. It is readily observable to even the most casually informed reader that in The Devil and the Doctor, for example, Keller has talked about himself, his loved ones and his friends throughout. And the more personal contact one has with Dr. Keller and his countryside surroundings at Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, the more one realizes the surprising extent to which identifications can be carried. However, The Devil and the Doctor is no mere catalog of fictional marionettes of self, relatives, friends, cold impersonal property that is bought and sold for cash and land that is only that, but is the story of actual people imbued with lifelike reality, with warmly acceptable ambitions and emotions, of houses that are homes, and of land that is the good earth. The leading character, Dr. Jacob Hubler, is a human being with both faults and good points, the focal point of successes and defeats alike; he is an honest-to-goodness human being. And---basically and intrinsically, Hubler and Keller are the same. Readers of the more recent Homunculus will find an even more obvious picture of its author in Col. Horatio Bumble; in fact, some critics may well consider the parallel almost too close.

Dr. Keller has truly taken to heart the oft-heard advice "Write about what you know!" His tales mirror self, ancestry (he is the family historian), his friends and patients, and the human and humane values he cherishes. His stories taken as a whole may be read for pure enjoyment, for their innate philosophy, for their picture of humanity. One does not need to know the man to enjoy them. Yet to this writer that extra tang, that certain fillip are missing when one does not.

Keller is a being of many facets, his myriad tales examples of those facets as well as of great versatility. His philosophy has been forged in the battle of life from which he has emerged at times both victor and vanquished, recipient of both success and failure. Because he has set a high goal for himself

the fruits of accomplishment and success seem sweeter, the failures more dejecting, the thoughts of the might-have-been more poignant and wistful.

His philosophy is dual-edged, non-Aristotelian. It is one of love and understanding for a clambering humanity at once encumbered and aided by its manifold complexity of emotions. Yet withal it is cognizant of the b a s i c terror lurking just below life's surface. Dr. Keller's stories show that duality of philosophy; they veer from beauty to horror, and sometimes even show both qualities, each enhancing the other's accent.

As might be expected, such duality exists in Keller the man. Consider an individual who is loving and courteous to his wife, kind to animals, who loves babies, and above all who can express in warm prose a love of beauty. Yet the same man can drench his prose in the most savage sadism! Consider the horrible mass doom of the mobilists in "The Revolt of the Pedestrians" and the dwellers of Atlantis in "The Boneless Horror"; the cruel fates of the protagonists of "Tiger Cat," "Heredity" and "The Thing in the Cellar"; the fiendish torture devices in "The Doorbell"; and the reflection of lifelong mental anguish that is "A Piece of Linoleum."

Another interesting facet of Dr. Keller's fiction is its frequent preoccupation with the ever-present friction existing between male and female. This is most noticeable in his (as yet) unpublished novels The Fighting Woman and The Eternal Conflict. The existence of this motif once led a fan to inquire whether it did not stem from the good doctor's being a mite henpecked. Said Keller himself, half seriously: "Considering the fact that my mother was a woman, my wife is a woman, my three daughters are women, and my Pekinese dog is a bitch, what else could I be?"

On another occasion he had this to say about the sex: "I f i n d women divided into four classes: ladies, women, females and damned females. ... I like them all, have loved a few; I would not say that I am afraid of them, but I have suffered enough at their hands to keep my fingers crossed."

The reactions of the observers to the rebirth of the Keller cycle i s interesting in the extreme. As Keller himself has remarked, they fall almost exclusively into two divisions: those who like his work intensely, and those disliking it equally intensely---there are very few who can be indifferent. And as Keller's work crowds more and more into the limelight, the controversy b e t w e e n these two factions waxes ever warmer.

It is difficult to explain the reasons behind this situation to everybody's complete satisfaction. We may postulate, perhaps, that if t h e author's philosophy of life aligns favorably with that of the individual reader, then h e will be partial to Kolleryarns, and that if the two philosophies are sufficiently dissimilar, then the reverse will result. But this does not tell the whole story. And speaking for himself at least, this writer feels that there is something deeper in Dr. Keller's prose, a sort of literary catalyst that works often near-magical effect.

Be the fervid controversy and attempted explanations what they may, no one can deny the great potentialities existing in the fiction of David H. Keller; and those who have always loved his work will tell you these potentialities will not only keep the Keller cycle permanently alive, but will in time bring about its widespread literary acceptance outside of fandom's limited confines.

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This-'n'-That---continued from page 64

Keller, David H.: The Sign of the Burning Hart (NFFF, $1½). A reprint.

Kerby, S.A.: Mr. Kronion (Laurie, 8/6). Zeus in modern dress appears.

(concluded on page 87)

Brodie-Innes, J. W.

The Devil's Mistress

London: William Rider & Son, Ltd., no date (1915). 357pp. 18.5 cm.

Review: Isabel Goudie, forced to marry a dull-witted and not overly clean farmer in order to pay her lawyer-father's debts, soon wearies of his companionship and yearns for something to alleviate the tedious routine of her days. Originally baptized a Catholic, she has also accepted baptism in her husband's church, the Scottish kirk, in which he is an elder. (The time of the novel is Cromwellian England, when religion was a sternly considered matter.) Isabel's dreams are many, and when one day she meets a handsome, suave stranger on a woodland road she immediately falls in love with him. The stranger persuades her to visit a mysterious midnight meeting in the local kirk; and at this meeting, before a congregation of other misled souls, she renounces her second baptism (though not her Catholic first one) and by being pricked on the shoulder is inducted into the devil's coven. The man whom she met and fell in love with is called by some the devil, and by others "the Dark Master." He proceeds immediately to teach her the many secrets which membership in the coven entitle her to know, and is so enamoured of her great beauty that he chooses her to be queen of the coven. He also promises her revenge upon an uncouth neighboring laird whose repeated advances had earned her rebuffs and dislike.

During ensuing chapters nearly every phase of witchcraft and demoniac practice is brought into the story. Isabel learns how to cause a windlestraw to turn into a black charger which will bear her wherever she wills at lightning speed. She learns how to weave a spell over a besom left in bed with her clod-like husband, who thus believes that she has never left his side. She prepares the moon-paste, giving her tremendous powers, and a spirit from Hell is assigned her as a servant. She gains healing powers and damning powers. She meets Robert Gordon, whom popular rumor credits with being a magician who has no shadow, and who possesses a fire elemental that will do his bidding. In every way she becomes a sorceress, and her life is a revelry of wild and exciting adventures.

The ending of the tale is of course somewhat obvious. Isabel nearly always wears a tiny golden crucifix sewn beneath her dress, and by token of this and her Catholic baptism she can alter the otherwise immutable decrees of the Lords of Fate. Yet only once may she so do---and she fears that by such an action her powers of evil and her demon lover will be lost to her forever. Then, in a sudden crisis, she is forced to resort to this power.

The concluding chapters show her seeking absolution for her witchcraft and diabolism from a Catholic priest. He causes the Dark Master to appear before her, not as the man she has loved, but as he really is. And what he is she alone is able to see---for the author cleverly confines himself to hints, thus endowing the scene with tremendous effect. After gaining absolution Isabel is seized by the kirk, accused of renouncing its baptism as well as practicing evil magic. The charges are proved, and she is strangled and her body reduced to ashes.

The Devil's Mistress is in many ways one of the most unusual and interesting novels of black magic and witchcraft that this reviewer has ever read. It is well written throughout and the suspense is handled with especial deftness. In a preface to the book Brodie-Innes claims the tale is a true one; he cites sources of data, mentions supporting documents, and names the location of supposedly clinching proofs. Whatever the reader may choose to believe, he must nevertheless admit that the devices and situations used have an unusually authentic ring. The novel is dedicated to Bram Stoker, for whose help and encouragement Brodie-Innes declares himself much indebted. ---Thyril L. Ladd.

THE MAN WHO CAME AT MIDNIGHT

by
Ruth M. Eddy

Gaslight flickered eerily through the crack in my bedroom door. It was Hallowe'en, night of the supernatural, and long past midnight. I had drifted off to sleep with visions of hobgoblins and Jack-o'-lanterns drifting through my childish mind. Suddenly, as in a dream, I heard a sepulchral voice saying, "Slithering...sliding...squealing...the rats in the walls!"

Half-asleep, half-awake, I lay in the darkness for a moment, and then shouted for my mother as loudly as I could. She came into my room and spoke softly, "Everything's all right, dear. It's just Mr. Lovecraft telling us about the new story he's writing. Don't be afraid. Go back to sleep." Her warm tones were reassuring, and I was comforted as she leaned down to kiss me.

But sleep was impossible, for little as I was then, I lay listening to the strange-sounding story our nocturnal visitor was reading. As I was to find out years later, not only was Howard Phillips Lovecraft an expert writer of weird, spooky and uncanny tales, but he was also something of an actor. He made his fictional characters come truly alive through reciting his manuscripts aloud. And this he did in the wee sma' hours of the morning as my parents listened attentively.

Lovecraft did not like daylight. He preferred darkness, always. Even when doing creative writing at home, if it was daytime he would draw the heavy curtains and write by artificial light. He did not like to leave his house during the day, but he and my father would often explore dark, unlighted alleys after midnight, walking along wharves and dimly-silhouetted bridges on the edge of the swamplands. It is not hard to imagine H.P.L. postulating unknown entities in these dark places, and from such nocturnal jaunts would often come ideas for his future stories.

In case I could stay awake long enough, I would sometimes listen to these tales, drifting off to sleep however before the story had ended. I grew accustomed to his voice, though I never quite got up enough courage to peek past the bedroom door at the reader himself. Yet in later years, as my father and mother discussed this friend of theirs, I could not help feeling that I had really known him, too.

