FANTASY COMMENTATOR

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

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editor and publisher

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This is the twenty-sixth number of Fantasy Commentator, an amateur, non-profit periodical of limited circulation appearing at irregular intervals. Subscription rates: 30¢ per copy, four issues for $1. All opinions expressed herein are the individual contributors' own, and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the staff as a whole. This magazine publishes no fiction, but poetry and manuscripts dealing with any phase of fantasy literature are welcome. Please address all correspondence to the editor at 7 East 235th Street, New York 70, N.Y.

THIS-'N'-THAT

Your editor impulsively decided to follow Fantasy Commentator tradition by compiling a list of all books of fantasy fiction published since issue #24. Halfway through the task he was regretting his rashness very keenly. The work was pushed on to the bitter end, however, and the fruits of these labors follow below. Included are volumes printed here, in Britain and such Continental titles as could be unearthed; reprints, paper-bound or otherwise, have been excluded unless they represent old, rare and/or extremely out-of-the-way material. Except for those books that have escaped attention (very few, it is believed) and the ones cited in the last Commentator "This-'n'-That" column, then, this listing covers all of the years 1950 and 1951 plus early issues in the field during 1952:

Addams, Chas.: Monster Rally (Simon & Schuster, $2.95). Wonderfully gruesome collection of macabre cartoons.

Asimov, Isaac: Foundation (Gnome, $2¾). Equal to the author's usual standards ---such as they are. Entertaining.

---: I, Robot (Gnome, $2½). Routine novel of intrigue in the future.

---: The Stars, Like Dust (Doubleday, $2½). Inter-galactic novel, serialized in magazine form as "Tyran."

Asquith, Cynthia: What Dreams May Come (Barrie, 10/6). Eight horror and supernatural tales, sometimes effective but more often rather obvious.

Aymé, Marcel: En Arrière (Gallimard, 350fr.). Ten shorts, some of which, like "Conte du Milieu," are fantasy.

---: The Second Face (The Bodley Head, 10/6). Amusing account of a man's face miraculously changed into another's.

Bacchelli, Riccardo: La Cometa: Romanzo Tragicomo (Rizzoli, L.750). Rich allegory about an imaginary comet about to destroy the world. Excellent.

Bair, Patrick: Faster! Faster! (Viking, $3; Eyre & Spottiswoode, 9/6). Allegorical fantasy about the plight of the individualist in the regimented world.

Beuf, Carlo: The Innocence of Pastor Müller (Duell, Sloane & Pierce, $2½). Illustrated by the author; introduction by J.D.Adams. Brief account of a device that photographs thoughts.

Blish, James: Jack of Eagles (Greenberg, $2¾). Serialized as "Let the Finder Beware." Pretty sour stuff!

Boucher, Anthony & McComas, J. Francis, eds.: The Best from Fantasy and Science Fiction (Little-Brown, $2¾). 19 good shorts in an atrocious binding.

Bradbury, Ray: The Illustrated Man ($2½, Doubleday). 18 excellent s-f stories, some previously unpublished. Get it.

Brown, Frederic: Space on My Hands ($3, Shasta). Nine good shorts, but half of them are a bit too well known.

Bushnell, Adelyn: Strange Gift (Coward-McCann, $3). A clairvoyant in doubting New England. Quite entertaining.

Cadell, Elizabeth: Brimstone in the Garden (Morrow, $3). Pleasant combination ghost story and social satire.

Campbell, John W., Jr.: The Moon Is Hell! (Fantasy Press, $3). The title story is better than "The Elder Gods," which is also included for good measure.

---, ed.: The Astounding Science Fiction Anthology (Simon & Schuster, $3.95). 23 stories, nearly 600 pages. Acceptable.

Capon, Paul: The Other Side of the Moon (Heinemann, 10/6). Familiar stuff: an expedition to another planet.

Carr, John Dickson: The Devil in Velvet (Harper, $3). A good combination time-travel fantasy & detective novel.

Carr, Rbt. S.: Beyond Infinity (Fantasy Press, $2¾). Four longish novelettes by a returned old-timer in the field.

Chaplin, Sid: The Thin Seam (Dent, $2; Phoenix, 8/6). Illus. by Norman Town. Borderline allegory that never jells.

Coatsworth, Elizabeth: The Enchanted: an Incredible Tale (Pantheon, $2½). Ill. by Rbt. W. White. A strange region in Maine where magic still reigns. Good.

Coblentz, Stanton A.: Into Plutonian Depths (Avon, 25¢). Let's not go.

Collier, John: Fancies and Goodnights ($4, Doubleday). 50 entries. To be reviewed in Fantasy Commentator #27.

(continued on page 184)

WEAVER OF NIGHTMARES

by
George T. Wetzel

> A day-dreamer I have been from boyhood, haunted, no matter what my task, by imaginations, mostly approximating some form of fictitious narrative; imaginations beyond my power to banish and seldom within my power to alter, modify or control.
>
> Besides, I have, in my sleep, dreamed many dreams which, after waking, I could remember: some dimly, vaguely, or faintly; others clearly, vividly or even intensely. A majority of these dreams have been such as come to most sleepers, but a minority have been such as visit few dreamers.
>
> Sometimes I wake with the most distinct recollection of a picture, definite and with a multitude of details. ... Often I wake with the sensation of having just finished reading a book or story. Generally I can recall the form and appearance of the book and can almost see the last page: size, shape, quality of paper and kind of type; with every letter of the last sentences.
>
> ---Edward L. White: The Song of the Sirens

His dreams, he said, began long years ago in Brooklyn when he was a boy of five. In some he seemed to explore actual remote sections of that borough's Prospect Park, but in others he could discern only ephemeral, misty groves and grottoes. Much later young Master Edward jokingly asked his elders to take him to see such non-existent places. And in the later years of manhood Edward Lucas White attributed the incus-fraught visions he still experienced not to waking memories or escapist imaginings but to years of tireless research. It was these dreams of maturity, the residuum of classical lore, that formed the core of his supernatural fiction. After divulging this, however, White promptly added that he had "not one iota of belief in the supernatural."

His appearance during the final decades of his life was that of a scholar. He habitually wore spectacles, was garbed in a plain black suit, and had white hair---a beard and mustache that almost covered his face. But the piercing expression of his eyes and an erect, almost military manner dispelled much of the sedateness that would customarily be associated with a professorial aspect.

Edward L. White's life might be characterized as that of a humor-loving family man. He enjoyed sitting down to dinner with his wife each day as much, he stated, as he had in his days of courtship. On one occasion he recounted with a smile how the family cat---when it lived masterless in alleys---"adopted" him one night as he strolled by. Abimelech, as it came to be known, followed him home to become a life-long guest.

His school pupils related how he would enter the classroom with a military gait, greet all in precisely the same words, change to classroom coat and go to work. He was noted for the ability to impart interest in subjects usually considered dull or difficult, and students remembered this years later. One day this bewhiskered gentleman rolled his trouser legs up to his knees, and grasping a ruler to serve as an impromptu sword, showed how Caesar led a charge during one campaign of the Gallic Wars. He was known familiarly to his young charges---but always out of earshot---as "Whiskers White." These Greek and Latin students became the "phenomenal number of friends who corresponded from all over the world."

Among his correspondents White numbered Rudyard Kipling, who was in Vermont in 1892 when White wrote an unsolicited but kindly appraisal of his poems. Kipling returned the compliment, graciously acknowledging White's scholarship in verse in a reply that started a life-long friendship.

But eventually these evenings of letter-writing had to be terminated. From the time he was nine years of age he had been attacked by sudden migraine headaches which incapacitated him for several days. For weeks thereafter he dared not read for more than a few minutes at a time. In later life these headaches frequently cursed him daily, starting especially when he read or wrote by artificial light. When this made correspondence almost impossible he began calling on his "adopted nephews and nieces," his former students.

Few sources of information on Edward Lucas White exist. His last book, Matrimony (1932), is primarily an account of his marriage, covering little of his earlier life and furnishing less biographical information than might be expected. More helpful are the National Cyclopedia of American Biography's brief account of the man and that in The Men Who Make Our Novels (1919), which Charles C. Baldwin compiled under the pseudonym of George Gordon. These, taken in combination with occasional columns in old newspaper files, enable the literary researcher to piece together a reasonably adequate picture of this author's existence.

Edward L. White was born in Bergen, New Jersey, May 18, 1866, of Thomas Hurley and Kate Butler (Lucas) White. His parents were Roman Catholic, of French stock, their ancestors having emigrated to Pennsylvania in the middle 1700's. In 1868 the family moved to Brooklyn, remaining until 1872. There followed five years on New York's Lake Seneca before going to Baltimore, where, with three exceptions, White spent the remainder of his life.

He was educated at Pen Lucy School, the University School for Boys and Villanova College. In those days his chief interest was science, and he at first visualized himself a lecturer in biology. However, on a round-trip by sailing-ship to Rio de Janiero in 1885 he took the opportunity to evaluate his character carefully, and resolved to devote himself to poetry and literature. This was not as startling a shift of purpose as it might seem, for he had delved deeply into fiction, history and poetry since childhood. Longfellow, whom he took as a model, claimed that an understanding of the Romance languages helped versification, and White decided to follow his lead. He attended Johns Hopkins, hoping to become a professor or a librarian. His studies quickly led him to the conclusion that Romance literature was but a weak shadow of that in Latin and Greek, without knowledge of which no one could really comprehend the moderns. He began to concentrate on the classics, but too late: his migraine forced him to quit in 1888, his health badly broken.

A living must be earned, and White turned to teaching Latin and Greek in private schools of Baltimore, Friends School and Boys Latin. For the first half of 1892 he was (as he himself put it) "a temporary, stop-gap Latin teacher at Dartmouth."

On November 28, 1900 he married Agnes Gerry, daughter of a physician of near-by Cantonsville, after an acquaintance and friendship of some twelve years. Their life together was "singularly happy," though in the last years before her death in 1929 Agnes White was an invalid. Her husband passed away on March 31, 1934, at the age of 67.

Edward L. White always stated that he found poetry much easier to write than prose. Worry, economic pressure and illness, however, deprived him of the leisure he felt was necessary for its composition. Yet prose-writing was forced on him as it was upon Poe and Lovecraft. He would write and rewrite, only to find his final draft as unsatisfying as his first. He actually burned thousands of ms. pages in his back-handed script before producing one which his "critical faculties approved of as not bad enough to burn." This was in August, 1903.

"From 1904 on," he wrote, "I had some meagre success both at writing short stories and selling them to magazines. By 1909 I felt myself capable of a romance. My rash impulse was to emulate Sienkiewicz's Deluge, which I rate as the greatest historical romance ever written...." White then realized that he had discovered an unworked Golconda of literary material in reading of the life of Francia, dictator of Paraguay. The result was El Supremo, composed in the summers of 1910-11-12, which ran to 700 pages when published (1916).

In the next dozen years there appeared two collections of short stories, The Song of the Sirens (1919) and Lukundoo (1927), and three novels about classical days in Greece and Rome, The Unwilling Vestal (1918), Andivius Hedulio (1921) and Helen (1925). White also wrote two works of non-fiction, Matrimony (1932),an account of his marriage, and the historical text Why Rome Fell (1927). These, along with a slim collection of poems titled Narrative Lyrics (1908), make up his published books. There also exists in manuscript a 500,000-word novel, Plus Ultra, whose length caused it to be rejected by a number of publishing houses.

White composed his stories in lead-pencil on small sheets of paper. In the days after his marriage his wife would copy these drafts on the typewriter. Since his handwriting was large, these manuscripts appeared even longer than they actually were---Plus Ultra, for example, takes up four running feet of shelf space in this form.

"My literary creed is that no one should write unless in possession of an idea of theme or plot original and worth writing about; nor unless writing lucidly and agreeably," White once stated. He is on record also as "loathing" satire, irony, cynicism and sarcasm in writing. It is perhaps on account of this latter feeling that some of his work lacks the subtlety and polish of better known authors. He claimed that he had "never stooped to potboilers," however. In a 1919 letter to a book reviewer on the Philadelphia Public Ledger White named "The Fasces" (in The Song of the Sirens) as his best work of fiction to date.

Aside from occasional touches in his poetry, Edward Lucas White's published work in the fantasy field is confined to his short stories. Quite probably his interest in the genre stemmed from an early passion for the writings of Edgar Allan Poe. "I fuddled my brain reading and rereading him," he admitted, "till I had to banish from my home everything of his, if I was to read anything else." Abetting this was of course his literary credo which put such high value on originality. His mental outlook certainly did not shy from the unusual, besides: despite his family's religious background he was a natural-born free-thinker, "pondering what was imparted to me, accepting some of it, yet disbelieving much," even from his childhood years. And finally there was the vivid clarity of his dreams, on which much of his fiction directly hinged.

The bulk of White's work in the field is in Lukundoo, all of whose ten entries are fantasy in some form. These, with the title story in The Song of the Sirens, comprise the subject-matter for our consideration. Tales of magic make up a majority of the eleven; to a lesser count come those of demonism; and a solitary ghost story completes the group.

This last story is "The House of the Nightmare." This account of a man forced to spend the night in a house he does not know to be haunted has a sustained atmosphere of eerieness that White handles quite well. A secondary theme ---not developed to any extent---intensifying this atmosphere is that of nightmares affecting another than their own dreamers; this appears but briefly, which is regrettable, for I believe the concept is quite original.

White's tales in which the element of magic is paramount might be considered by starting with "The Message on the Slate," an elusive story that almost eludes classification. Ghost and magic elements are present, but the external soul motif (of which voodooism is an aspect) seems to dominate these. The cen-

tral theme is quite original. A man's wife, to whom he has been inordinately attached, dies; he insists on a second coffin, identical with hers, being interred at the same time. He later marries another woman, but is quite indifferent to her, as he cannot forget his earlier mate. The woman resents his attitude, and on the advice of a spiritualist insists that the two coffins be dug up. While this is going on the husband's form becomes more and more nebulous and eventually disappears---only to be found in the supposedly empty coffin, breathing his last. The occasional verbosity and the depressing atmosphere of this story have probably prevented its becoming popular. It reminds me somewhat of The Picture of Dorian Gray, where Oscar Wilde employs a slightly different cast of the same external soul motif.

Coming it would seem from the pages of the defunct Unknown Worlds magazine is "The Picture Puzzle." The central prop, a jig-saw puzzle on which a man and his wife see different scenes, receives no explanation from White, who is apparently interested only in the strange coincidence it brings to fruition. Only upon retrospection does the reader deduce or devise his own clarification.

In "Alfandega 49A" the author again indulges in subtle presentation, leaving loose ends the curious reader must gather up himself. It is plain, however, that Orodoff Guimaraes resorted to black magic to destroy his enemies, but whether he accomplished his evil end by voodoo or through the agency of a demon servitor is not even remotely suggested. The atmosphere is good here, and more than atones for a somewhat conventional course of action.

"Lukundoo," possibly White's most famous story, is a refined dose of African demonism (or magic, as you will) that may be too strong for many tastes. A witch-doctor's curse causes a man to become afflicted with horrible growths---tiny, living mannikins which sprout from his flesh. An "Afterword" in Lukundoo reveals that this, like all but one of the entries of the volume, was dream-inspired. "But I never should have dreamed it," wrote White, "had I not previously read H. G. Wells' much better story, 'Pollock and the Porroh Man.' Anyone interested in dreams might relish comparing the two tales. They have resemblant features, but are very unlike...."

Ambitious design shows in "Sorcery Island," where the reiterated motif of flying geese remind one of witches' familiars and objects of a magic spell. An airman flying above a lonely islet is caught in the magic spell that not only walls in its victims on the ground but reaches invisible fingers into the sky to trap new prey.

The final story that can be classified as involving magic of some sort is "Floki's Blade." This, which is based not on White's nightmares but those of an acquaintance, is a rather mediocre supernatural tale, interesting if read only as an entertaining adventure yarn.

The style of "The Pig-Skin Belt" is reminiscent of Henry S. Whitehead's prose of the West Indies. Its theme is therianthropy, and like several titles mentioned above it offers no answers to questions of motivation. This detracts little from its quality, however.

Probably one of Edward L. White's finest efforts is "The Snout." It tells of what was found by a pair of housebreakers in the home of a mysterious recluse. Its development is kindred with that of H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu stories. The hints of human demonism and degeneration found here seem to foreshadow many elements of that Providence master's work.

"Amina" is also a powerful portrait in demonism. It is interesting to compare it with "The Ghoula" (in Narrative Lyrics), which employs the identical theme and setting and which was composed in the same year (1906). Knowing White's method of composition, I feel sure the poem was the first version of the two. The feeling of an actual nightmare truly pervades this story, and the revelation of the final horror climaxes the reader's mounting disquietude.

As mentioned before, on the title story in The Song of the Sirens is supernatural. This tale seems to end much too abruptly. The slow, elaborate beginning makes one suspect strongly that the author indended it to be of greater length, and that at one point---page 51 of the book, I should guess---something happened (a bout of migraine, perhaps?) that forced him to abandon a leisurely development. Lovecraft, it might be mentioned, commented on the "persuasive strangeness" pervading this work.

Though not qualifying as supernatural, two other titles in this book are worthy of mention. "The Flambeau Bracket" has unmistakeable Poesque touches with its final revelation of a murdered man's identity and the reason for his death. But for several technical faults this title might well pass for a newly-discovered tale by that author, so excellent is the central idea and so close the stylistic similarities. The other story is "Disvola," a study of a ghastly vendetta. Its incidents have almost a Shakespearian color, and its chilling finale displays more understatement that White usually exercises.

A study of White's style dredges many interesting things to the surface. The shocking terminal climax, or punch-line ending, was idiomatic with the man, and would seem to corroborate the sometimes-questioned statement that his fiction was very often literal accounts of nightmares. For a nightmare usually embodies a single overwhelming mood or idea that literally frightens a person awake. Many of White's characters of mysterious identity reveal themselves and as a result send the unfortunate discoverers into that kind of screaming shock which characterizes for most of us the struggle of a bad dream's ending.

The leaving of loose ends in his various stories is another trait. H. P. Lovecraft, for example, committed similar plot lacunae, but Lovecraft knitted such separate tales together over a period of years by gradually explaining and filling in the gaps, a case in point being his "ghoul-changeling" motif. White apparently was not bothered by these gaps, and made no effort to fill them.

Lesser characteristics are the recurring themes of sorcery and biological anomalies. An adventuresome mood suffuses nearly all his prose, historical and supernatural fiction alike, giving them a virility reminding one of London.

Edward Lucas White's work in the fantasy genre stands alone, isolated from his contemporaries and from current schools alike. It is individual, influenced mainly by dreams, that residuum of reading and classical lore that owns no master. And it gives its possessor a distinct and unmistakeable niche in the halls of fantastic fiction.

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don, Our Yesterdays	N.Y.Sunday Sun, May 24, 1891
Boy's Valor, Man's Courage, Sail, Steam at Night, Friendship	N.Y.Sunday Sun, Feb. 28, 1892
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A Sleeping Car	N. Y. Sunday Sun, January 14, 1906
On a Crawfish in a Glass Jar	" " " " April 1, 1906
The Regiment	" " " " Jan. 27, 1907
The Autograph	Smith's Magazine, August, 1907
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Lost Baltimore	The Outlook, August 24, 1907
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The Little Faded Flag	Atlantic Monthly, May, 1908
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(Note: the places of publication of E. L. White's magazine short stories are not available at this writing, these periodicals being mostly obscure ones. It is known, however, that his "Song of the Sirens" appeared in Sunset Magazine under the title "The Man Who Had Seen Them.")

AUTHOR'S POSTSCRIPT

Aside from the literary sources mentioned in the main body of this article, considerable information was obtained from personal recollections of two of Edward L. White's acquaintances and from newsclippings in the files of Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library. My brief study of this author has been helped by the most generous suggestions of Mrs. Hampton of the Maryland Historical Society, to whom this humble literary effort is gratefully dedicated.

---oOo---

(Thumbing the Munsey Files---continued from page 172)

pelled from his regiment in disgrace, is in New York while his old regiment is fighting in France. He appears to lead them in a charge, is killed---whereupon his dead body is discovered in New York. Good---one of Abdullah's better efforts.

LITTLE KNOWN FANTASY

by

Darrell C. Richardson

III -- Fantasy and Science-Fiction in New Magazine, New Story & All Around

One of the most fascinating of the older all-fiction magazines is New Story. It followed the pattern of the Frank A. Munsey chain in often changing title, merging with and absorbing other publications. It was very popular in its day, too, but is now almost unknown. It was first called New Magazine, and had evolved out of the old Gunter's Magazine, originally a Street and Smith periodical. With the October, 1910 issue (vol. 12, #3) of Gunter's, which had just been bought by the LaSalle Publishing Company of Chicago, the title was changed to The New (Gunter's) Magazine. With the November, 1910 number it became The New Magazine, and was renumbered volume one, number one. In August, 1911 the title New Story was adopted, and by early 1912 the magazine was taken over by Street and Smith again. Once more the title was changed (December, 1915), this time to All Around Magazine. And with the April, 1917 issue All Around combined with People's Magazine, another Street and Smith periodical. All these changes give the impression of an unstable publication---yet throughout its life (78 numbers) a regular monthly schedule was maintained.

This series of magazines contained a large number of unusual stories, including several that are science-fiction or fantasy. It is perhaps most famous because three stories by Edgar Rice Burroughs and one by H. Rider Haggard were printed there. "The Return of Tarzan" was a seven-part serial beginning in the June, 1913 number. "Tarzan of the Apes" had appeared a few months before (October, 1912) in The All-Story; this had made such a terrific hit that it was considered quite a feat for Street and Smith to steal away the sequel from the editor of the Munsey chain, Bob Davis. The first three installments of "The Return of Tarzan" were featured by cover illustrations; one of these (later reproduced on the jacket of the book) was a full-color painting by N. C. Wyeth. "The Outlaw of Torn" began in January, 1914, the very month after "Tarzan" had concluded; it was a five-part serial, running through the May, 1914 issue. "Allan and the Holy Flower" by H. Rider Haggard was serialized concurrently in seven installments, closing with the June, 1914 number. This prevented "The Outlaw of Torn" from being honored by cover illustrations, since three were used to provide some excellent illustrations for Haggard's contribution. In the February, 1916 number of the magazine Burroughs' fantasy novel "Beyond Thirty" appeared complete. This issue of All Around is so rare and sought after (since "Beyond Thirty" was never printed anywhere else) that it would be difficult to estimate its market value. To a slightly lesser extent, in fact, the same thing is true of the other issues containing original printings of Burroughs' and Haggard's novels.

These novels are fairly well known, so I shall concentrate on reviewing in this brief article some of the more obscure fantasies in these magazines.

Owen Oliver's "Man Who Came Back" (October, 1912) concerns a lost race in Wengaland, an unknown part of Africa. The Wengas brew a noxious, paralyzing drug that robs men of will-power and transforms them into beasts. The purpose of a trek into this strange land is to search for Charles Norrington, who had disappeared there: not in order to save him---it would be too late for that---but to grant him a higher mercy, death.

Two short supernatural tales by E. F. Benson appeared here. "The Room in the Tower" (September, 1914) is a weird tale on the oft-used theme "dreams are

subsequently realized in the material," and provided the title for Benson's first collection of stories. The ghosts in "What Came into the Long Gallery" (March, 1915) are the spirits of twin babies murdered in a terrible fashion by their uncle to gain an inheritance. He threw them into the huge fireplace of the gallery and stamped them down into the flames with his riding-boots. The little ghosts are finally "laid" by kindness and love.