How Lovecraft loved coal-black cats! He always had one near him. Cats sat in his lap while he wrote and they followed him out on his lone midnight explorings. His beloved black cat played a prominent part in "The Rats in the Walls," and when one day this cat disappeared he became heartsick.

I feel H.P.L. would have been astounded, indeed, had he heard his "Dunwich Horror" broadcast two years ago on Hallowe'en. Never a lover of modern days and ways, using even such a common device as a telephone annoyed this gentleman and scholar of a different world! He preferred writing by hand to typing, and my parents often typed his manuscripts to relieve him of a hated task.

The shy and reticent Howard Lovecraft gained encouragement from my father and mother because of their interest and enthusiasm in his work, and soon after that Hallowe'en night he sold his macabre "Rats in the Walls" to a well-known magazine. Not a Hallowe'en has passed since Lovecraft's death in 1937 without my family gathering for the reading aloud of a weird story by our favorite author---now internationally famous as a writer in the genre---although our eloquence cannot compare with his masterful interpretations.

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THE IMMORTAL STORM

A HISTORY OF SCIENCE-FICTION FANDOM

by
Sam Moskowitz

(part 16)

XXXIX
The Great Drive Toward the Convention

The end of 1938 found the New Fandom faction, headed by Taurasi, Sykora and Moskowitz, approaching their objectives more rapidly than in their most optimistic hopes. Older organizations and publications had been successfully amalgamated into this new one, which was receiving prompt support. Its official organ, New Fandom, had won the admiration of John W. Campbell, Jr., who pledged to the convention the backing of Astounding Science-Fiction. Thrilling Wonder had just climbed on the band wagon. And of course fandom itself had endorsed convention plans by a majority vote at the Philadelphia Conference the previous autumn, an act that automatically rejected the bid by the Futurian group. The reorganized Queens SFL chapter was now one of the largest and most active fan clubs in the country, and as we have seen was serving as a base of operations for New Fandom's convention aspirations. Fantasy News had no near competitors, and fan periodicals generally were swinging into line behind it, the Cosmic Publications group and the manuscript bureau. Obviously, then, the machinery for a successful convention now existed. It was only up to the operators to use it properly.

It should be emphasized that although a convention on a smaller scale held in Newark the previous year had drawn over a hundred attendees, there was otherwise no precedent for what was now being attempted. Facts which everybody today accepts without question could not be taken for granted in 1939. Even the most minor aspects of the affair presented problems for debate and discussion at that time. The thought that such conventions would become annual events was given no thought whatsoever by the sponsors; this one was planned as a "one-shot," and the very year had been chosen because it coincided with that of the World's Fair, and it was hoped that out-of-town fans might be more likely to attend with such a double prospect in view. It is interesting to conjecture on how long it would have taken for a second convention to come about had the first one failed.

One can see that this initial world convention required far greater effort than did its successors, which by and large used the original pattern with comparatively few major modifications. Nothing was mere routine in 1939!

To give fandom at large a sense of solidarity and to give the event a truly national flavor, New Fandom from the outset appointed regional representatives throughout the country to solicit aid and handle convention work in their areas. Soon a cross-section of the most influential names of the day formed a network that resulted in large regional delegations at the affair.

Next, the dates set were the second, third and fourth of July, the hope being that the holiday weekend would bring in more outsiders than it would lose New Yorkers. Events justified this hope.

The problem of deciding upon a convention chairman was discussed. The idea of allowing an important personage to act as master of ceremonies for purposes of prestige was broached and discarded; preference to any one magazine editor, for example, might discourage coöperation from the others and give a general air of partiality. Only a fan could be truly neutral. Ultimately Sam Moskowitz was decided upon as chairman, partly because he was already chairman of the

sponsoring group and partly because the potential volume of his voice made microphone failures no problem.

Another question to be resolved was the locale of the affair. If held on the grounds of the World's Fair itself, officials offered a free hall, a discount of 20-30% on admission tickets if purchased in blocs of five hundred or more, and a day to be called jointly the Science Fiction and Boy Scouts of America Day. This plan was finally discarded because of the necessary daily admission charge and the fact that too many distractions would be harmful. Instead, the sponsors arranged to rent Caravan Hall, whose mid-Manhattan location (110 E. 59th St.) and low cost made it ideal.

Remembering one reason for the success of the Newark convention, Moskowitz decided to institute here, also, the plan of having fan publishers prepare special editions of their journals for contribution to and sale at Caravan Hall. Dozens of titles were announced in short order. A drive for contributions to an auction was begun, and items soon began to pour in from fans and professionals alike. An additional burst of enthusiasm greeted the news that a copy of the famous fantasy film "Metropolis" had been obtained for showing. Arrangements were begun to make a printed souvenir program booklet available for the convention---the first time this had been attempted. This proved very important, especially since advertisements solicited for it provided a new medium of revenue. To add an element of fun to the affair, the Queens SFL organized a softball team and challenged the Philadelphia Science-Fiction Society to a game for fan supremacy on the last day of the convention. Finally, Frank. R. Paul, the famous fantasy artist, was chosen to be guest of honor at the convention banquet.

As these developments transpired they were individually subjected to the most intensive press-agentry possible. Routine-seeming events today, fans a decade ago eagerly scanned the black headlines with which Fantasy News adorned descriptions of these preparations. Right up to convention time, too, New Fandom featured colored, silk-screened covers that were little more than posters advertising the event, and carried behind them extensive and rabid publicity composed by Sam Moskowitz. Large announcements were printed and posted in local libraries and museums, and two sets of circulars giving all information and full travelling instructions were mailed to fans everywhere.

As promised, professional publicity was also forthcoming. Amazing Stories, Astounding Science-Fiction, Thrilling Wonder Stories and Science Fiction all published announcements of varying lengths with full details. In some cases these were beautifully timed to appear just near enough to the affair to boost potential attendance.

Behind-the-scenes activity reached new peaks as the great day grew near. Meetings of the convention committee were held weekly. At every gathering of the Queens SFL chapter, without exception, vigorous and minutely detailed reports were presented. Fan typewriters clattered and pens scratched out personal letters to acquaintances and celebrities, begging them to attend. Rarely had so many worked so selflessly on any fan event.

XL
The Character of the Opposition

In order that we may comprehend fully and accurately the fateful events which transpired on the first day of the first world science-fiction convention, as well as the motives inspiring them, we must outline the opposition encountered by the New Fandom convention committee.

Later national gatherings found little but good will and helping hands attending their efforts, but from the beginning those of New Fandom were marked

by strife and desperate measures. The organization's struggle for recognition had aroused such widespread opinion against fan feuding that by adopting this as a plank in its platform New Fandom virtually lifted itself quite a height by its own bootstraps. So successful was the campaign urging editors to bar such fights from fan magazine pages that by the end of 1938 only the Futurian-controlled Sci-Fiction Fan and Science Fiction News Letter continued to print columns of vituperation, most of which was aimed at New Fandom. For a short while it was hoped that when Wollheim sounded his famous "Retreat" (see chapter XXXIV) the Fan would discontinue these efforts---but this was not to be.

Olon F. Wiggins, editor of the Fan and by devious politics president of the FAPA, suddenly launched an anti-convention campaign that for vicious unreasonableness had no parallel before nor any since. Its opening gun was "What's New about New Fandom?," published in the the February, 1939 Science Fiction Fan. In this article he denied that there was anything novel about New Fandom, insisting the latter was not essential to the success of the convention.

> The real purposes of the affair have been overlooked by a majority of fans, very few there are who have fathomed the real truth of the matter. Not through ignorance, perhaps, but rather through their eagerness.... I will not go into the truth of this as I don't wish to disillusion those who haven't woke up as to what is going on. Rather shall I sit back and watch the culmination of this farce.

Wiggins doubted that New Fandom had formed a new base for fan activity, and he refused it any credit for the influx of fans into the field that had been brought about since its inception. New Fandom, he reiterated, had "failed the fans miserably."

> Are its leaders incapable of handling the affair now that they have started it? Present indications point in that direction. The New Fandom group are not the logical sponsors of the convention anyhow. The only logical committee to handle the convention is the one headed by Donald A. Wollheim. ... Before it has gone too far why not put the convention back into the hands of its logical sponsors. The Wollheim-headed group. For a true stf. convention for the real fans and a return to normal.

Whatever Wiggins lost in being cryptic and ungrammatical, he gained in forcefulness: there was no doubt where his sympathies lay!

And this article was but the beginning. He also wrote letters to every important fantasy magazine editor urging that support be withdrawn from New Fandom. One was even published in Amazing Stories' letter column early in 1939. Another was brought by John Campbell to the March 5, 1939 meeting of the Queens SFL. In it Wiggins disparaged the attempt of appealing to a mass audience, saying he doubted if there were more than fifty true fans in existence, and stating that authors, editors and artists of fantasy had no place in such an audience. A rebuttal of these remarks (together with the text of the letter itself) appeared in the March 12, 1939 issue of Fantasy News. Wiggins replied to the rebuttal in April, 1939 Technocrat (which was distributed with his Fan). This reply was more an outburst of temper than a logical answer. Moskowitz and Taurasi were accused of lacking "the necessary intelligence" to write such a rebuttal. Campbell (who refused to withdraw his allegiance to New Fandom) was labelled "either ignorant or not aware of the full facts of the case." Wiggins doubted that the professionals would contribute much of anything to the convention, and then insisted that they were backing it, but because of selfish motives. New Fandom, he in-

timated, had "sold out" to the pros. Fans would rue the day they ever supported such an affair.