"The Terror" by John Edward Russell (July to October, 1914) is a novel of adventure and search for treasure in the South Seas. The plot centers around a mysterious creature on an unknown isle where pearls are hidden. The "terror" turns out to be a prehistoric pterodactyl, which hunts and kills men as effectively as a bird does insects.

James Francis Dwyer is represented by two novels in the Talbot Mundy tradition. "The Green Half-Moon" (August to November, 1915) deals effectively with Oriental mysticism. "The Heart of Tamerlane" (April to July, 1915) tells of the search for the "heart" of Tamerlane which exerts a sinister influence among the "initiated" of India. Three adventurers gain admittance to its secret ceremonies, where thousands of maidens have been sacrificed through the years to provide blood for its "life." The solution to the mystery packs a climactic punch.

The July, 1915 New Story also furnishes two other fantasies. One is Morgan Robertson's last story, written shortly before his death, "Finnegan's Eyesight." The other is a long novel by Wolcott Le Clear, "The Toad of Doom." This adventure story of South America introduces a lost race of Incas who have an interesting way of disposing of their victims. The extract of an exotic plant is sprinkled in a trail from the victim to the cave where the toads live. The giant toads, charmed by the scent, follow it to their prey, which they devour alive.

The December, 1915 issue began Frank Blighton's five-part serial, "The Island of Fear." This is old-time science-fiction about an invention that transmits electricity without wires. Most of the action takes place on "Electric Island," which is surrounded by natural barriers such as inaccessible cliffs, whirlpools, etc. With it was William Hope Hodgson's fine little gem, "The Mystery of the Missing Ships." "The Derelict," one of his best fantasies, was published two months later (February, 1916) in the same number as "Beyond Thirty."

"The Buddha's Elephant" by Allan Hawkwood (August, 1916) is described as a tale of "a Greek goddess in the Chinese desert." In a lost Greek city in the Gobi is---among other things---a replica of the Parthenon. This is a very good lost race tale indeed. And why not? For "Allan Hawkwood" is no other than that master craftsman, H. Bedford-Jones! Bedford-Jones, who next to Frederick Faust may have been the world's most prolific writer, wrote an occasional off-trail story under this pseudonym.

In the same issue is the first of a series of prehistoric fantasies by J. Allan Dunn, "The Fire Maker." The second, "Wo, the Wizard" (September, 1916) demonstrates how brain can win over brawn even in the Stone Age. Wo becomes the first medicine man of his tribe. "Squat, the Word Maker" (October, 1916) shows how the cave people's language developed. The final title in this series is "Red the Fish Eater" (November, 1916).

With this last are three more fantasies. First, a complete Semi Dual novel by J. U. Giesy and Junius B. Smith, "The Web of Circumstances." Secondly, a horror story by Guy Thorne entitled "The Ventilator." Reminiscent of Poe, it is well told. Strangely enough, the leading character is a collector of "fantasy and stories of the imagination," and is reading a volume of Poe when first he appears on the scene. Finally, a four-part serial called "The Bowl of Baal" begins in the same number. This is by Robert Ames Bennett, and is almost as good as his famous earlier fantasy Thyra (1901). While flying over Arabia Larry O'Brien discovers and lands in an unknown city. He is welcomed as Baal, Lord of Air. The

city is governed by a sultana, the beautiful and passionate Tigra. Even more interesting to O'Brien is the attractive priestess of Baal, Istara. Not far from the city is a place of mystery and terror called "Irem"; here lives the "dweller in Irem," which O'Brien discovers to be a monstrous prehistoric lizard. Aside from containing all the elements of a first-class fantastic yarn the story has considerable literary merit. It might well join "The Heads of Cerberus" and "The Abyss of Wonders" in Lloyd Eshbach's projected Polaris Fantasy Library.

"The Treasure of Atlantis" by J. Allan Dunn (December, 1916) is a complete novel about survivors of ancient Atlantis in unexplored South America. The theme is quite time-worn, but the story holds up well.

The final issue of All Around (March, 1917) contains George B. Rodney's long fantasy novel, "The Underground Trail." This definitely top-notch! It not only was excellent in its own time, but it stands up very well to modern standards of the field. In the very wildest and remote section of Arizona a group of people are attacked by hostile Apaches. They escape into a cave, but are trapped when their pursuers cause a landslide at the entrance that seals them in. At the rear of the cave they find and follow a subterranean tunnel for countless miles. In this tunnel (which, incredibly, was man-made and very ancient) they stumble on the fabulous, legendary "mother lode" of gold, where that metal apparently grows like a plant. They are also attacked by a prehistoric cleosaurus, which has survived, though blind, through the ages underground. After seven days, near death, they emerge in a hidden sealed valley in the depths of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. This valley is peopled by nearly 20,000 descendants of the ancient Toltecs. The party's adventures there, the several love affairs, the pagan rites of the civilization, and the ultimate escape all make a very exciting story.

Among other well-known writers who contributed to these magazines are James Oliver Curwood, Gilbert Patten, J. Aubrey Tyson, Edwin Bliss, Bertram Atkey, Clarence Buddington Kelland, Edgar Wallace and Achmed Abdullah. Much of the obscure fantasy in these pages is eminently readable, and well worth the attention of discriminating collectors.

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BOOK REVIEWS

NEW TALES OF SPACE AND TIME, edited by Raymond J. Healy with an introduction by Anthony Boucher. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1951. xiii-294pp. 21½cm. $3.50.

Nowadays anyone with previous publishing "connections" and a dozen back number magazines apparently qualifies as an expert on science-fiction. To date the efforts of these self-styled experts have been generally unrewarding, and in particular the anthologies they have edited have been pretty disappointing. It is pleasant, then, to dispel their stale rehashings from mind with this fresh collection---for New Tales of Space and Time contains ten stories written especially for it, none of which has ever been printed elsewhere.

On the other hand, this "new" way of filling an anthology carries a disadvantage. An anthology is supposed to be a group of stories sufficiently above average quality to warrant appearing in book form. What are the chances that any sheaf of stories, written quickly to order, will be above average? More important, what are the chances of their bettering those in any two consecutive issues of a good science-fiction pulp, with which they would for the most part be comparable and with which they would necessarily compete?

Let us review the contents of Mr. Healy's compilation before attempting to answer these questions and draw conclusions.

All of the entries are acceptably written, and the majority could have appeared in Galaxy or Astounding Science-Fiction. Two of them possibly couldn't

have: Anthony Boucher's "Quest for Saint Aquin" and Gerald Heard's"B + M---Planet 4." The first is an unusual robot tale of the future that probably violates enough pulp mores in its extrapolation on religion to bar it from a fantasy magazine. I enjoyed it considerably. I can't say the same for Heard's story, however. It is a long-winded bore, like much of this eccentric Californian's fiction, and contains many touches indirectly advocating nudism, living without houses,"coöperating" with vegetables by "letting them evolve instead of simply exploiting them" (whatever that means) and similar quaint notions. It is on a par with Is Another World Watching?, in which Heard conjured up giant Martian bees as the cause of the so-called flying saucers---which of course have been identified as instrument-carrying balloons. Neither work deserves serious consideration.

Two well-known and overrated authors, Isaac Asimov and A. E. van Vogt, have also contributed to New Tales of Space and Time. The former's "In a Good Cause---," better than much of his fiction, is a nicely-turned study in political philosophy with a couple of neat, ironic twists. Very entertaining. Van Vogt's "Fulfillment" is about a machine that can think, and, in combination with some typical confusing time-shifts, gives the author a perfect opportunity to surround a minute idea with a vast amount of unnecessary wordage. It all adds up to very little---except to show that a lot of people can't tell the difference between woolly prose and genuine writing ability. (I wonder how much longer fantasy editors, publishers and readers are going to mistake such mixtures of jumbled time-sequences, impressive phrases and infinitesimal plot-germs for talent?)

Three titles fall into the "pleasant time-killer" category---they are neither outstandingly good nor bad. "You Can't Say That" by Cleve Cartmill, is the best of this mediocre trio. It is mainly adventure in the future, with some detective overtones, blended into a slickly satisfying formula yarn. Conversely, P. Schuyler Miller's "Status Quandam" is the least pleasing. This is a hastily dashed-off de Campish time-jump back to Athenian Greece, and reads in spots like a precis of a novel rather than the short story it was intended to be. I feel Miller was more interested in showing that Greek everyday life was not the same as schoolbooks portray it than in writing a good story. Midway between these two stories is "Tolliver's Travels" by Frank Fenton and Joseph Petracca. This deals with a hack Hollywood scenario writer suddenly projected into the world of 2151, where happiness is enforced by law.

Let me cite the remaining entries, the cream of this anthology, in order of ascending quality. R. Bretnor's "Little Anton" is a rollicking, hilarious and frequently bawdy tale of an adolescent immigrant boy who has four-dimensional sight, and of his great-uncle, none other than the infamous inventor Papa Schimmelhorn. This is a welcome addition to the author's past efforts in this series. Kris Neville's "Bettyann" is a mood story about a member of an alien race who could not be faithful to her own people. There are a few rough spots in the prose fabric which remind the reader that Neville is an untried author, but they are far outshadowed by some unusually effective descriptive weaving. If "Bettyann" is a fair sample of his abilities today, those of his maturity should be hauntingly beautiful indeed. I think that "hanuting" is also the best word for "Here There Be Tygers," in which Ray Bradbury tells what happened to an exploring rocket in a strange, faraway universe. Like most Bradbury yarns, this one has very little plot, but plenty of warm, circumstantial detail and fine atmosphere. It is probably the best story in the book.

The interesting introduction of Anthony Boucher (why not editor Healy, one wonders?) laments the way anthologists live off each other's guts---albeit in more delicate terms. The reader is also told here that the contents of the book were intended "to provide an answer to another problem," the expression of more positive faith in man himself to solve his future troubles. I hate to disillus-

ion Mr. Boucher, but this seems to me to be nothing more than a variation or rephrasing of what fantasy editors have been saying for years. In fact, the whole pulp field (in science-fiction and out) has always operated strictly on a low-level human equation because readers weren't supposed to understand anything else! Oh well. Mr. B. also informs us that in planning this volume authors were told in advance just what themes they were supposed to write a story about. Readers of New Tales of Space and Time, whether they liked it or not, can surely pounce on that remark to prove their point. (I refrain from joining in this pastime myself only because I have already used up more wordage here than I intended.)

To summarize: Three entries in this collection are excellent; two are very good; three rate as ordinary; and two fall well below par. Add to this the fact that new stories can't duplicate others and you have definitely classified the book as one of 1951's dozen best.

Should you buy it? You can't answer that without recalling one other fact. No matter how poorly compiled and repetitious the average anthology may be, it nearly always has one redeeming feature: at least one entry that is a real gem, a genuine classic. If you haven't read that classic, or don't own it, you may well purchase the book for it alone. That happens more often than many editors think. New Tales of Space and Time, for all its good points, just doesn't have one of those classic gems. Whether you'll want to own it, then, simply depends on how badly you want to read ten new science-fiction stories.

---Charles Peter Brady.

NIGHT'S YAWNING PEAL: A GHOSTLY COMPANY, selected and with a foreword by August Derleth. Sauk City: Arkham House, 1952. viii-280pp. 21 cm. $3.00.

Time slips by too rapidly: one can scarcely believe that nearly five years have passed since the appearance of August Derleth's last collection of supernatural fiction, The Sleeping and the Dead. In the interim he has been busy catering to the fashionable public taste for science-fiction anthologies, and it is good now to find him returning to his first love with this new compilation of fifteen weird tales.

Night's Yawning Peal is somewhat shorter than its four predecessors, and differs from them also in being built around one single title, Howard Lovecraft's "Case of Charles Dexter Ward." This novel takes up almost half the book. Bringing it back into print after several years of unavailability is certainly commendable---the more so because "Ward" remains every bit as effective as it was over a decade ago in Weird Tales, and not the least because neither there nor in Beyond the Wall of Sleep was it printed in clear type of adequate size. That is accomplished here for the first time.

Along with Lovecraft, such masters as Dunsany, Le Fanu, Blackwood and Wakefield are represented, all of them by refreshing, out-of-the-way items. "The Sign" first appeared in Lord Dunsany's Jorkens Has a Large Whiskey (1940); those not fortunate enough to own that scarce volume will be glad of the chance to read this gently ironic tale of reincarnation here. "The Charchyard Yew" never appeared in Sheridan Le Fanu's collected works, which is a pity, as it is a very effective account of ghostly retribution well up to the Victorian master's standard. Algernon Blackwood tells a rather thin, though quietly moving, story of a remote Welsh valley and the retinue of Pan in "Roman Remains"; this too was never collected by the author in any of his books. H. Russell Wakefield's "Gorge of the Churels," which has seen print only in The Arkham Sampler, deals skillfully with Indian magic, but cannot equal his best earlier efforts in the field.

With the exception of "The Loved Dead" by C. M. Eddy, Jr., the rest of the entries are of recent vintage---less than five years old, for the most part. "The Loved Dead" dates back to 1924, when its appearance stirred up considerable

furore in educational and religious groups; today the necrophilia it describes is less likely to shock readers than provoke psychiatric speculation. The best in the group of recent tales are "Mr. George" and "The Lonesome Place," which illustrate nicely August Derleth's own ability to handle two entirely different kinds of supernatural themes, both of which he manages very well. "The Lonesome Place," incidentally, reads as if it were taken from Unknown Worlds, and strikes me as one of the author's very best contributions to the genre besides.

A little below these two in quality are John Beynon Harris' "Technical Slip," a nice life-lived-over tale, and Michael West's "Hector," where the reader has the tables turned on him in the very last paragraph. Both are enjoyable.

Five familiar names round out the selections. They are Richard Curle ("The Suppressed Edition"), Manly Wade Wellman ("Dhole"), Carl Jacobi ("The La Prello Paper"), Malcolm Ferguson ("A Damsel with a Dulcimer") and Robert Bloch ("The Man Who Collected Poe"). None of these contributions is at all outstanding, but all are well-written and eminently readable. Jacobi's is the best.

Despite the fact that Night's Yawning Peal is not quite equal to Derleth's earlier compilations, there is much to be said for it. Bringing "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" back into print alone certainly makes it worth its price, and avoiding duplications found in many collections (not a single story in this one has ever been anthologized before) merits high praise also. By largely limiting himself to recent pulp sources the editor has assumed a self-imposed handicap, since little worthwhile supernatural fiction appears there regularly, but granting this, Derleth has worked his vein well. From an absolute point of view Night's Yawning Peal is somewhat more than adequate; and compared to the science fiction trash now being printed it is a classic. ---A. Langley Searles.

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THUMBING THE MUNSEY FILES

with William H. Evans

(continuing the summaries of fantasy tales from Allstory-Cavalier weekly in 1915)

Dec. 11 "Snared" by J.U.Giesy & J.B.Smith (3 parts: 22,19,24pp): Semi-fantasy novel about Semi Dual, this time after white slavers.

Dec. 18 "Polaris---of the Snows" by Charles B. Stilson (3 parts: 22, 22, 40pp) Romantic adventures among a lost Greek race at the South Pole. Good.
"The Tenth Question" by George Allan England (14pp): A madman kidnaps a doctor and requires that he guess what he---the madman---is thinking of by asking ten questions. Quite good, with a greater depth of concept than Stanley Weinbaum's "Brink of Infinity," that had the same idea.

1916

Jan. 1 "The Sea Demons" by Victor Rousseau (4 parts: 20,22,24,19pp): Strange creatures from beneath the sea attack humanity, guided by a traditional mad scientist. A British submarine finds the home of the "queen" of the creatures---who are, incidentally, much like bees in their social system---and by controlling her thwarts the invasion. Although as a whole this novel is good its scientific background is inadequate.
"The Astrogen Waistcoat" by E. A. Morphy (9pp): The trial flight of a "life preserver for use in planes which contains the new, very buoyant gas 'astrogen.'"

Jan. 8 "To Be Accounted For" by Achmed Abdullah (4 pp): A French officer, ex-

(continued on page 166)

THE IMMORTAL STORM

A HISTORY OF SCIENCE-FICTION FANDOM

by
Sam Moskowitz

(Editor's note: Apologies are again extended to the followers of this article for omitting an installment from the last Commentator. We hope the circumstances necessitating that omission will not recur. New subscribers to this magazine who are interested in reading earlier installments of "The Immortal Storm" will be glad to hear that these have been published in a 164-paged mimeographed booklet; this can be ordered from Henry Burwell, 459 Sterling St. NE, Atlanta, Georgia for the very modest price of $2 postpaid. Readers will also be interested to learn that Sam Moskowitz's authority as an expert in the fantasy field is accorded official recognition in Who Knows---and What, a companion volume to Who's Who published by the A. N. Marquis Co., which lists authorities, experts and the specially informed on 35,000 subjects. These compendia may be found on the reference shelves of most libraries.)

(part 18)

XLII
Opinion Rallies

On July 4, 1939, the day that the convention was winding up with a softball game at Flushing Flats, the Futurian Society held an open meeting attended by some two dozen people, including Morojo and Ackerman of the California delegation. An open forum on science-fiction and fandom was held, such topics as Michelism, actions at the convention just concluded and the site of the next convention being discussed. It was decided to back the bid of Chicago for the 1940 gathering. Mark Reinsberg, spokesman for the Chicago delegation, had approached Moskowitz repeatedly in an effort to gain New Fandom's support for this, mentioning several times in the course of the conversations that no one should take seriously any derogatory reports about him coming from W. Lawrence Hamling, whom he described as the leader of a Chicago faction opposing him. Not wishing to involve either himself or New Fandom in any developing fan feud, however, Moskowitz cautiously had asked Reinsberg to wait until New Fandom leaders had had an opportunity to discuss the question at greater length; and at the same time he had ventured the personal opinion that holding major conventions only a year apart might result in an annual farce where the time at each convention would largely be spent fighting over the site of the next. Reinsberg was of course dissatisfied with this wait-and-see attitude. He needed something concrete, such as a New Fandom or convention vote of approval, to take back to Chicago in order to give his proposal officiality. He considered Moskowitz's stand uncooperative, and felt embittered over it. Quite naturally, then, he was inclined to view the Futurians in a good light when they voiced early support of his plan.

A prompt indication that fan strife would continue well after the convention was a brief, hastily-mimeographed pamphlet In Your Teeth, "Gentlemen": Convention Sketches, distributed outside the dining room where Standard Magazines played host to the convention committee and far-travelled fans on July 7, three days later. This pamphlet consisted of two pages of derogatory text and four of cartoons, the latter bearing such titles as "Tyrannous Unholy Trio" and "We Are

the Exiles." The text of the pamphlet read in part as follows:

> Our objection [to Taurasi, Moskowitz and Sykora] is not directed by personal motives but rather by a feeling of extreme distaste for the stench of overpowering imbecility. We regret the fact that the TRIO were either so senile or so ridiculously blind as to believe that we, Frederick Pohl, John B. Michel, Donald A. Wollheim, Robert W. Lowndes, Cyril Kornbluth, Jack Gillespie and the writer had no intentions other than the feeling of complete friendship and the desire to welcome all out of town convention-goers as warmly as was proven by our activities in regard to meeting various members as they arrived in New York and even in some cases, providing rooms for them to stay. We have our own very good reasons for detesting the stupidity and crass unsportsmanshiplike attitude as was displayed by the by-now famous "Exclusion Act" ...For Mr. Taurasi, Mr. Moskowitz and Mr. Sykora...WE MEAN TO FINISH YOU IN THE INTEREST OF JUSTICE WHICH CANNOT EXIST UNTIL YOUR STRONG ARM TACTICS ARE DISCLOSED TO WORLD SCIENCE FICTION.

The pamphlet went on to demand that every fan who thought the exclusion wrong say so publicly. A page was also devoted to an open letter to Sykora, condemning him for his part in the affair, and branding him as guiltiest of all.

Moskowitz read this pamphlet aloud in entirety to a group which included Ackerman, Morojo, Korshak, Taurasi, Racic and Sykora. Everyone laughed about it, and spoke with great conviviality on the street for some time, parting on good terms and with expressions that could reasonably have been construed to mean that the convention difficulty with the Futurians was unfortunate but past and forgotten as far as those immediately present were concerned.

The first major account of the convention, run serially in three issues of Fantasy News, contained no mention of the difficulty with the Futurians. Attendees returning home presented their stories as they saw them. Futurian publications, like Science Fiction Progress and the aforementioned In Your Teeth, "Gentlemen" not only carried the expected heated accounts of their version of the incident, but were larded with bitter similes, insults and some outrightly inaccurate statements like "New Fandom would not coöperate with their [Chicago] convention unless they promised to bar the Futurians...." Included also were some very pertinent observations by Donald Wollheim. From the Futurian standpoint he felt the results of the convention were particularly fortunate. The Philadelphia fans were now largely neutral instead of antagonistic toward them, and the Los Angeles delegation perhaps even favorably inclined. The affair, he said, was a great moral victory for the Futurians, and their forward progress was inevitable.

The first mention of the Futurian incident in an accredited fan magazine of general circulation published by an unimplicated party appeared in Ted Dikty's Fantasy Digest for June-July, 1939. This consisted of a single sentence in Korshak's: "Memoirs of a New York Trip": "Some unpleasantness was caused when Don Wollheim and his brother Futurians were not allowed in the Convention Hall." Bob Tucker, who had been involved in several brisk spats with Moskowitz, editorialized on this statement in the first subscription number (August 5, 1939) of his Le Zombie. Under the heading "A Little Unpleasantness Dept." he said of it, "If true (and all reports seem to indicate it is) makes us a little ashamed of being a member of New Fandom which evidently is responsible for the happening. It seems to us that Wollheim and Co., regardless of political or personal differences, should have been allowed into the convention hall.... For one group to bar another

group's entrance, because of political or personal causes is...well, unmanly to be mild. It's grossly unfair.... I rather believe that happening will be a blot upon an otherwise perfect affair, and considered so not only by the Wollheim faction, but by every fair minded fan as well! New Fandom, we spank your hands!"

A blow to the New Fandom group and a boost to Futurian morale came when Philadelphians Baltadonis and Train, long anti-Futurian in convictions, stated in their revived Science Fiction Collector that they felt the excluded six should have been permitted to enter, even acknowledging their past actions.

In the absence of a single word of rebuttal from the convention committee and in view of the accusations from apparently neutral attendees, fans at large had little alternative but to believe that New Fandom had indeed been guilty of spiteful action prompted merely by personal animosity. Opinion began to harden against the committee and all they stood for as well---New Fandom, Fantasy News and the Queens SFL chapter. Memberships to New Fandom no longer flowed in with previous speed and subscriptions to Fantasy News were not always renewed. Two of the strongest props in the New Fandom stronghold were seriously weakening. This change of fan opinion came with lightning speed, and every positive aspect of convention success was being overshadowed. In this history readers have the advantage of knowing the inside story just as it transpired, but fans around the country then of course did not.

As a result of these events, the "Retreat" Wollheim had sounded in the December, 1938 Science Fiction Fan came to an end, and the Futurians planned to set up apartment headquarters in New York, replete with three mimeographs, and renew in earnest the activities they had in fact never completely terminated. By personal contact, too, their side of the story was spread far and wide. A questioned Futurian would speak to an individual fan at great length. Moreover, Michel, Wollheim and Wilson had toured the Northeast in May, 1939, just before the convention; they had made it a point to visit most leading fans of the area, had put their best foot forward to make new friends, had settled old enmities, and had become human beings instead of merely names on printed pages to many prominent fans in the field. The fact that the Futurians had been the only welcoming party to out-of-towners, and the only group to pal about with during and after the convention (Moskowitz, Taurasi and Sykora not being easily accessible even when not up to the ears in convention preparations) also contributed heavily.