At this point Wiggins appeared ready to drop the debate. But the Futurians were not. The March, 1939 Science Fiction Fan found R. W. Lowndes pitching the same brand of ball in an article that bore the same title as Wiggins' original one. He opened with a broadside against Leo Margolies and Standard Magazines, maintaining that Margolies had promised the Michelists that they would receive representation on the convention committee; New Fandom having not given them notice, he accused Campbell, Margolies and Weisinger of having made "no effort to follow their pledges. In the face of double-crossing by Sykora they have remained silent and continue to support one they know to be dishonest." The convention was in incompetent hands, he maintained, but the weight of numbers probably would make it a success. Indeed, he hoped it would not fail, for if it did New Fandom would certainly attribute such an outcome to the "terrible machinations of the Michelists, the reds, the stooges from Moscow who disrupted the proceedings because they could not run them themselves." Lowndes concluded by accusing the editors of "welching," and describing New Fandom as "crooked."

Early in December, 1938 Lowndes had begun issuing from Springdale, Conn. a weekly sheet entitled Le Vombiteur. This hektographed publication ran to two to four pages; its contents made no attempt at being topical, but were rather devoted to whatever struck the writer's fancy. There were exchanges with August Derleth and Jack Speer on fan matters and politics, and a poll of fans' favorite stories. Le Vombiteur was not outstanding and had but small influence upon important fan events of the day, but it did serve the function of directing anti-New Fandom propaganda to whatever readers came its way. More important, it showed that the apparent resignation of the Futurians from activity was nothing more than the veriest camouflage.

As far back as September, 1938 regular meetings of the Futurian Society were being held at the homes of its members. Though small, the society by 1939 was a loyal, well-knit group including Donald Wollheim, Frederick Pohl, Robert W. Lowndes, Cyril Kornbluth, Richard Wilson and the up-and-coming author Isaac Asimov, who served as secretary. The Futurians were the active core of opposition to New Fandom and the allied Fantasy News and Queens SFL.. This opposition appeared unified and well-planned. In addition to material in Le Vombiteur, it manifested itself in other ways.

Early in April, 1939 Frederick Pohl announced the formation of the Futurian Federation of the World. This organization, sponsored by the New York Futurians, announced it would publish regularly The Futurian Review and devote itself to correcting past 'mistakes' of such groups as the ISA and New Fandom. Advertising for recruits began, and attempts were made to siphon prospective members from the ranks of New Fandom. This "world" federation received luke-warm support from some young fans (such as James S. Avery and Harry Warner, Jr.), but managed to publish only one issue of their Review before convention time, thereafter completely dropping from sight. These facts lend the distinct impression that the organization was merely one more device trying to reduce the effectiveness of New Fandom and the convention.

When New Fandom announced acquisition of a print of "Metropolis," the Futurian Society immediately circulated an open letter demanding to know if money for the film had been sent to Nazi Germany. They based their demand on a statement in the May, 1938 issue of Sykora's Scientifilmaker which said that he (Sykora) was "carrying on negotiations for the rental of this film from the original makers." As it had been originally made by UFA in 1926, he was of course implying dealings with a German firm. But the nature and wide distribution of this open letter branded it an obvious device to lower the prestige of the convention committee. Actually "Metropolis" had been obtained on loan from the files of the

New York Museum of Modern Art, which owned the print outright.

At the April 2, 1939 meeting of the Queens SFL two Futurians, Richard Wilson and Cyril Kornbluth, were present, and tendered an official offer from the Futurian Society that the two organizations hold a joint meeting for the purpose of promoting harmony. Because of the long-standing differences between the two groups, Queens director Taurasi viewed this attempt at conciliation with suspicion, particularly in the light of the "Metropolis" episode, then but a few weeks old. He feared it might be a trick of the Futurians to infiltrate and disrupt the Queens SFL, having good reason to remember the former's abilities along such lines when he recalled how they engineered his own impeachment back in the days of the Greater New York SFL chapter. Further, since many Futurians were admitted communists and communist-sympathizers, he felt that association with them would be detrimental to his club. He therefore fell back on the Margolies stipulation that Wollheim and Sykora and their followers could not be active in the same SFL chapter, and on this basis requested Kornbluth and Wilson to leave the hall. But the latter two requested the decision on the question to be put to the membership present. Taurasi then ruled that to decide otherwise than he had would involve changing the chapter charter in the light of Margolies' stipulation in granting it; and that initiating such a change would be possible (if at all) only through request of a member present. And neither Kornbluth nor Wilson, of course, were Queens SFL members. No member spoke; everyone was willing to let the decision Taurasi had voiced stand.

Sam Moskowitz stopped Wilson before he left and asked him point-blank if he favored New Fandom's sponsorship of the convention. It was an especially pertinent question, since Wilson was at once a New Fandom member and a Futurian. When he replied in the affirmative Moskowitz asked him to print a statement to that effect in his News Letter to clarify his stand to outsiders. As a result the April 8, 1939 Science Fiction News Letter carried the following remarks by Wilson:

> Sam Moskowitz has asked us to state publicly that we favor New Fandom's sponsorship of the World Science Fiction Convention this July, if we so thought, in order, presumably, to banish any doubt in people's minds. Consider it stated.... New Fandom also wishes it known that the film "Metropolis," which will be shown at the affair, was obtained from an American firm...and that not one pfennig will go to der Vaterland for its rental.... The Marxist Manhattanites, incidentally, are sniggering happily to themselves at NF's move in this direction since "Metropolis" was made in Socialist Germany by a bunch of red-hot Communists and fairly oozes propaganda.

This statement proved of great significance, for from its tone and from the editorial "we" casual readers got the impression that Wilson was speaking for the Futurians in general rather than for himself alone. Many therefore felt the two rival groups were working together.

In later years the Futurians claimed that they had gone out of their way to be neutral, had kept their hands off the convention and allowed New Fandom the utmost leeway---and this despite their feeling the group was unqualified to handle the affair and that they themselves were unjustly treated. Existing evidence shows this claim to be utterly false. Wilson's statement did not check the constant barrage of Futurian anti-New Fandom propaganda, which continued unabated up to the very date of the convention.

In the May, 1939 Science Fiction Fan which was distributed two months after the appearance of the above-quoted Wilson statement (ample time for its

withdrawal from publication had the author so desired) Donald Wollheim's column "Fanfarade" launched yet another attack on the convention and its leaders. After plugging the Futurian Federation of the World Wollheim declared the New Fandom meeting was merely an "advertising convention" presented for the benefit of the professionals alone since there would be no formal business and no motions from the floor. The Futurians, he said, would hold a meeting of their own the day after this "privately-owned editors' advertising convention." Completely ignoring the statements clarifying the status of the "Metropolis" film, he rehashed the issue from the standpoint of the Futurian open letter and quoted Sykora's remarks again as proof positive that the film print was being rented from German sources. Then, forgetting that he had just claimed there would be no motions allowed from the floor at the New Fandom convention, Wollheim contradicted himself by predicting that Sykora would railroad through a motion changing the name of New Fandom to the International Scientific Association, the older group of which he had once been president.

Yet throughout all these attacks New Fandom had hewed closely to their no-feud policy, confining themselves merely to formal explanations of the facts behind the "Metropolis" rental and Wiggins' letter to Campbell. However, the continuous barrage was worrying. New Fandom sponsors were, in effect, pioneers. They were tackling what up to then was the biggest fan job ever attempted. They needed every bit of help they could get, and felt it reasonable to suppose that if some, such as the Futurians, were unwilling to help, they at least would not go out of their way to harm the affair. But the facts show clearly that New Fandom was subjected to a most trying ordeal, and that the nature of the opposition was definitely calculated to be damaging. This should be carefully borne in mind when appraising the situation soon to follow.

XLI
The First World Science-Fiction Convention

July 2, 1939, first day of the convention, was a fair day with the temperature in the mid-eighties. At 10:00 A.M. the hall, located on the fourth floor of the building, was opened so that the growing groups of fans in the street below might have a comfortable place to congregate and converse before the program got under way. A refreshment stand selling soft drinks and pie at a nickel per portion was also opened.

Among the things first impressing a fan arrival were the striking modernity of the newly decorated hall; the original colored paintings for covers of fantasy magazines, loaned especially for the occasion, and including a colored Paul original never before published; and the official souvenir booklet with its shining gold cover. The latter, it should be noted, had been printed by the old-time fan Conrad Ruppert. It featured original decorations by Frank R. Paul and two pages of photographs of such well known professionals as Stanley G. Weinbaum, Henry Kuttner, David H. Keller, Otis A. Kline and others.

From the earliest hours it could easily be seen that the convention had been successful in bringing distant fans together. There was a California delegation composed of Forrest Ackerman, Morojo and Bradbury. From Texas had come Dale Hart, Julius Rohl, Allen R. Charpentier and Albert S. Johnston. New and old Chicago fans were represented in Erle Korshak, Mark Reinsberg, William Dillenback and Jack Darrow. A photograph of Darrow and Ackerman, most famous of the letter writers to fantasy magazines, was of course taken for posterity. Several Canadian names lent an international flavor to the convention. Others, too, had travelled long distances to attend. There was Jack Williamson from New Mexico; Ross Rocklynne from Cincinnati; Nelson Bond from Virginia. Among other authors in at-

tendance were Harl Vincent, Ray Cummings, Manly Wade Wellman, Edmond Hamilton, L. Sprague de Camp, Isaac Asimov, Norman L. Knight, Eando Binder, John Victor Peterson, Frederick C. Painton and Malcolm Jameson. In addition to Frank R. Paul, artist Charles Schneeman was in attendance, and the professional fantasy magazine editors were represented by Campbell, Margolies, Weisinger, Hornig and Farnsworth Wright of Weird Tales, who unfortunately arrived after the main sessions had been concluded. Many of the authors, editors and artists brought wives and children with them. Present also were such well-known fantasy fans as David V. Reed, L. A. Eshbach, John D. Clark, David C. Cooke, R. D. Swisher, Milton A. Rothman, Oswald Train, Kenneth Sterling, Charles F. Ksanda, Robert A. Young, Scott Feldman, Julius Schwartz, Vida Jameson, John V. Baltadonis, Walter Sullivan, Gertrude and Louis Kuslan, David A. Kyle, Robert A. Madle, John Giunta, Julius Unger, Richard Wilson, Herbert Goudket, Robert G. Thompson, A. Langley Searles, Arthur Widner and Leon Burg.