The first report in some fashion justifying New Fandom's actions came in "Speer's Scribblings," a regular column devoted to commentary on fan political activity that appeared in Louis Kuslan's Cosmic Tales. The Summer, 1939 number, which appeared in August, 1939, contained his observation that there had been no suppression of sociological matter at the convention, Hodgkins' technocrat publication We Have a Rendezvous having been given the same distribution advantages as the other journals there. Of the "Warning" pamphlet distributed by Futurians he said: "It is filled to the ears with half truths, one-sided statements, and bald inaccuracies. If the dissenters had ammunition like that ready, what might they have planned to do if they were admitted to the hall?" He concluded: "More and more it came to me, as matters progressed, that this, counting out the undercover dissension, was in general the way a convention should be run. Such an event shouldn't be, isn't, in the case of other organizations, a deliberate assembly; there are many present not interested, or ill-informed, and people can usually think better from behind typewriters, anyway."

Despite everything, including systematic Futurian propaganda and suspicious silence by the convention committee, the entire matter might have quickly blown over, if only for lack of leadership in outlining a plan of action to be taken---but then leadership dramatically resolved itself. This leadership came from the Los Angeles SFL chapter, which wielded the most fanwide influence of any

in the country. It had held over a hundred meetings, published a number of fan magazines, and had sent three delegates across the country to the convention and back. The Voice of the Imagi-Nation, a letter 'zine published by Morojo and Ackerman, usually carried chapter news and announcements, and enjoyed a wide circulation; the first page of its September, 1939 issue was emblazoned with the following:

OUR REACTION TO THE "EXCLUSION ACT"

> From the full and adjured-unprejudiced report of three delegates to the convention---reports orally discussed during five consecutive meetings of the LASFL---and from published accounts and correspondence with concerned parties, it is the considered opinion of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Science Fiction League, as of September 7, 1939 that the action on the part of William S. Sykora, Sam Moskowitz and James V. Taurasi, sponsors of the "First World Science Fiction Convention," in arbitrarily barring from the proceedings advertised as "open to the public" six persons---known to all fandom as science fiction fans---was discriminatory and dictatorial, premeditated and openly contrary to the mass-will of the conventioneers, in irreconcilable conflict with the distinctly democratic ideals of sincere science fiction. In brief, it is believed that a matter of personal animosity---a local feud---was allowed to run away with reason on the part of the promulgators of the convention. Our attitude is one of severe censure of a shameful occurrence, a reprehensible happening which we feel we reflect all fair-minded fans in stating: Must never be repeated! Our sentiments scarcely can be too strong in plainly criticizing this egregious error, in in outrightly condemning this---outrage.
>
> As the oldest and leading chapter of the league the LASFL has felt it its responsibility to make public this, the decision of its majority of members, as arrived at as described foregoing, and as of the date recorded. Signed, Russell J. Hodgkins, Director; T. Bruce Yerke, Secretary.

This statement could not be ignored. It was a clarion call for fans to rally against an alleged outrage. It meant that the New Fandom convention committee had either to fight the combined ranks of the LASFL, the Futurians and in a sense the Midwest group which was shortly to fall under the leadership of Tucker, also outspokenly against it, or ignominiously be forced out of active fandom by the strength of its opposition. If it elected to fight, it not only would be forced to discard its theretofore successful "no-feuding" policy, but would enter the conflict with its former ally, the Philadelphia SFS, now a neutral observer. The committee could count on little help from New Fandom members at large, and would have to seek fan magazines to publish their arguments intact or else print them itself alone. For three months no word was forthcoming from the trio. If they did not speak out soon the entire edifice of New Fandom must inevitably collapse. Those "in the know" felt it already too late, that the committee had indeed marked time too long. Its fate seemed inexorably sealed.

XLIII
Breasting the Undertow

The question is certainly apropos---why had the committee made no reply to the charges brought publicly against them for three months after the con-

vention? And what were its thoughts and impressions of the gathering storm? The answers are as human as they are valid.

First of all, the committee members anticipated no reaction approaching in vigor that which actually transpired. They were of course prepared for all manner of indignant ravings from the Futurians, but expected these to be for the most part ignored on the basis of the Futurians' past record. Wollheim, leader of the group, had been perpetually involved in fan disagreements for several years prior to the convention. He was more a notorious than a popular figure at the time, and his exclusion from the New York gathering was not expected to arouse any widespread sympathy. Futurian tactics at the 1938 Newark convention (as detailed in chapter XXVIII of this history) varied from acts of bad taste to some of outright dishonesty, and taken in concert were a deliberate attempt to interfere with its functioning to a point where it might actually be disrupted. It was not unreasonable to expect fandom to remember these actions.

It was expected that fandom would also remember the Futurian blackball votes that barred Moskowitz and Osheroff fro membership in the Greater New York SFL chapter for no reason that could sufficiently be considered honest and impartial. There was also the Futurian-sponsored impeachment of director Taurasi of that organization because of his refusal to recognize a motion to contribute to a Communist-front organization from the group's treasury. Could the Futurian attempt to wreck the 1938 Philadelphia Conference by scheduling another meeting at the identical time have passed this soon from fan memories? Had fans also forgotten the political maneuvering that transparently catapulted Olon F. Wiggins into the FAPA directorship after Wiggins had closed his Science Fiction Fan to all but pro-Futurian material and written letters to professional editors asking them to withdraw support from the New York Convention?

All available evidence showed that the Futurians were unfavorably disposed toward the affair. The Science Fiction Fan carried anti-convention material up to the very date of the gathering; the Futurians attempted to prove that the film to be shown, "Metropolis," was obtained from Nazi sources; they distributed anti-convention material to attendees at the very doors of the hall; and with them they had for later distribution a set of inflammatory and pro-Communist booklets.

Moreover, this list of inimical actions, long as it may appear, represents (as readers of this history know) but a fraction of those that might be cited in documentaried detail to convince any unbiased individual that there was more than sufficient reason to bar from the convention a group that refused even a promise not to cause trouble there.

Secondly, the convention committee anticipated no later opposition from Los Angeles and Chicago, for their representatives had departed from the city with a manner that plainly indicated a belief that excluding the Futurians was a regrettable small blemish on the affair's success not to be pressed further. The strong action from these sectors was shocking because it was so completely unexpected---and, in the minds of the committee, hypocritical as well.

Thirdly, preparations for a gathering on the scale of the "Nycon" (as it has come to be called) necessitated so much labor that it left the chief workers in a state of mental and physical exhaustion for a considerable time. Other fans who have put on major conventions will attest to the fact that on their conclusion they felt not the slightest inclination to tackle a major fannish task again. It will be remembered, too, that the heat of the 1939 summer was enough to accentuate this feeling considerably.

Finally, three of the major workers for New Fandom---Taurasi, Sykora and Racic---had almost simultaneously at this time begun serious courtships of fair young maidens, and were more in a mood for butterflies and roses than for waging a sordid fan feud.

Moskowitz, who was fully aware of the situation, was unemployed, and found it no mean matter to raise even a few cents for postage stamps. He did, however, frantically attempt to arouse his co-workers to some activity, arranging for them all to meet at his Newark home to frame a plan for action. Sykora's view that it was advisable to continue the "no feud" policy by not rebutting any of the accusations and slanders prevailed. A second meeting, a short time later, found Sykora more alarmed at the intensity of the opposition rallying against New Fandom, but now convinced that the situation had been permitted to progress too far, and in favor of slipping out of the difficulty by whatever means seemed expedient---even to the point of admitting that his own judgement at the convention had been at fault. But Moskowitz, whose every fan action had been tinged with a sort of fantatical sincerity, was deeply hurt by the unjust attitude many had taken toward them, and angrily determined to force all ill-considered accusations down the throats of their makers. He persuaded Sykora and Taurasi that the situation was not impossible, and voiced a plan which he hoped would turn the tide. New Fandom had reen run openly and honestly in the manner of a benevolent dictatorship. The most damaging charge brought against it, contended Moskowitz, was that it could not truly represent fandom since members could not vote democratically on its policies or for its officers. Therefore he proposed that a liberal democratic constitution be prepared for ratification by the membership. In view of past achievements---and despite recent developments---most of the present leaders would probably be retained in any general election. It was then agreed that Sykora, who had had considerable experience in such matters, was the one best suited to compose such a document.

Moskowitz visualized the framing of a constitution as but one phase in an overall strategy calculated to restore New Fandom and its leaders to a place of respect. The special convention issue of New Fandom, now long delayed, was to be issued as soon as possible so that members at large could read details of the convention's success and its implications. Raymond Van Houten worked in a printing shop, and claimed that he could get the magazine professionally printed at a price within reach of the New Fandom treasury, and on the strength of this an imposing line-up for the issue was prepared. (In 1939, appearance of a printed fan magazine was news of first importance, and annouucements of it amounted in themselves to worthwhile progress.) Finally, the "no feuding" policy was to be discarded as harmful, and Moskowitz was given a free hand to stem and counteract unfavorable publicity wherever and whenever he could.

The facts of the matter were that there was still a great deal of material to work with, if the cards were played properly. Though weakened by the aftermath of the Nycon, New Fandom and its allied Fantasy News and Queens SFL chapter still formed formidable bases of power. These remaining assets must now be manipulated not only defensively to restore prestige and influence, but offensively to strike the opposition a crippling blow at the same time.

The Queens SFL had been affected least of all---in fact it was prospering better in late 1939 than it ever had before. The September meeting broke all chapter attendance records, and boasted such visiting celebrities as Charles Hornig, Malcolm Jameson, John D. Clark and Willy Ley. The October meeting enrolled artist Frank R. Paul and author Eando Binder as members. At this time, too, a show of hands revealed that nineteen Queens SFL members planned to travel to the Philadelphia Conference of science-fiction fans scheduled for October 29th, at which the newly-written New Fandom constitution was to be read publicly.

Meanwhile attempts were being made to inject new vigor into Fantasy News, which had been steadily sinking in quality and influence. With its August 5 issue Le Zombie had become a biweekly subscription news-sheet, and was not only offering new, direct competition, but championing New Fandom opposition as well.

After voicing its protests, support in the form of news submissions and subscriptions came immediately from the Futurians and (at the direct expense of Fantasy News) from the Los Angeles and Chicago groups. Le Zombie presented news informally, with considerable editorial slanting along the lines of Tucker's personal prejudices. Since Tucker had a marked penchant for sarcastic wit, his newscasting was highly amusing and found considerable fan favor. A preferred target for many of these barbed rejoinders was Fantasy News itself, and Taurasi was badly outclassed when in came to a clever reply. The competition was easily the most damaging Fantasy News had ever received, the ironic part being that Le Zombie was guilty of every fault (discounting grammar) it found in Fantasy News. Thus constantly harrassed, with some of his best news sources gone, Taurasi needed yeoman work indeed from his remaining reporters if he hoped to stay in the running. From September onwards he did receive this, but though scoops came in thick and fast his paper no longer presented as comprehensive a coverage of the fan world as it had previously.

As nearly all outside journals were either avowedly of the opposition or following the disastrous "no feuding" policy, solid, detailed rebuttals to attacks on New Fandom simply could not be placed in them. If such replies were altered to become "non-controversial," they were of course gleefully pounced upon and ripped to shreds. In addition, the opposition had many mimeographs and many hands to turn the cranks, making possible the publication of all manner of small leaflets; New Fandom had small facilities and too few workers to produce any comparable barrage.

In an effort to find a general outlet for his counter-attack, Moskowitz turned to The Science Fiction Collector. John Baltadonis had kept the Collector appearing monthly since its revival in March, 1939, and had received considerable aid from Moskowitz for his third anniversary number. Surely Baltadonis would not exclude controversial material from an old friend! So Moskowitz threw himself into preparation of an article which he hoped would be strong enough to reverse the trend of prevailing opinion. Realizing that many new fans did not read the magazine, he calculatingly dispatched a letter to Le Zombie announcing his heartrending loss of faith in fandom, and revealing that his side of the story would soon appear in the Collector. Apologies would be forthcoming after it was read, he intimated. Moskowitz hoped also that his vague phrasing would draw fire from his opponents, misdirect their attention, and make his forthcoming remarks all the more effective.