Fifteen special convention publications had been issued for the occasion. In addition to the program booklet there were Jack Speer's justly famous Up To Now, a 20,000-word account of fan history to date, the first serious attempt along such lines; Louis Kuslan's Cosmic Tales Special; Morojo's Stephen the Stfan, a booklet containing facsimile signatures of famous science-fictionists as well as blank pages for attendees to solicit autographs of others present; Metropolis, contributed by Ackerman; Wilson's Escape; The Fantasy Collector of Farsaci; Mario Racic's Fantasy in Opera; Van Houten Says; Le Zombie, published by Bob Tucker; Sully Roberds' Science Fiction Abbatoir; The Grab Bag by Ted Dikty; Bob Formanek's Fanta-Verse; We Have a Rendezvous, technocratic propaganda issued by Russell J. Hodgkins; and Daniel McPhail's Stf. and Nonesense. The wide variety of publications was ample evidence of the interest fandom took in the proceedings.

Of the three New Fandom leaders only one was present at the hall during the initial morning session. Moskowitz was arranging last-minute details at his Newark home, and Sykora was likewise at home, busily engaged in binding enough copies of the July New Fandom for convention distribution. So it happened that when the main body of the Futurian group---Wollheim, Lowndes, Pohl, Kornbluth and Gillespie---stepped from the elevator and headed toward the hall Taurasi alone was on hand to confront them and question their right to enter in view of their flagrant anti-convention activities.

Now, prior to the convention the New Fandom heads had discussed what course should be taken if a Futurian delegation did put in an appearance. They felt, first of all, that in view of the Futurians' slurs they might not come at all. But if they did, then the triumvirate felt serious consideration should be given to excluding them. Taurasi, Sykora and Moskowitz reached no definite decision, however, other than that the Futurian group was not to enter the hall unless it first satisfied the convention heads as to its good intentions.

So in the absence of any consultant Taurasi felt it would be wisest to refuse entrance to these Futurians until his confreres arrived. And when Moskowitz made his appearance Taurasi was still arguing with the would-be attendees, none of whom had yet gotten more than ten feet from the elevator door. Wollheim promptly appealed to Moskowitz, maintaining that he had not carried out any strong action against the convention (!), that he had come without propaganda of any sort to distribute, and that the intentions of himself and of his group were merely to mingle with others present and have a good time. Moskowitz then decided to permit the quintet to enter, conditional to his first speaking to Sykora as a matter of courtesy.

(At this point it might be asked why the much larger Futurian group did not simply brush past Taurasi and Moskowitz since, as they later stated, they debated the ethical grounds on which they were being kept out. Aside from the wish to enter properly, readers should be reminded that both Taurasi and Moskowitz

weighed close to 200 pounds, and next to science-fiction Moskowitz's greatest enthusiasm was boxing.)

It was at this juncture that fate played its peculiar hand. Sykora, it so happened, was not destined to arrive until considerably later, and in the normal course of events Moskowitz and Taurasi would simply have waited a reasonable time and then permitted the Futurians to enter. But the next group of fans leaving the elevator included Louis Kuslan, the well-known Connecticut fan. He carried in his hand a little yellow pamphlet titled A Warning!. "Look what John Michel gave me downstairs before," he said as he handed the pamphlet to Moskowitz. Michel, who had joined the other Futurians awaiting entry, said nothing.

The pamphlet was dated July 2, 1939, and its cover also bore the heading "IMPORTANT! Read This Immediately!" It contained four pages of text, and when Moskowitz opened it he found himself reading the following:

BEWARE OF THE DICTATORSHIP

YOU, who are reading this pamphlet, have come to attend the World's Science Fiction Convention. You are to be praised for your attendance and complimented on the type of fiction in which you are interested. But, TODAY BE AWARE OF ANY MOVEMENT TO COERCE OR BULLY YOU INTO SUBMISSION! Remember, this is YOUR convention, for YOU! Be on the alert, lest certain well-organized minorities use you to ratify their carefully conceived plans.

WHY THIS WARNING?

This warning is being given to you by a group of sincere science fiction fans. The reasons for this warning are numerous; THEY ARE BASED UPON EVENTS OF THE PAST---particularly events which took place at the Newark Convention of 1937. At that time the gathering of fans and interested readers was pounded into obedience by the controlling clique. The Newark Convention set up dictatorially, the machinery for the convention which you are now attending. THE NEWARK CONVENTION MUST NOT BE PERMITTED TO REPEAT ITSELF! It remains in your power to see that this convention today will be an example of perfect democracy.

STARTLING FACTS

The Queens Science Fiction League was formed by the Newark Clique, after that convention, in order to make the necessary local organization upon which the dictatorial convention committee could base itself. . . . The editors and those dependent on them for a living, the authors, have made it a duty to attend Queens S.F.L. meetings regularly in order to keep it going and to keep the 1939 convention in hand. At the elections held last meeting, held openly so as to detect any possible opposition, the three dictators were re-elected unanimously in perfect un-democratic harmony.

HIGH HANDED TACTICS

At the same time that the Queens S.F.L. was established, a large number of New York City fans formed the Futurian Society of New York. Contrary to much propaganda, the Futurian Society is not confined to communists, michelists, or other radical elements; it is a democratic club, run in a democratic way, and reflecting science fiction fan activity....

A LOADED WEAPON

> The World's Science Fiction Convention of 1939 in the hands of such heretofore ruthless scoundrels is a loaded weapon in the hands of such men. This weapon can be aimed at their critics or can be used to blast all fandom. But YOU, the readers of this short article, are the ammunition. It is for YOU to decide whether you shall bow before unfair tactics and and endorse the carefully arranged plans of the Convention Committee. Beware of any crafty speeches or sly appeals. BE ON YOUR GUARD!

The booklet ended after a few more paragraphs of a similar nature, and was signed "The Association for Democracy in Science Fiction Fandom."

Actually the pamphlet had been composed and printed by Futurian David Kyle on the presses of his brother's Monticello, N.Y. newspaper. But this, of course, was not known to Moskowitz until considerably later. At the time, the charge that New Fandom was a puppet in the hands of the professionals, the kind words for the Futurian Society, the cry of dictatorship---these appeared but a repetition of the clichés that had been hurled against convention backers for the past year. And it seemed to Moskowitz, as it probably would have to any reasonable man in his place, that the Futurians had come prepared to agitate against and possibly disrupt the proceedings.

Moskowitz turned to Wollheim and said, "I thought you just stated that you would do nothing to hurt the convention." Wollheim shrugged his shoulders and eyed the pamphlet. "I didn't print them." "But his group was passing them out," Louis Kuslan quickly added.

Now thoroughly worried by the turn of events, Moskowitz went downstairs to see if Sykora had arrived as yet. Failing to find him, he returned barely in time to intercept the building attendant, Maurice J. Meisler, who informed him that he was wanted by policemen waiting on the street level. It appeared that Taurasi, before Moskowitz's arrival, had anticipated difficulty in restraining the Futurians and had called upon official assistance. Moskowitz explained the situation to the officers, saying he believed he could handle it, but asking the police to stop back in an hour or so to check, which they agreed to do.

As he concluded this conversation, his eye was caught by bright colors beneath a near-by radiator. Investigation showed that here were cached several hundred copies of booklets printed by the Futurian Society of New York. In the press of circumstances, with no opportunity to read them carefully, Moskowitz assumed from their origin, authorship and surreptitious concealment that they were further anti-convention propaganda.

(Later examination showed the booklets to be recruiting fodder for the cause of Michelism, their common denominator being more pro-Marx than anti-New Fandom. There were five different titles, as follows: An Amazing Story by Robert Lowndes, a bitter, five-paged condemnation of editor Raymond Palmer because he published anti-Russian and anti-communist stories; Dead End 1938, also written by Lowndes, which discussed whether the dreams expressed in fantastic fiction could ever be broken by economic, social or psychological disaster from a Marxist viewpoint; John Michel's Foundation of the CPASF (a reprint from the April, 1938 Science Fiction Advance); a reprint from New Masses of Upton Sinclair's article, Science Fiction Turns to Life, which is a review of two social satires, Show and Side Show by Joshua Rosett and E. C. Large's Sugar in the Air; and The Purpose of Science Fiction, in which British fan Douglas W. F. Mayer expressed the opinion that science-fiction broadened a fan's horizon, and even if it did not lead him to take up a scientific career, if it could but influence him to follow political movements promoting social reform (such as, of course, the Futurians') it

would be accomplishing its purpose.)

It seemed to Moskowitz at this juncture that the Futurians intended to deluge the convention with unfavorable material. At the same time he still hoped, for the sake of harmony, that this difficulty could be resolved smoothly. When he returned upstairs, therefore, he approached Wollheim and asked: "If we let you in will you promise on your word of honor that you will do nothing in any way to disturb the progress of the convention?" "If we do anything to disturb the convention you can kick us out," Wollheim replied. "We don't want to kick you out," said Moskowitz. "We simply want your honored promise not to harm the convention." But this promise Wollheim adamantly refused to give. Later he claimed he could make no such promise because Moskowitz intended it to be binding on his friends as well as himself. This allegation is untrue, for Moskowitz then spoke to each Futurian member, offering to admit any one who would guarantee his own conduct by so promising. On this basis several were admitted, Richard Wilson, Jack Rubinson, Leslie Perri, Isaac Asimov and David Kyle among them. But the core of the group---Wollheim, Lowndes, Pohl, Kornbluth and Gillespie---chose to remain without. And when Sykora arrived somewhat later he thoroughly concurred with the action that Moskowitz and Taurasi had taken, declaring that it would be the height of folly to admit any fan who would refuse to promise not to cause trouble.