Both hopes were realized. Tucker printed the letter in Le Zombie, and Baltadonis received over two dozen new subscriptions for the Collector as a result. At the same time Russell Hodgkins, director of the Los Angeles SFL, rose to the bait, and in a letter which appeared in the next Le Zombie tore into Moskowitz's statements. Everything was progressing according to plan, and the plan named the Philadelphia Conference as the climactic site. Here the opposing forces would group for the showdown. The Futurians had announced that they would be on hand---en masse. A Chicago delegation was to include Tucker and Walter Marconette. Jack Speer was driving in from Washington, D.C. The Queens SFL was to be well represented. Baltadonis promised Moskowitz that the issue of the Collector containing his article would be ready for distribution by that time. And behind the scenes, at the same time that New Fandom was whipping its proposed constitution into final shape, Milton Rothman and David Kyle were readying proposals for a new national fan organization to replace it. The fuse steadily burned its way towards the powder keg.

XLIV
The Second Philadelphia Conference

The conference was to have been held in the large back room of the tav-

ern owned by Baltadonis' father, where the first such conference had been so successfully and convivially held the previous October. However, it had since been learned that a local ordinance forbade holding a public meeting in the premises on Sundays. Baltadonis, Madle and Agnew had nevertheless managed to secure a hall in down-town Philadelphia by dint of hasty footwork at the last minute. To help pay for the unexpected added cost a donation of ten cents was accepted from each attendee, and to aid the cause of refreshments the Queens SFL gave ten dollars from its treasury. Despite the last-minute site-change the conference was called to order by chairman Baltadonis precisely at 3:00 P.M. as scheduled.

First on the agenda was a discussion and vote as to whether the Fantasy Amateur Press Association election just past should be repudiated or permitted to stand. What had happened was as follows. Rothman, who had been elected editor and mailing manager, had appointed Robert Madle to assume his duties for the duration of his term because of the pressure of personal affairs. It developed that Rothman had constitutional right to do no more than resign, and that it was the duty of the FAPA president to appoint a successor. This the president had not done. The secretary-treasurer, Taurasi, was supposed to obtain an official list of active members from the editor before elections, and send ballots to them only. Taurasi wrote to Madle for this list, but received no reply; whereupon he mailed ballots to all members he knew of---which of course included some who previously had been dropped from the organization rolls, and who were therefore not eligible to vote. Should this election, which was technically illegal, be accepted? As nearly two dozen attendees at the conference were FAPA members, a discussion of the situation was held and a vote taken. The majority favored letting the election results stand as the simplest solution.

(Subsequent events rendered this vote useless, however. Wollheim in the meantime had submitted the entire matter to Walter Marconette, who as FAPA vice-president was empowered to rule on all such questions. Marconette ruled that Rothman's appointment of Madle was invalid, and that since Rothman had not submitted any resignation he was officially editor up to election time. Marconette also ruled the election illegal, and ordered another. As a result of the second election Rothman succeeded Wiggins as president, Speer became vice-president, Madle the secretary-treasurer, and Marconette official editor. But this did not end FAPA's troubles. Immediately thereafter Marconette resigned, claiming that his name had been placed on the ballot without his knowledge, and president Rothman appointed Jack Agnew to fill his place. Taurasi, meanwhile, doubting the legitimacy of the second election, balked at turning over FAPA records and monies; and it became necessary for Rothman to travel from Philadelphia to New York and personally persuade Taurasi to do so. Thus passed into history the FAPA's gravest crisis, which for a time actually threatened to destroy the organization.)

The Philadelphia conference now turned to the question of a national fan organization. The first speaker on the subject was Rothman. He felt that New Fandom was dictatorial in management, and that a brand new organization with a democratic framework should be contemplated. "It's too much work to build up an entirely new organization, so we'll simply take over the New Fandom membership, treasury and other resources and mold it to suit the fans," he said, adding hastily, "With the consent of New Fandom's dictators, of course." Speer, the second speaker, felt like Rothman that New Fandom with a change of name and a new constitution would make an excellent fan organization. He had come prepared with a suggested sample, and passed around copies of his constitution for consideration. David Kyle then spoke, suggesting a sort of federation or congress of local groups, each of which would have a single vote in the federation. Speer took immediate exception to this plan, pointing out that it was unfair for clubs having unequal memberships to have the same vote, that nothing had been said about over-

lapping memberships, which would mean that nothing could stop a given clique from forming numberless "front" groups, each of which would be able to vote.

Moskowitz was the next speaker. Tense silence prevailed as he stepped forward, for everyone realized he probably had strong views on the statements of his predecessors. His speech was comparatively brief, and began by outlining the history of New Fandom in the past year. He defended its semi-dictatorial set-up on the grounds that circumstances freely and publicly discussed had made a benevolent dictatorship initially necessary, and that the First Philadelphia Conference had voted unanimous support of the organization after hearing this. Moskowitz reminded the assembly that at the Nycon banquet he had announced that New Fandom was planning a constitution based on democratic principles for approval of its membership, and that in the ensuing three months such a document had actually been prepared. It embodied the ideas several, including Van Houten, Speer and Sykora, and had been cast into its final form by the latter. A copy, together with a large diagram that outlined its major tenets simply, had been brought along to the conference, and New Fandom officials were ready to present and explain it to the assemblage.

This move apparently took the opposition---as represented by Rothman and the Futurians---completely by surprise. And in what appeared to be a time-consuming delaying action they began a marathon debate over taking New Fandom's assets as the groundwork for another major fan organization. This was well on the way to becoming a filibuster when Lloyd Eshbach, exasperated by the proceedings, made a strong plea for sanity and a sensible settlement of problems. Moskowitz took advantage of the lull following this plea to ask the chair that Sykora be permitted to read New Fandom's constitution aloud. Baltadonis granted permission, but it was some time before this could be done for Futurians Kyle, Wollheim, Kornbluth and Pohl alternately challenged and debated with the chair on points of procedure for half an hour.

Finally Sykora was permitted to erect a large chart diagramming the document, to which he referred constantly. A copy of the constitution is unfortunately no longer available to this historian, so the details which follow are necessarily drawn from memory. Briefly, membership in New Fandom was divided into an outer circle and an inner circle of fans; only those in the outer circle could join the inner, and only those in the inner circle could vote or hold office. Admission to both divisions was to be directed by a committee created for that specific purpose. The reason for the two groups was to allow the more active fans, the publishers of magazines and sponsors of public events, to do the work of the organization and guide its policies, while providing a definite place also for the newcomers and the general readers whose interest did not go beyond joining the organization for milder participation in its activities. Members of course could gravitate from one circle to another as time strengthened or weakened their interest in fandom.

With prize-fighters there are nights when they reach their peak, when they will never reach greater heights; with artists there comes the day when they have completed their finest painting; with authors, the completion of their masterpiece. October 29, 1939 was William Sykora's day. Rarely has a man done such justice to a document. Despite the unceasing chatter of heckling Futurians he sold his product to the audience. On completion of the reading majority acceptance seemed almost a forgone conclusion. Now there were questions and discussion with Sykora replying in careful detail to all questions asked.

Futurian Leslie Perri called the document "magnificent," but queried as to whether there might be present some concealed legal device for barring her group. The Futurians themselves were impressed by the constitution, but appeared suspicious of its length and what they construed as evasiveness in some of Sy-

kora's remarks. Their heckling had by this time grown to extreme intensity, and Sykora had borne all of it with incredible patience, wisely realizing his doing so would strengthen New Fandom's cause and render Futurian conduct the more unsportsmanlike. Probably this forbearance alone prevented an explosion in the charged atmosphere pervading the conference.

But fate was not to be denied. During the course of one of Sykora's explanations Wollheim shouted, "That's a lie!" Had this exclamation been made by any other Futurian it might not have touched off the explosion---but coming from Wollheim, who had inflicted many a fannish hurt upon Sykora in the past, it was the straw that broke the camel's back. Sykora's face reddened, his fists clenched. "Nobody can call me a liar and get away with it," he said audibly, and determinedly advanced to the front row where his opponent sat a scant ten feet away. As Wollheim pressed against the back of his chair tiny Jack Gillespie, who weighed scarcely a hundred pounds, sprang in front of him to intervene. Sykora brushed him aside with one hand and confronted his opponent. As the whole Futurian contingent were sitting together, there were eleven men for Sykora to deal with, not merely Wollheim alone. Shocked into realization of Sykora's danger by Gillespie's action, Moskowitz headed down one aisle toward the group and Taurasi hastened down the other. Speaking for most of the Philadelphians, Madle shouted to Moskowitz, "We're here if you need any help!"

(to be continued)

---oOo---

DREAM CITY

by
Thomas H. Carter

I saw it first within a dream
and even then it did not seem
to merge into our space, our time;
like some unremembered rhyme
it lurked beyond the rim of thought,
that fragile ancient city in the sea,
but each night brought
the whisper of its shadowed streets to me.

For my magic city was lonely,
having no song and no laughter:
it needed someone---if only
to mourn no one coming after
those gone in unforgotten past.
Forever waiting my city stood fast.

No! This city was never young
save in its bravest dreams.
It was a sad and ancient chorus sung
to solace unaccomplished schemes.

---oOo---

Back numbers: The following back issues are available in small supply: #12, 20, 23 and 25. Price: 30¢ each, four for $1.

TIPS ON TALES

by
John C. Nitka

Erle Cox's Missing Angel (1947): Not since reading Turnabout and Topper have I come across anything like this novel. Its central character is one Tydvil Jones, Puritan bred and considered a paragon, whose mother has managed to marry him to a girl of similar outlook. Upon the death of both parents he becomes head of his father's vast mercantile establishment. He is domineered by a constantly nagging spouse. A series of incidents precipitate his calling on "Old Nick," whereupon the devil himself---henceforth known as Nicholas Senior---appears in person. In exchange for his soul the devil agrees to grant Tydvil's every wish for a period of three months. Tydvil decides to catch up on his wild oats, and to do so assumes human forms that are the exact duplicates of various other people's. The first guise is that of a rakehelly salesman known as the firm Lothario. He ends the adventure in the home of a married woman with private detectives breaking in the door, at which point Lucifer magically whisks him back into his office out of harm's way. As another character he raises merry Cain with the local police, and as a third makes love to his own wife, thus satisfying himself of her infidelity. Events run boisterously along in this fashion until one day near the end of his three months' pact his wife and secretary, who have no love for one another, begin a noisy argument in his hearing. This prompts his final request of Nicholas Senior---to limit his wife's vocal output for the rest of her life. But it turns out that this is one of the very few wishes the devil has no power to grant; and being thus unable to keep his end of the bargain, he has to relinquish his claim on Tydvil's soul. All finally ends happily. This is a heartily recommended novel although, it having been published only in Australia, it isn't easy to get.

Cromwell Gibbons' Bat Woman (1938): A certain misshapen scientist from Germany falls in love with an American girl. She spurns him and marries somebody else. His craving for her becomes a mania, however, and at a time when she is seriously ill and can offer no resistance, he abducts her. She dies in the process, but the scientist succeeds in restoring a sort of life by converting her into a vampire. He then sets about to find ways of bringing her back to true existence. In this he is foiled at the last moment when searching police break into his laboratory. The balance of the tale deals more sophisticatedly with tracking him down and capturing him. The novel is better than its resumé would indicate, and was once made into a more or less successful movie.

Mary W. Shelley's Last Man (1833): This famous account of the future does not stand up well to reading nowadays. The authoress disciplined her imagination too much, and made no provision for readers to use theirs. Her England of 2090 was still using stage coaches, and the men riding in them wore hose and short trousers; sailing vessels were still popular, and bustles and corsets the rage. Her only concession to progress in transportation is the occasional use of balloons. The story that has been superimposed on this distinctly unfuturistic background is just as old-fashioned. It is mainly concerned with British political machinations, the tradional monarchy being overthrown and a republic headed by a president set up in its place. The conversation and action are stilted, having of course been written at a time when artificiality and long wordy descriptions were popular. The best part of the book is about a pestilence that gradually wipes out all of the human race but the chief character, à la Shiel's Purple Cloud, who then sets out to see if any other human survives. The Last Man is a very rare book, and is better left that way.