It is possible that the Futurians refused admittance would have behaved in orderly fashion in the hall and, aside from voicing indignation at their reception, would have entered into the spirit of the gathering. It is conceivable also that the refusal of Wollheim and others to promise good behavior can be laid to personal pride. But to New Fandom leaders, in the light of past experiences, refusal to promise not to cause trouble meant one thing: that this was precisely what the Futurians were going to cause. Sykora, Taurasi and Moskowitz remembered the expulsion of Sykora from the Greater New York SFL; the refusal to admit to membership Osheroff and Moskowitz to the same organization; the subterfuge employed in soliciting signatures to a petition of reprimand regarding the operation of the 1938 Newark convention, as well as the Communist propaganda distributed at that convention; the steady bombardment of abuse that preparations for the 1939 gathering had elicited; and they remembered, too, that all these things had been engineered by Futurians or friends of Futurians. At the convention hall they found the Futurians distributing plainly disruptive literature in advance of the meeting, and apparently armed with a reserve stock of similar material. Faced with these facts, and with a group of fans refusing a simple promise not to cause trouble, what conclusion were they to come to?

In retrospect, we can see their dilemma more clearly. Looking at the circumstances in the most pessimistic light, we can see that the Futurians had everything to gain and little to lose. If allowed to enter, they could have disrupted proceedings, and thus proved their prior claim that New Fandom was incompetent to run a successful convention; if not allowed to enter, they could point to another prior claim of New Fandom's being essentially dictatorial as proved. Indeed, Futurian strategy may have been devised with these possibilities foremost in mind. Whether it was or not, Futurians stood to gain public sympathy as a result of the convention if they played their cards properly no matter what stand New Fandom took.

It is of course impossible to say, even now, if New Fandom's decision was the wisest that could be made. It can still be argued pro and con. At least we can see how it came to be made, and should understand that Moskowitz, Taurasi and Sykora felt themselves to be acting for the good of the greatest number present, and therefore to be adopting the morally right course. It was a course that violated the principles of accepted convention harmony inevitably, however, and as we shall later see one which brought both condemnation and personal difficulties to the formulators.

At later times the excluded Futurians made several attempts to enter the hall, usually in pairs, but were stopped by Taurasi or the attendant Meisler, who had orders not to permit them entrance. Inside the hall, meanwhile, Futurians and their friends who had been admitted circulated about and did their best to rally support for those outside. The ladies present, particularly Morojo and Frances Swisher, attempted every method of reason with the triumvirate, though to no effect. Leslie Perri persuaded Jack Williamson to approach Moskowitz on the matter, and others present subjected Taurasi and Sykora to similar pressure. David Kyle passed about the room, distributing circulars announcing that the Futurians would hold a conference of their own the day after the convention. Debate on the action of New Fandom leaders grew in tempo until by two o'clock, when the convention was scheduled to be called to order, the task seemed an impossible one. The entire attendance was milling about and discussion was rife. Would the convention break up before it had even begun?

At this point Maurice Meisler, the attendant, nudged Moskowitz, who had paused irresolute. "Call the convention to order," he said. "They'll have to come to a decision on whether they stay or go. But if you let things go any further as they are you won't have a convention at all." Moskowitz looked dubious. "Go ahead," urged Meisler. "I've seen this sort of thing happen before. Call it to order and your troubles are over."

Moskowitz ascended the platform and walked to the podium. There, disdaining the microphone, he bellowed: "In the name of New Fandom I call this, the first world science-fiction convention, to order!"

(to be continued)

---oOo---

BEHOLD THY HOST

by
Genevieve K. Stephens

He fell headlong on the lurching steps,
With hungry fingers clawed the door
That swung ajar. "Crawl in, my friend,
And share my poor abode."
Hands pulled him upward. Muttered he,
"Is God's word broken, then?
I am the Wandering Jew,
Who spat upon the Christ."

"Know then, who lifts thee up,
This is Judas' house:
Behold thy host!"

THE MADMAN

by
Thomas H. Carter

See now! There they go
on busy useless missions,
and only I do know
that they are mad. Laughter
strained through tight teeth
is their world, and after
brief youth creeps swift age.
I have my bright and barren room
which pity has brought me;
let them march to ceaseless doom!
I wandered past the tricky edge
of madness, they said. But I see
where they go, and prefer to listen
to mind's brittle voice whispering to me!

---oOo---

APOLOGIES are due subscribers for the lateness of this issue, which has necessitated combining two issues into this single Summer-Fall, 1949 number. Apologies also for the crowding out of the Bleiler Checklist review. This goes in #24.

SOME RADIO FANTASY

by
James Harmon

When you think of fantasy on the air-waves, you think immediately of "Lights Out." And when you think of "Lights Out," you probably think of the most famous fantasy ever broadcast. It concerned two gentlemen named Well(e)s, and the combination proved more far-reaching than either of them ever suspected. The trouble was, of course, that most listeners to Orson Welles' adaptation of The War of the Worlds thought they were hearing news reports of an actual Martian invasion. When you recall how many people rushed excitedly out into the crisp November night ready to defend their homes against bug-eyed monsters from another planet, it isn't so hard to understand why sharpers are still selling the Brooklyn Bridge, or why the Shaver mystery reached the heights it did.

"Lights Out" has survived several writers. When Orson Welles left it for greener pastures, Arch Oboler took over. After Oboler came Willis Cooper. Of the three, it is my opinion that Oboler was by far the best; Willis Cooper comes second, and I found Welles a poor third. Currently the program is off the air, but it still seems popular enough to be used in sections of the country as a summer replacement, so I doubt if we have heard the last of it.

One of the most popular stories it ran was "The Chicken Heart." (To my first-hand knowledge it has been broadcast three times.) Here a scientist succeeds in keeping a chicken's heart alive in a glass vessel. One day when on exhibit a careless spectator knocks its case on the floor, breaking the vessel and spilling certain chemicals on it. These latter cause the heart to grow at an accelerated rate. The heart fills the room, then the city, and finally (you guessed it!) the world itself. The scientist and a friend escape in an airplane, but eventually fall into the pulsating heart as the plane runs out of gas.

"Lights Out," of course, is only one of many radio programs featuring fantasy. These go back to the late 'twenties, at least, when "Chandu the Magician" and Alonzo Dean Cole's "Witch's Tale" were popular. These were before my time, I hasten to add, so I cannot describe them. Less well known was "Dracula," which ran in the early 'thirties. This was a series of eight programs dramatizing Bram Stoker's famous novel---which, luckily, fell into eight neat instalments very cleanly. The title-role was played by Brett Morrison, who much later played "the Shadow."

"The Shadow" began as a series of weird stories, but eventually degenerated into just another crime show. This also happened to "Inner Sanctum," by the way. One supposes there was good reason for the change, but on the former program at least the occasional fantasies produced seemed to be more popular.

There are several transcribed programs which are broadcast on different schedules in different sections of the country that are fantasy, too. One, almost a direct copy of "The Shadow," is called "The Destroyer." The Destroyer's means of attaining invisibilty is a tube of special gas he carries (the Shadow, it will be remembered, used hypnotism). "The Haunting Hour," "The Witching Hour" and "Murder at Midnight" (original titles, eh?) are poor mysteries half the time and poorer fantasies the other half. One of the better transcribed shows, to my mind, is "The Hermit of Murmer's Cave"; it has presented some very fine stories, and if the Hermit's hounds can be heard baying in your locality by all means tune in occasionally.

Of the semi-fantasy shows (usually alternating between fantasy and crime stories) are "The Mysterious Traveller" and "Suspense," which may be heard "live" over two different nationwide networks. By stretching definitions a bit

such programs as the Lux and Ford radio theaters, "Screen Guild Players," "Hallmark Playhouse" and the like, all of which broadcast occasional adaptations of fantasy movies, plays and books might even be included in this class.

One of the most entertaining of these semi-fantasy shows is "I Love a Mystery." Originally it was cast as a five-a-week continued serial, then changed to a weekly program, and finally restored to the original formula. Not only were weird mysteries presented regularly, but also such really fine fantasies as "The Decapitation of Jefferson Monk" (later made into a movie under another title),"My Beloved is a Werewolf," "Temple of the Vampires," and so on. This same program was once used as a summer replacement under the title "I Love an Adventure."

Another long-standing program of interest is"Escape," which is still running on CBS. This is always loaded with fantasy; indeed, I remember one season whose last three months were given over entirely to science-fiction. Two-thirds of these shows (by actual count) were based on stories by H.G.Wells, with Rider Haggard and other well-known authors represented as well. I remember two of them in particular. One was based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Diamond as Big as the Ritz." It concerned a hyper-rich family that lived on a hidden mountain which was really one huge diamond. The family had made billions for generations merely by chipping off pieces of the diamond and selling them. The estate had been gradually built into a veritable paradise, all carefully hidden and guarded. But when a young man who has been kidnapped to entertain a young lady there falls in love with her, and the two escape, all is discovered. Seeing all is lost when Army bombers appear on the horizon, the family blows the mountain off the face of the earth with an atomic bomb. The other story told of a young poet who got the bright idea of living in a department store. He would simply hide by day and get everything he needed at night. But he found that the store had a colony of people living there secretly, and they of course would not let him escape to tell others of their existence. He fell in love with one of the girls there (who in turn was in love with a night-watchman), and the three plot escape. They are discovered by the colony and turned over to the Dark Ones---people who live at night in funeral homes---who turn the trio into store-window dummies. Quite a fantastic story, well presented.