(This-'n'-That---continued from page 160)

Conklin, Groff; ed.: Possible Worlds of Science Fiction)(Vanguard, $2.95). 22 shorts, not a single one outstanding! Why collect junk? Conklin is out of gas.

Connolly, Myles: The Bump on Brannigan's Head (Macmillan, $2). Mildly entertaining borderline fantasy.

Crossen, Kendall Foster: Adventures in Tomorrow (Greenberg, $3½). With very few exceptions the 15 entries are commonplace. The introduction shows how little of the field the editor knows.

Cummings, Ray: Princess of the Atom (Avon, 25¢). Typical Cummings s-f.

Davenport, Basil, ed.: Ghostly Tales to be Told (Dodd-Mead, $3). Acceptable.

de Born, Edith: Gaëtan, or, the Stock-taking (Chapman & Hall, 8/6). Dull account of talking with the dead.

de Camp, L. Sprague: The Castle of Iron (Gnome, $2½). An unconvincing, overly slick extravaganza.

---: Rogue Queen (Doubleday, $2¾). Refreshingly different s-f. Try it.

---: The Undesired Princess (FPCI, $3) makes an undesired book, even if two extra shorts are included. Avoid it.

--- & Miller, P. Schuyler: Genus Homo (Fantasy Press, $3). A satirical and humorous (if slight) novel of a group of people transported to the future.

Dee, Sylvia, pseud. (Josephine M. Profitt): Dear Guest and Ghost (Macmillan, $2¾). Fairly good modern ghost tale.

Deharme, Lise: La Porte à Côté (Gallimard, 330 fr.). Transmigration of souls; a ghost in an old chateau.

Derleth, August W., ed.: Beyond Time and Space (Pellegrini & Cudahy, $4½). 34 entries; a fairly good anthology.

---: Far Boundaries (Pellegrini & Cudahy, $2.95). Eminently readable, but rather casually assembled anthology.

---: The Outer Reaches (Pellegrini and Cudahy, $3.95). 17 authors have chosen their best uncollected tales; the result is an uneven, under-par selection.

Drake, Leah B.: A Hornbook for Witches (Arkham, $2.10). Fantasy poetry.

DuBois, Theodora: Sarah Hall's Sea God (Doubleday, $2¾). Borderline picaresque novel whose effect never quite comes off.

---: Solution T-25 (Doubleday, $2¾). U.S. is conquered by Russia. A bleak, not too well written s-f novel.

Dumas, Alexander: The Wolf Leader ($3, Prime). Ed. by L.S. de Camp after the translation of Alfred Allinson. Excellent Mahlon Blaine illustrations. For the collector, not the reader.

Dunsany, Lord: The Last Revolution (Jarrolds, 9/6). The revolt of intelligent machines against man. A few touches of humor relieve the somber atmosphere.

---: The Strange Journeys of Colonel Polders (Jarrolds, 9/6). Therianthropic adventuring. These shorts are very good, but not up to Dunsany's standard.

Dutourd, Jean: A Dog's Head (Lehmann, 8/6). Trans. by Robin Chancellor. Satirical fantasy about a man born with a spaniel's head. It is superbly done in the best classical manner. Recommended.

Farley, Ralph M., pseud. (Roger S. Hoar): The Hidden Universe (FPCI, $2). Dull, uninteresting juvenilia. Thumbs down.

---: The Omnibus of Time (FPCI, $3½). A collection of interesting paradoxes.

Fearing, Kenneth: The Loneliest Girl in the World (Harcourt, $3). Borderline s-f, mostly dealing with cybernetics.

Feiner, Ruth: A Miracle for Caroline (Coward-McCann, $3½)(England: Are You Ready, Caroline?; Hale, 10/6). Might-have-beens in a woman's life. Good.

Fessier, Michael: Clovis (Dial, $2; Wingate, 7/6). Amusing tale of an intelligent parrot, appropriately illustrated by Carlotta Petrina.

Fils, Crébillon: The Sofa (Folio, 17/-). A reprint of an 18th century novel about the spirit of a man enclosed in a sofa, whence he witnesses various types of love making. Yawn-provoking. Translated by Bonamy Dobrée; illus. by M. Bonafils.

Fischer, Leonard: Let Out the Beast (¢¼, Newstand Library)(paper). The world is destroyed again by atom bombs. Ho-hum.

Fleming, Peter: The Sixth Column (Hart-Davis, 9/6; Scribner, $2½). Attempted Soviet onslaught on Britain.

Flint, Homer Eon & Hall, Austin: The Blind Spot (Prime, $3½). Let's face the facts: this novel contains very little fantasy and is badly written, too.

Frankau, Pamela: The Offshore Light (Heinemann, 12/6). Borderline novel about a man's dream of a perfect island displacing his belief in reality.

Franklin, Jay, pseud. (John F. Carter): Champagne Charlie (Duell, Sloan, and Pierce, $2½). Pleasant, urbanely amusing fantasy about a man endowed with a miraculous power.

---: The Rat Race (FPCI, $3). Satire of Washington in a future atomic war.

French, Paul: David Starr: Space Ranger (Doubleday, $2½). Fast-moving, entertaining juvenile novel of future.

Gallico, Paul: The Abandoned (Knopf, $2¾; Joseph, 9/6, as Jennie). Charming tale of a boy who was turned magically into a cat. Highly recommended.

Gazdanov, Gaito: The Spectre of Alexander Wolf (Cape, 8/6). This horror novel starts off well, then promptly flops.

Gernsback, Hugo: Ralph 124C41+ (Fell, $2½). Forewards by Lee de Forest and Fletcher Pratt do little to improve a novel as bad now as in 1911, when it was originally written.

Gerstle, Sara: Four Ghost Stories (Wilson, $3). Nice format, but the tales seem more tamely factual than usual.

Gheorghiu, C. Virgil: The Twenty-Fifth Hour (Knopf, $3½; Heinemann, 10/6). A passionate, pessimistic forecast of a third world war and the collapse of Western man. Unusually excellent s-f.

Gibbs, Lewis, pseud. (Joseph W. Cove): Late Final (Dent, 9/6). 1960's few survivors of the next atomic war.

Gold, H.L., ed.: The Galaxy Reader of Science Fiction (Crown, $3½). 24 entries, nearly 600 pp., would make this a bargain if the stories---which are less than 2 yrs. old---weren't so new.

Goyen, Wm.: Ghost and Flesh (Random, $2¾). Acceptable horror tales.

Graves, Rbt.: Occupation: Writer (Farrar, Straus, $4; Cassel, 12/6). 6 s-f and fantasy shorts plus mundane stuff.

Green, F.L.: The Magician (Coward-McCann, $2¾; Joseph, 9/6). Borderline account of a conjurer who performed a kind of real magic. Well written.

Green, Henry, pseud. (Henry V. Yorke): Concluding (Viking, $3; Hogarth, 8/6). A confusing picture of a surprisingly peaceful future epoch.

Greenberg, Martin, ed.: Journey to Infinity (Gnome, $3½). An anthology giving an s-f history of man from the prehistoric past to the near future.

---: Men Against the Stars (Gnome, $2.95; Grayson, 8/6). A well-chosen collection chronicling man's conquest of space.

---: Travellers of Space (Gnome, $3.95). Introduction by Willy Ley and Cartier illustrations---but it's still so-so.

Greener, Leslie: Moon Ahead (Viking, $2½). Plausible juvenile s-f adventures.

Griffith, Mary: Three Hundred Years Hence (Prime, $2½). Rpt. of an 1835 novel.

Groussard, Serge: Talva (Gallimard, 350fr.). Wandering Jew theme; laid in 1951 Israel.

Guerard, Albert Joseph: Night Journey (Knopf, $3; Longmans, 10/6). The future ---after both sides have lost World War III. A chronicle of terror, betrayal, and confusion; often very effective.

Hamilton, Edmond: City at the World's End (Fell, $2¾). Despite the poorer concluding chapters, this is a surprisingly good story of an entire city being thrown into the future.

Harvey, William Fryer: The Arm of Mrs. Egan and Other Stories (Dent, 10/6). A new collection by a modern master.

Hazlitt, Henry: The Great Idea (Appleton-century-Crofts, $3½). An often dull novel of the year 2100. Skip it.

Healy, Raymond J.; editor: New Tales of Space and Time (Holt, $3½). Reviewed in this issue.

Heard, Gerald: The Black Fox (Harper, $3; Cassel, 9/6). A distinctly above-average novel of the supernatural.

Heinlein, Rbt. A.: Between Planets ($2½, Scribner). Interplanetary s-f, illus.

---: Farmer in the Sky (Scribner, $2½). Same. Up to Heinlein's standard.

---: The Green Hills of Earth (Shasta, $3). Very good s-f shorts.

---: The Man Who Sold the Moon (Shasta, $3). Five more excellent s-f tales.

---: The Puppet Masters (Doubleday, $2¾). Fairly entertaining light novel about a parasitic race that possesses minds.

---: Waldo and Magic, Inc. (Doubleday, $2½). Two frothy fantasy novelletes.

---, ed.: Tomorrow the Stars (Doubleday, $2.95). 14 tales, relatively new.

Herbert, A.P.: Number Nine, or the Mind Sweepers (Doubleday, $3½; Methuen, 10/6).

Wonderful satirical fantasy, with psychiatry and civil servants the chief victims. Thoroughly recommended.

Howard, Elizabeth & Aickman, Rbt.: We Are For the Dark: Six Ghost Stories (Cape, 10/6). Carefully written, modern in cast, but no classics.

Howard, Rbt. E.: The Hour of the Dragon (Gnome, $3). On the comic strip level.

Hubbard, L. Ron: Typewriter in the Sky and Fear (Gnome, $2¾). 2 short novels of no more than average quality.

Hyams, Edward S.: The Astrologer (Longmans, 9/6). Satirical fantasy about a mathematician's new theory; a Martian invasion is thrown in for luck also.

Jameson, Malcolm: Bullard of the Space Patrol (World, $2½). Pleasantly entertaining interplanetary shorts.

Jens, Walter: Nien die Welt der Angelagten (Rowohlt, DM8.50). The familiar mechanized future, enslaved man.

Jones, Raymond F.: The Alien (World, 35¢). More paper-bound s-f hackwork.

---: Renaissance (Gnome, $2¾). Light s-f, implausible but entertaining.

---: The Toymaker (FPCI, $3). Collection of fairly interesting shorts.

Jordan, Mildred A.: Miracle in Brittany (Knopf, $2¾). Effective mood novel of a priest's attempt to convert the people in a Breton village where the old gods still rule. Distinctly good.

Kasak, Hermann: Der Webstuhl (Suhrkamp, DM ?). Fine symbolistic parable about the evolution of society & the state.

Keller, David H.: The Eternal Conflict (Prime, $3½). Borderline fantasy.

---: The Lady Decides (Prime, $3½). Ditto. Keller fans will probably enjoy both; each is limited to 350 copies.

Kenton, Edna, ed.: Eight Uncollected Tales of Henry James (Rutgers, $4¼). A couple of fantasies are included.

Kerr, Sophie: The Man Who Knew the Date (Rinehart, $2½). The protagonist can predict the dates of people's deaths.

Kneale, Nigel: Tomato Cain and Other Stories (Knopf, $3; Collins, 8/6). 29 shorts include several extremely powerful ones with macabre themes.

Kühnelt-Leddihu, Erik von: Moskau, 1997 (Thomas, 14.80 Swiss fr.). Grim, disturbing picture of the world 50 years hence. Well done.

Kuttner, Henry: Fury (Grosset & Dunlap, $1). Adequately entertaining s-f.