Weird Tales once godfathered Robert Bloch's "Stay Tuned for Terror," a program now defunct. Apparently the show wasn't particularly successful, for no other professional fantasy magazine ever followed this lead. At this point I might also mention Nelson Omstead's dramatic readings; these are quite good, and feature occasional fantasy.

There has always been much fantasy in children's programs, some of it quite good, some equally bad. The most popular science-fiction theme is that of Superman, who is a sort of fairy-tale Buck Rogers. Buck Rogers, of course, was one of the earliest of these programs, though now off the air. There is also "Mandrake the Magician," who creates illusions by hypnotism. Even the Tom Mix show delves into occasional fantasy, usually in the form of weird mysteries that do not always have mundane explanations. There are other occasional fly-by-night affairs, too, that never last very long or attract much interest.

There is one juvenile program that I think deserves particular praise. It is"Adventure Parade," a five-a-week serial that dramatizes famous classics in five installments. All kinds of classics are presented, of course, but every month or so a science-fiction tale by Wells, Verne or Haggard is given.

At present only ABC's "Quiet Please" is devoted exclusively to fantasy. Many of its stories are written by Willis Cooper, whom I have already mentioned. "Quiet Please," I think, is somewhat better than "Lights Out," chiefly because it on occasion utilizes fantasy humor successfully.

Only one all-fantasy show isn't much---but let's be glad we have it and hope for a better radio future!

TIPS ON TALES

by

Charles Peter Brady

Richard Marsh's Seen and the Unseen (1900): Today one's reading choice in fantasy seems to be between bad ideas well written and good ideas badly written. Avid propaganda from a dozen or so small publishing houses has swung fan favor toward the latter; so just for variety's sake, let's look at a representative of the former. The Seen and the Unseen is a collection of an even dozen short stories, about half of which can claim connection with the supernatural. One would be tempted to label this the "unseen" half of the book if the ghosts weren't very much in evidence indeed. They openly saw away on fiddles ("The Violin"), commit murder ("The Houseboat"), and are even solid enough to topple healthy football players by blocking and tackling ("The Fifteenth Man")! In fact, that's just the trouble with most of Mr. Marsh's spooks---they're too darned solid. When one modern ghost story writer said that the most effective spectres were those which did not contradict nature but rather joined hands with it, I doubt if he visualized this type, which likes to knock people face down into muddy gutters. After reading about them you uneasily wish they'd content themselves with effetely clanking their chains instead of being so rowdy. In all justice, however, I must admit there is one coy ghost in the book ("The Photographs")---it takes a camera to catch her. But she makes up for lack of action by extremely voluble talking---which may or may not prove that even in the Great Beyond women always get in the last word. One story, "A Pack of Cards," starts out in the supernatural vein,but fritters out as an elaborate hoax in the end. Quite unconvincing. The best item in the collection, "The Tipster," isn't a ghost story at all, by the way, but rather a nice bit of pure fantasy about a chap who could see into the future.... All the prose in The Seen and the Unseen is well constructed, as would be expected by readers of The Beetle, Marsh's most famous story. It is entertaining, too, and you only realize at the finish of the book that the whole thing really wasn't quite worth the time you spent on it.

A. Conan Doyle's Doings of Raffles Haw (1891): I found this early Doyle novel both rewarding and disappointing. It was disappointing because it was too short, and rewarding because what there was of it was pretty good. The central character manages to transmute lead into gold by a method that may have seemed plausible fifty years ago, but which sounds a bit silly nowadays. One can overlook that, however, for Doyle is less concerned with the process itself than with the effect enormous wealth has on the people who know about it. If enough length had been taken for developing that theme, so that the alchemy would fade further into the background, this might have become a minor classic. Even as it is, The Doings of Raffles Haw is a very effective portrayal of conventional high tragedy. Despite all efforts to divert it into worthy, charitable channels, the boundless wealth of Raffles Haw proves always a source of corrupting evil, and in the end drives the inventor to destroy records of his process and commit suicide. Overall, the work is more rewarding than disappointing. And since interest increases as the book moves forward, the reader is left with a pleasant impression. I recommend that you read the book if it ever comes your way.

Murray Leinster's Last Spaceship (1949): I don't think this novel has appeared in magazine form before book publication, and I can't understand why, for it certainly fits current editorial policies perfectly. It omits not one single possible trite plot-element, conversational banality or known fantasy cliché. In fact, the whole thing is written with such pathetically dead-pan seriousness that it is a beautiful parody of a science-fiction novel. Recommended for laughs.

Keller, David Henry

The Homunculus

Philadelphia: Prime Press, 1949. 160pp. 20 cm. $3.00.

Review: The recent reawakening of interest in the works of this author has resulted in the book publication of many of his older stories, and there remain still more scheduled for future appearance. It is not hard to understand Keller's popularity, for a perusal of his productions reveals a writer of high capability and almost amazing versatility. His stories range from the lyrically beautiful Sign of the Burning Hart to the wry, nearly savage bitterness of "A Piece of Linoleum." Between these extremes are found stories of high adventure, such as the plainly-written but fascinating Solitary Hunters, and some truly fine short stories, such as "The Face in the Mirror," a subtle and original variation of the William Wilson theme.

It is not to be inferred, however, that Keller is without fault. At his best, he has turned out tales which have the inevitable perfection of a fine jewel. Unfortunately, much of his output shows that he is not the best judge of the quality of his stories. These at times are but expanded anecdotes, inadequate in either detail, structure or characterization. The story, in other words, has been conceived in an attempt to bring off an ending, and the result is not always successful. On the other hand, Keller has the essential gift of a born storyteller---readability. At his best or worst he is always interesting. What one regrets, therefore, is that he does not always maintain the high level of which he is so plainly capable.

Of particular interest is The Homunculus, the latest volume to bear the Keller by-line. Dated 1947, it is one of his most recent compositions. It is a little hard to review. Keller has never been an author to confine himself to familiarity of either style or concept, and this entertaining novel is one of marked originality. Embodied in it are some of the author's sharpest characterization and smoothest writing. The result can be recommended to almost anybody.

Briefly, The Homunculus concerns the attempt of an elderly doctor to grow a baby in a bottle, as prescribed in the formula set down by Paracelsus for creating synthetic life. The doctor is a retired army colonel named Horatio Bumble, a thoroughly unorthodox but warmly human individual who lives with his charming wife, Helen, in their home in a small Pennsylvania town. The first inkling Helen has of anything extraordinary occurs when the colonel informs her he desires to build a hole. From then until the surprise ending events move swiftly.

Although one is not conscious of it while reading, The Homunculus possesses a plot of rare complication. At almost the same time that he conceived the plan of his experiment, two singular individuals appear in order to aid Colonel Bumble. They are Sarah, the too-perfect servant, and her brother Pete, a wonder-worker of the first order. Possessing a most remarkable background, these two provide all that is requisite for the success of the "bottle baby."

The Homunculus offers a clear illustration of Keller's usual technique ---to create a situation, and then see how it will affect mankind. In this novel, however, emphasis is more on the reaction of humanity to the mass production of babies. Narrated in a bland and straight-faced style, the saga of Bumble becomes a hilarious satire on the eccentricity and stupidity of mankind. In the past, Keller has attempted satire only to have his compassion undermine it; here is a most felicitous blend of satire and sentiment.

Once the news of his experiment becomes generally known, the Colonel and his companions are subjected to various unpleasant but funny consequences, including the arrest of Bumble on an old city ordinance which forbids the burying of garbage. From the jail he is kidnapped by a gangster called Mr. Caruso, whose

deep love for his mother has made him resent Bumble's experiment. It is Caruso's desire to have an operation performed which would leave the colonel mindless. When at last Bumble is rescued, and the news broadcast to the nation, the public refuses to believe that Caruso meant to have only the colonel's brain---it insists that it was another part of Bumble's anatomy entirely that was to have been removed.

One of Keller's most effective broadsides here is aimed at the press of the nation, as represented by Amy Worth, a vindictive sob-sister; Spence, an imaginative feature-writer who conceives the Rubber Woman; and Billie Bell, a sympathetic if gushy columnist. Like his other satire, these parodies hit straight home because they are only slightly exaggerated. For however much one may enjoy Keller's humor, in the final analysis one is left with the conviction that he is a man who knows life and who knows people. Beaneath the surface laughter of The Homunculus there is a bed-rock of truth and honesty. I do not think he harbors many illusions.

The Homunculus is a good example of Keller's deft blending of reality and fantasy. The matter-of-fact innocence of the style prevents questioning as to credibility, although the fantasy element is strong. Numbered among Bumble's friends are such stand-outs as ageless and lovely Lilith, who is all things to all men; and Pete, who might have had an altogether different role in the scheme of things---if he had won a certain election long ago. The plot also includes an interesting if tangential hypothesis on the creation.

It cannot be denied that there are faults in the book. Keller is an uneven writer, and there are evidences of unevenness here. On the other hand, his skill as a story-teller easily pulls him through such lapses and keeps the reader engrossed. In the final judgement, Keller's outstanding characteristics remain his humanity, his honesty, his understanding, and---above all---his narrative ability.

I don't know if The Homunculus is an important contribution to the genre or not. Certainly it is thoroughly worthwhile and entertaining, rich in overtones and implication, by an author of first importance.

---Thomas H. Carter.

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This-'n'-That---continued from page 69

Kline, Otis A.: The Port of Peril (Grandon, $3). Adventure on Venus, from the old Weird Tales serial.

Laski, Marghanita: Toasted English (Houghton-Mifflin, $2½). A hilarious satire on the Edwardian dream.

Leinster, Murray: The Last Space Ship (Fell, $2½). Reviewed on page 85.

Long, Frank B.: John Carstairs: Space Detective (Fell, $2½). Acceptable.

Mackenzie, Compton: Hunting the Fairies (Chatto & Windus, 10/6). Two Americans among "little people" of Scotland.

McCall, Marie: The Evening Wolves (Day, $3). New England witch-craze days.

Margulies, Leo & Friend, Oscar J., eds: From Off This World (Merlin, $2.95). A collection of 18 "Hall of Fame" classics from TWS. Good; recommended.

Mead, Shepherd: The Magnificent MacInnes (Farrar, $2½). Borderline, amusing.

Merritt, A.: The Fox Woman (Avon, $¼). A fine collection of Merritt's short stories. A great bargain at this price!

---: The Ship of Ishtar (Bordon, $3½). Finlay-illustrated reprint. Recommended.

Myers, John M.: Silverlock (Dutton, $3). An excursion through letters, wherein a shipwrecked man meets famous characters of literature. Very well done.

Orwell, George, pseud (Eric Blair): Nineteen Eighty-Four (Secker & Warburg, 10/-; Harcourt, $3). The super state of the future, described with realism and immediacy. It is too well written to be called mere satire. A must for a serious reader; too unpleasntly good for a casual fan to miss. Get it.

(concluded on page 92)

THUMBING THE MUNSEY FILES

with William H. Evans

(continuing the summaries of fantasy stories from Allstory magazine in 1910.)

July "1,000 Times Lighter than Air" by Edgar Franklin (20pp): Stir love, an airship powered by a new light gas, a rustic inventor and some typical Franklin humor, and this is the result. It isn't too bad, either.

Sep. "The Monkey-Man" by Wm. Tillinghast Eldridge (4 parts: 14,15,14,11pp): A voyage to the South Seas to capture a monkey-man reported there develops into shipwreck and mutiny. Said m.-m. is finally found. So-so.

Oct. "The Cave of the Glittering Lamps" by Ludwig Lewisohn (4 parts: 11,12,5, 6pp): A Persian cave-city inhabited by ancient priests is discovered by a party of American adventurers. Of medium quality.

Nov. "The Power King" by Francis Perry Elliott (5 parts: 16,11,13,15,10pp): A radioactive atom-destroying gun is the object of the usual chase and intrigue a la Oppenheim.

"The Silent Sounds" by Epes Winthrop Sargeant (30pp): In Central African ruins---apparently of Atlantian origin---is discovered a machine acting like a disintegrator through projecting supersonic waves. Several nations hear of it, of course, and the resulting intrigue ends when the Eastern Asia battle fleet is defeated by one small ship and the machine itself. Rather good.

Dec. "The Sky Police" by John A. Hofferman (6pp): Sky piracy in 1950 causes a grave international incident; devious methods prevent a war, however.

1911

Jan. "A Place of Monsters" by Thos. P. Byron (9pp): A weird tale of adventurers falling afoul of monsters, Mayas and a "feathered serpent" while pearling in a Central American lake. Good atmosphere.

Apr. "The Stimulator" by Randolph Haynes (7pp): A device to direct the mental force of the wearer so that anyone about him will be friendly. Finally the wearer falls in love---and the machine blows up.

July "The Forest Reaper" by Wm. Tillinghast Eldridge (6 parts: ?,?,13,13,12,12 pp): A madman in the South American interior decides to avenge the death of his brother, who was murdered by natives, by killing them. Finally he falls into his own trap. This is told in diary form; well written.

Sep. "Pelliwink" by Thos. R. Ybarra (5 parts: 20,11,12,12,14pp): The American Dumnovix Smathers goes to Spain in search of Arabian lore. He uncovers a spell for summoning a djinn, who tricks him several times. Things get all tangled up, but finally work out in his favor. Pleasant, interesting.

"A Prehistoric Lullaby" by Daniel Henry Morris (3pp): A love triangle among the cave people.

"The Liberation of the Lost" by Elford Eddy (5pp): An unusual tale about a professor who is blown to Hell---literally---by a new explosive he has accidentally concocted. There he is condemned to repeat his search for the lost formula until eternity. But he succeeds in repeating the former conditions, blows all Hell to pieces, and liberates the lost souls, who thenceforward must drift in the void for eternity.

"The Future Powder" by Jos. H. Ranson (3pp): A powder that enables a financier to get "foresight" and make a stock market killing. Skip it.

Oct. "The Watcher" by Kelsey Percival Kitchel (8pp): Projection of his face to sight of a rival in love first drives him away, andthen, when he is dying, brings him back. So-so.

Dec. "When I Was Dead" by Howard Renwick Cannon (7pp): A man "dies" during an operation, is buried, dug up for medical use, and finally revived.

1912

Feb. "Under the Moons of Mars" by Norman Bean, pseud (Edgar Rice Burroughs)(6-part serial: 13,8,15,17,16pp): The author's first story, published in book form later as A Princess of Mars.

"Manikins of Malice" by Chas. Stephens (36pp): Two men, unknown to each other, are operated upon while in an army hospital. When released it turns out that their brains have been interchanged. Most of the story deals with their efforts to reestablish themselves in the communities where they are known---but themselves know no one. A rather early example of the theme, and better developed and handled than most.

Mar. "Unsight---Unseen" by Wm. Tillinghast Eldridge (3 parts: 14,14,11pp): Invisibility is used for investigation of trickery and for pranks. So-so.

Apr. "In Man's Image" by Richard Duffy (32pp): A scientist and his step-daughter, with a trained chimpanzee that is almost human, are isolated on an island in the St. Lawrence. Smuggler appear, and the usual scrapes and adventures ensue. The ape plays a part, though an unimportant one.

May "The Seventh Prelude" by Lillian Bennet-Thompson (8pp): A ghost hoax.

June "The Yap" by Epes Winthrop Sargeant and Charles Jenkins (37pp): Popp, the "Yap," invents an anti-gravity airship and an earthquake machine, and as a result promptly gets mixed up in high finance, love, the foiling of foreign powers intent on stealing his inventions, and a war. In the end he wins out against all odds. Just medium.

"The Luck Juice" by Jos. H. Ransom (4pp): A drug that enables a person to "hunch" what horse will win in a race, etc., and thus increase his luck. An unusual idea, adequately handled.

Sep. "The Magical Bath-Tub" by J. Earl Clausen (3 parts: 20,20,22pp): A gold wishing ring, once property of a lost Aztec city, is accidentally built into a special gold bathtub, and strange things commence to happen. Efforts of the Aztecs to recover the ring complicate matters. There is some humor present, though it is rather dated.

Oct. "Tarzan of the Apes" by Edgar Rice Burroughs (132pp): The first of this famous series. Either you like them, or you don't; I happen to.

"On the Zodiac Turnpike" by Ella P. Argo (5pp): A strange little fantasy about a madman's delusion. Off-trail and interesting.

Nov. "Stardust" by Stephen Chalmers (2 parts: 26,25pp): A ray from a new element discloses the spirit world. This brings up the question (among others) of whether a spirit can give evidence in court. The story is quite interesting despite its cops-and-robberish tinge.

"The Selfrespectometer" by T. Bell (4pp): A device to measure one's self respect turns out to be a hoax. Skip this one.

1913

Jan. "The Gods of Mars" by Edgar Rice Burroughs (5 parts: 21,32,24,31,20pp): The second of the John Carter stories, in which he returns to Mars, lands in the Barsoomian sanctuary of sanctuaries, overturns the organized religion of the planet, and so on. Good Burroughs, and one of the best of the Martian novels.

Feb. "The Second Man" by Lee Robinet (100pp): see Fantasy Commentator #17.

"The Cardinal's Silk Stockings" by Morris G. Gowen (7pp): A pair of a cardinal's stockings are worn---unknown to him---by a ballet dancer; afterwards, the cardinal wants to dance when wearing them. Humorous.

"The Bride's House" by Eliot Dane (6pp): Tender fantasy of haunting.

Mar. "The Brain Blight" by Jack Harrower (129pp): A story involving three different drugs: a brain blight, that makes a person mad; a will-destroyer,

to make people obey; and the whirling death, which causes mysterious crimes. This is really a detective story with fantasy overtones.

"Siren's Isle" by J. Earl Clausen (2 parts: 12,20pp): An island in the Aegean Sea with groves and marble temples is inhabited by a woman who claims to be a siren, and to have the horn of plenty. A pleasant fantasy with de Campish touches.

June "The Black Comet" by J. Earl Clausen (110pp): A dark star approaches the earth, causing panic, with some people trying to devise ways of saving themselves. Finally, the star misses and goes on its way. This story is better than many another we have read on the same theme.

"The Mastodon-Milk-Man" by C. MacLean Savage (3 parts: 22,20,38pp): Arctic Waters, while exploring inland Labrador, finds frozen mastodon milk which he drinks. He is made unusually strong. Coming back to civilization he has the usual expected adventures. Average.

"Spawn of Infinitude" by Edward S. Pilsworth (10pp): A meteor hits earth, bringing a strange plant, which turns out to be a very bad thing. It is ultimately destroyed. An early example of the theme, but not well done.

July "The Cave Girl" by Edgar Rice Burroughs (3 parts: 19,16,18pp): This time Burroughs goes prehistoric, mixing his animals as only he can do to get copious gore. Yet it toto it is a good adventure novel.

Sep. "The Copper Princess" by P. P. Sheehan (87pp): The mummy of Ita, an Inca princess, comes to life in modern society. Sheehan usually has an interesting story to tell, and this is one of his better ones.

"His Day Back" by Jack Brant (6pp): A ghost story---with no horror.

Oct. "To Slay at Will" by J. Klinck (11pp): An unusual tale of a mysterious device---never explained---which kills insects at a distance.

Nov. "The Man without a Soul" by Edgar Rice Burroughs" (90pp): The original publication of The Monster Men.

"The House of Sorcery" by Jack Harrower (4 parts: 26,29,17,25pp): A good mystery complicated by brain-transfers.

Dec. "The Warlord of Mars" by Edgar Rice Burroughs (4 parts: 24,23,14,28pp): The third---and last---of the John Carter novels. The saga ends by making him master of the entire planet and restoring him to his family. My own favorite of the Martian tales.

"The 'V' Force" by Fred C. Smale (8pp): An odd account of a bar of metal ---received from a Tibetian priest---which attracts living things and sucks out their life force.

1914

Feb. "Under the Andes" by Rex T. Stout (139pp): A hidden Inca civilization is discovered by American explorers, with the usual denouement.

"The Devil and Dr. Foster" by J. Earl Clausen (4 parts: 15,28,19,17pp): Devilish doings in a small town. Well above average.

Mar. "The Woman of the Pyramid" by P. P. Sheehan (93pp): A weird tale of mystic time-travelling to ancient Egypt and of reincarnation. Well worth reading.

(with the March 7, 1914 issue, the first of volume 29, All-Story became a weekly.)

Mar. 7 "The Eternal Lover" by Edgar Rice Burroughs (39pp): reincarnation, suspended animation and time-travel all mixed up in a typical ERB thriller. A cave man is projected into the present by an earthquake, finds his mate of an earlier day reincarnated. Tarzan also appears.

"Pursuit" by Frank Gould Comstock (8pp): Air cops and robbers in 1924.

Mar. 28 "Cloud Climbers" by Julian Henckly (29pp): Spies abound in this air war of the future. Average.

Apr. 14 "Power Unconquerable" by Daniel Henry Morris (5pp): Controlled molecular motion.

"At the Earth's Core" by Edgar Rice Burroughs (4 parts: 20,18,18,22pp): The first of the series about Pellucidar, the prehistoric land existing in the interior of a hollow earth. I liked it.

"Eggs" by T. Bell (6pp): A satirical short story about a 1928 when such natural foods as milk, eggs, etc. are collector's items. Humorous.

"The Ghost Mill" by P. P. Sheehan (58pp): A device set up in a cave is supposedly producing perpetual motion. The location subsequently acquires the reputation of being haunted. Extremely good atmosphere.

Apr. 11 "The Dumb Terror" by Chauncey H. Hotchkiss (70pp): An interesting mystery involving a new, powerful oxidizing agent.

Apr. 18 "False Fortunes" by Frank Conley (3 parts: 20,20,27pp): An old recluse discovers the philosopher's stone. The story is mainly about the rivalry of several groups which are after it. Average.

"Queen of Sheba" by P. P. Sheehan (89pp): One of the author's unusual mystic stories of hypnotism and reincarnation.

May 2 "The Haunted Legacy" by Paul Regard (99pp): The working out of a gypsy curse, with a haunted thaler that materializes at odd times. Good!

May 9 "The Joy of Seeing" by Wm. James Henderson (10pp): A medieval tale of Jean, a blind poet, who sells his soul in exchange for having sight restored; the futilities of human life he sees make him renounce his bargain. For some reason this appealed to me very much.

June 20 "The Frozen Beauty" by Stephen Chalmers (3 parts: 33,30,32pp): Suspended animation and adventure. Nothing special.

July 25 "Votes for Men" by Percy Atkinson (7pp): A satire on matriarchy, 1923, when men have to marry any woman asking them---or be sold at auction!

"They Never Knew" by David A. Curtis (48pp): Hypnotism and bank-robbery.

Aug. 8 "In the Professor's Room" by Redfield Ingalls (9pp): Professor Kittilson invents a device to hear the past of any object. Average.

Aug. 22 "The Invisible Judge" by Jack Harrower (7pp): A good ghost story.

"For Love of the Princess" by Frank Blighton (43pp): The hypnotist Swami Rami again in another borderline mystery. Fairly interesting.

Sep. 26 "My Friend Petersson" by James B. Hendryx (10pp): Petersson invents a device to locate his "soul-mate"---who turns out to be an Eskimo. He sets out to get her, and is involved in a series of adventures. Fair.

Oct. 3 "The Fog Man" by Edwin L. Sabin (47pp): A small California town is covered with fog for several days, and things start to disappear. A weird, manlike shape is seen about daily. It turns out to be an escaped "wild man from Borneo." The first part of this story is well written, but the good atmosphere isn't maintained throughout.

Oct. 10 "The Lost Echo" by Frank M. O'Brien (8pp): A semi-humorous account of an echo that took ten hours to return. Fair.

Nov. 14 "The Empire in the Air" by Geo. Allan England (4 parts: 26,23,21,36pp): Invading "vitons" (to use a later nomenclature) from the fourth dimension almost subjugate the earth, but are finally defeated. A little dated now, but still good and readable.

Nov. 21 "The Flying Scourge" by Chas. Augustine Logue (30pp): A subairplane, a device to explode ammunition at a distance, and a new plague lead to cops-and-robbers intrigue and adventure. So-so.

Nov. 28 "The Curse of Quetzal" by J.U.Giesy and J.B.Smith (52pp): Semi Dual returns to investigate a murder and a cursed image. Good whodunit.

Dec. 5 "The Fighting Soul" by Edgar Franklin and Gilbert Riddell (50pp): Hartwell, a financier, is trying to make his niece marry his partner. To persuade her he seeks the aid of Dr. Buckly, an occultist. The doctor reveals Hartwell's psyche to him as a separate entity, which tries

to change the man's cold methods. Odd; interesting.

1915

Jan. 23 "Sweetheart Primeval" by Edgar Rice Burroughs (4 parts: 17,22,15,34pp): The sequel to "The Eternal Lover." Reincarnation in reverse, back to the stone age. If you liked the first one, you'll like this also.

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This-'n'-That---concluded from page 87

Peckham, Virginia: Proud Angelina (Duell, $3½). Borderline allegory.

Philpotts, Eden: Address Unknown (Hutchinson, 9/6). Communication with intelligent life in another solar system. Plodding, talky.

Repp, Ed Earl: The Radium Pool (FPCI, $3). "The Stellar Missile" is included also. Garbage, both of them.

Rodda, Chas.: The House Upstairs (Barrie, 7/6). Psychological, borderline.

Romilly, Eric: Bleeding from the Roman (Chapman & Hall, 9/6). A soldier is thrown back in time to Rome. Both de Camp-like and Thorne Smithish.

Smith, Carmichael: Atomsk: a novel of suspense (Duell, $2½). A stereotyped science-detective thriller.

Stapledon, Wm. Olaf: Worlds of Wonder (FPCI $3). Don't let the odd paper and amateurish appearance fool you: this omnibus book of three short novels is one of the best buys of the year.

Stewart, Geo. R.: Earth Abides (Random, $3). Civilization is destroyed by a new disease.

Tchkotoua, Nicholas P.: Timeless (Murray & Gee, $3). Overly sentimental novel of psychic phenomena. Phooey.

Templeton, Wm. F.: The 4-Sided Triangle (Long, 9/6). Pleasant and entertaining expansion of an Amazing Stories tale.

Towers, Frances: Tea with Mr. Rochester (Joseph, 7/6). Short stories, a few of which are supernatural.

Varè, Daniele: The Doge's Ring (Methuen, 8/6). A magic ring takes its owner on excursions into other ages.

Véry, Pierre: In What Strange Land...! (Wingate, 9/-). Haunted by visions.

Waugh, Evelyn: Scott-King's Modern Europe (Little-Brown, $2). Weak satire.

Webster, Elizabeth Charlotte: Ceremony of Innocence (Harcourt, $2¾). A psychic novice wreaks havoc in a convent; the time-sequences are often confusing but otherwise the book is very good.

Weinbaum, S. G.: A Martian Odyssey (Fantasy Press, $3). Ingratiating shorts.

Welles, Orson, ed.: Invasion from Mars (Dell, $¼). 12 s-f shorts, including the Welles 1938 radio script.

Williams, Chas.: Many Dimensions; War in Heaven (Pellagrini & Cudahy, $3). Acceptable reprints.

Williamson, Jack: The Humanoids (Simon & Schuster, $2). Reprint of the recent Astounding novel in a sleazy, incredibly poor quality format.

Wright, S. Fowler: The World Below ($3½, Shasta). Good reprint.

Wylie, Philip: Gladiator (Avon, $¼). One of the best superman novels ever again available. Get it.

Zagat, A. L.: 7 Out of Time (Fantasy, $3). Bok-illustrated. A so-so fantasy.

NON-FICTION

Fagin, Bryllion: The Histrionic Mr. Poe (Johns Hopkins, $4). A brilliant, persuasive study. Highly recommended.

Garrett, Eileen J.: Adventures in the Supernatural (Creative Age, $3½). Experiences of a clairvoyant.

Gekle, Wm. Francis: Arthur Machen: Weaver Fantasy (Round Table Press, $5). A 500-copy edition, with bibliography.

Jones, H. Spencer: Life on Other Worlds (Mentor, 35¢). Very good pocket-book.

Ley, Willy: The Conquest of Space (Viking, $3.95). A beautiful volume of excellent quality. Highly recommended.

Rugoff, Milton, ed: A Harvest of World Folk Tales (Viking, $3.95). Illustrated by Low. Quite good.

Scott, J.E.: A Bibliography of the Works of Sir Henry Rider Haggard (Mathews, 42/-).

Summers, Montague: Malleus Maleficarum (Pushkin, 15/-). Reprint. ---A.L.S.