Lawrence, Margery H.: The Rent in the Veil (Britain, 1951; no data on hand).

Leiber, Fritz: Gather, Darkness! (Pellegrini & Cudahy, $2¾). Future science as a dogmatic religion. Quite good.

Leinster, Murray: Sidewise in Time and other Scientific Adventures (Shasta, $3). Good selection of s-f shorts.

---, ed.: Great Stories of Science Fiction (Random, $2.95)(intr. by Clifton Fadiman). Fairly good collection.

Lieberman, Rosalie: The Man Who Sold Christmas (Longmans, Green, $2). Well told Christmas miracle.

Linklater, Eric: A Spell for Old Bones (Macmillan, $2½; Cape, 9/-). 2 giants and a poet: a delightful, wittily told fantastic parable of our day. Get it.

Long, Frank B., Jr.: John Carstairs, Space Detective (Fell, $2½; paper-bound from Fantasy Books, 1/6). Pleasant.

Luban, Milton: The Spirit Was Willing (Greenberg, $2½). A reporter is assigned to interview a ghost.

McCloy, Helen: Through a Glass, Darkly (Random, $2½; Gollancz, 8/6). Starts as supernatural, ends as mundane.

MacDonald, John D.: Wine of the Dreamers (Greenberg, $2¾). Variant on Sinister Barrier: people's minds are possessed by beings of another planet. Not bad.

McDonald, Jo: The Voyage of the Eider (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 10/6). Borderline fantasy of an imaginary Arctic expedition.

McDonell, Gordon: The Clocktower (Little-Brown, $3). Curiously real novel of a lost race in a Himalayan valley.

Mackenzie, Compton: The Rival Monster (Chatto & Windus, 11/6). An amusing, though frequently contrived, account of a sea serpent off the Scottish coast.

MacManus, Seumas: Heavy Hangs the Golden Grain (Macmillan, $3). A warm and humorous fantasy of Ireland.

Margulies, Leo & Friend, Oscar J., eds.: My Best Science Fiction Story (Merlin, $3.95). 25 tales, many of extremely dubious quality. They take up 600pp.

Merril, Judith: Shadow on the Hearth ($3, Doubleday). The effect of an atomic attack on a typical American family. Plenty of verisimilitude and true-to-life detail. Worth reading.

Merwin, Samuel, Jr.: The House of Many Worlds (Doubleday, $2¾). Fast-moving adventure on "parallel worlds" theme.

Millicam, J.P.: Hector et le Monstre (Gallimard, 350fr.). An allegorical novel of death. Borderline.

Misrock, Henry: God Had Seven Days ($3, Doubleday). Ironic, satirical fantasy of a miracle and its aftermath.

Mortimer, Chapman: Father Goose (Hart-Davis, 9/6). Two charming and unusual long fantasy novelettes. Excellent.

Mullen, Stanley: Kinsman of the Dragon (Shasta, $3). All of Merritt's devices do not equal Merritt himself.

Munby, Alan N. L.: The Alabaster Hand and Other Ghost Stories (Macmillan, $2; Dobson, 8/6). Very well written, understated, but a bit too tame.

Nathan, Robert: The Innocent Eye ($2½, Knopf). Fine novel about Lucifer.

Noel, Sterling: I Killed Stalin (Farrar, Straus & Young, $3). Above average intrigue in the near future.

Norris, Frank Callan: Nutro 29 (Rinehart, $2¾). Amusing satire on the invention of a new food substitute.

O'Brian, Patrick: The Last Pool (Secker & Warburg, 9/6). 13 shorts; 2 are excellent supernatural ones.

Oliver, Jane, pseud. (Helen C.E. Rees): Morning for Mr. Protheroe (McKay, $2¾; Hammond & Hammond, 9/6). Life after death, realistically portrayed.

Padgett, Lewis, pseud. (Henry Kuttner): A Gnome There Was and Other Stories (Simon & Schuster, $2½). Good shorts.

---: Tomorrow and Tomorrow and The Fairy Chessmen (Gnome, $2¾). 2 short novels of the future: one is good and the other is excellent.

Parkman, Sydney: Life Begins Tomorrow (Pellegrini & Cudahy, $3; Hodder and Stoughton, 9/6). Mankind is all but wiped out by a deadly plague.

Peake, Mervyn L.: Gormenghast (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 15/-). A modern Gothic novel, sequel to Titus Groan.

Peck, Winifred: Unseen Array (Faber & Faber, 10/6). Dull psychic phenomena.

Picard, Barbara: The Mermaid and the Simpleton (Oxford, $2; Oxford, 7/6). Borderline fantasy, enlivened with illustrations by Philip Gough.

Pratt, Fletcher: Double in Space (Doubleday, $2¾). Two short novels, one of which ("Project Excelsior") is far better than the other ("Wanderer's Return").

---, ed.: World of Wonder (Twayne, $3.95). 19 s-f shorts; many are fine quality, but over half are anthologized already.

Randolph, Vance: We Always Lie to Strangers (Columbia, $4). Ozark tall tales.

Repp, Ed Earl: The Stellar Missiles (FPCI, $2¾). The stuff is really for the birds.

Reynard, Elizabeth: The Mutinous Wind (Houghton-Mifflin, $2¾). Illustrated by Wm. Barss. Early 18th century Cape Cod, a witch and a devil's advocate; some very effective atmosphere. These combine to make a very good novel.

Reynolds, Mack: The Case of the Little Green Men (Phoenix, $2). A fan convention is the locale for this rather undistinguished detective story.

Richer, Clément: Ti-Coyo and His Shark (Knopf, $3; Hart-Davis, 8/6). An utterly delightful fantasy. Don't miss it!

Rosenberg, Ethel: Uncle Julius and the Angel with Heartburn (Simon & Schuster, $3 cloth, $1 paper). Heartwarming and amusing tale of a man permitted to relive earlier experiences in his life.

Ross, Malcolm: The Man Who Lived Backward (Farrar, Straus, $3½; Gollancz, 12/6). Interesting account of a man who was born in 1940, died in 1865.

Russell, Eric F.: Dreadful Sanctuary (Fantasy Press, $2¾). A fairly entertaining, if shallow, novel of future.

Ryves, Thos. Evans: Bandersnatch (Grey Walls, 10/6). Science-fiction novel.

Sandoz, Maurice Y.: On the Verge (Doubleday, $4½). Four macabre tales in the Poe tradition. Illus. by S. Dali.

Sewell, Elizabeth: The Dividing of Time (Doubleday, $2¾; Chatto & Windus, 10/6). Borderline novel of daydreaming.

Simak, Clifford D.: Cosmic Engineers (Gnome, $3). Adequate space opera.

---: Time and Again (Simon & Schuster, $2½). Ditto. Serialized in Galaxy as "Time Quarry." The book is poorly bound.

Smith, Clark Ashton: The Dark Chateau (Arkham, $2½). 40 poems in an edition limited to 500 copies. Worth owning.

Smith, E. E.: First Lensman (Fantasy Press, $3). Under-par space opera.

---: Galactic Patrol (Fantasy Press, $3). Acceptable space opera, marred somewhat by an overly abrupt ending.

---: Gray Lensman (Fantasy Press, $3). Probably the very best in the series.

Stapledon, Wm. Olaf: A Man Divided (9/6, Methuen). Excellent novel of a dual personality. Stapledon's last work.

Stewart, Will, pseud.(Jack Williamson): (Simon & Schuster, $2½). A mediocre novel of 22nd century intrigue.

---: Seetee Ship (Gnome, $2¾), a sequel to the above Seetee Shock, is on an even lower level. Skip this one too.

Strange Tales from "Blackwood" (Blackwood, 7/6). Stories ranging from lycanthropy to death rays. Too obvious.

Sturgeon, Theodore, pseud. (Edward H. Waldo): The Dreaming Jewels (Greenberg, $2½). Expanded and rewritten version of a 1950 Fantastic Adventures serial. Corn in the economy-size box.

Taine, John, pseud. (E. T. Bell): The Iron Star (FPCI, $3). Reprint.

---: Seeds of Life (Fantasy Press, $3). A below-average Taine novel.

Tashlin, Frank: The Possum that Didn't (Farrar, Straus, $1¾). Amusing satire on moderns, illustrated by the author.

---: The World that Isn't ($2, Simon & Schuster). But this one is a flop.

Temple, Wm. F.: The Four-Sided Triangle (Fell, $2¾; Long, 9/6, 6/-). Pleasant.

Thurber, James: The Thirteen Clocks (Simon & Schuster, $2½; Hamilton, 9/6). A rather poor, confused fairy tale, nowhere as good as The White Deer.

Tomalin, Ruth: All Souls (Faber & Faber, 12/6). A witch's revenge; characters too eccentric to be real.

Tourville, Anne de: Jabadao (Stock, 480fr.). Beautiful poetic treatment of an old supernatural legend. Good.

Tucker, Wilson: The City in the Sea (Rinehart, $2½). An above-average tale of the future spoiled by a poor ending.

Turner, James: My Life with Borley Rectory (Bodley Head, 10/6). Hilarious tour de force spoofing life in a famous British haunted hause. Wonderful!

Vance, Jack, pseud.(Henry Kuttner): The Dying Earth (Hillman, 25¢). Collection of shorts about the future.

Van Vogt, A. E.: The House that Stood Still (Greenberg, $2½). A new detective fantasy, as fast-paced and confusingly plotted as usual in Van Vogt.

---: Masters of Time (Fantasy Press, $3). Also includes "The Changeling." So-so.

---: The Voyage of the Space Beagle ($2½, Simon & Schuster; Grayson, 8/6). 4 excellent short s-f tales. Undoubtedly the author's best book to date.

---: The Weapon Makers (Greenberg, $2¾). Completely rewritten and improved.

---: The Weapon Shops of Isher (Greenberg, $2¾). An attempt to capitalize on the previous title's popularity.

Verrill, A. Hyatt: The Bridge of Light (Fantasy Press, $3). An unconvincing plot overlays the authentic background.

Vollmoeller, Karl: The Last Miracle ($4, Duell, Sloane & Pierce; Cassel, 15/-). Overlong, tedious tale of mysticism.

Wagenknecht, Edward C., ed.: The Collected Tales of Walter de la Mare ($4½, Knopf). 24 of the author's 63 stories plus an excellent introduction.

Wallerstein, James S.: The Demon's Mirror (Harbinger, $3½). A mirror that gives the viewer his heart's desire---but at a terrible price.

Warner, Rex: Men of Stones: a Melodrama (Lippincott, $2¾; Lane, 9/-). A worthwhile allegorical fantasy.

Weinbaum, Stanley G.: The Dark Other ($3, FPCI). Ms. titled "The Mad Brain."

Wellard, James Howard: Journey to a High Mountain (Dodd, $3; Laurie, 9/6). Borderline: about a spurious miracle.

Wells, Basil: Doorways to Space (FPCI, $2½). Pardon us while we retch.

West, Anthony: Another Kind (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 12/6). A grim, effective account of future British civil war.

Williams, Chas.: The Region of the Summer Stars (Oxford, $1¾; Oxford, 6/-). Poetry concerning King Arthur and the Holy Grail; a sequel to "Taliessin through the Logres" (1938).

Wilkins, Wm. Vaughan: The City of Frozen Fire (Macmillan, $3; Cape, 9/6). Entertaining novel of a lost race in S.A.

Williamson, Jack: The Cometeers (Fantasy Press, $3). Also contains "One Against the Legion." Neither is outstanding.

---: Dragon's Island (Simon & Schuster, $2½). A poor rehashing of Slan.

---: The Green Girl (Avon, 25¢). Below par, dated s-f novel. Don't touch it.

Willingham, Calder: The Gates of Hell (Vanguard, $2½). 25 shorts, a few of which are unfortunately fantasy.

Wilson, Damsey: The Dark Mare (Doubleday, $3½). Shallow, frothy account of a woman being elected U.S. president.

Winn, Rowland: My Dear, It's Heaven (Cassell, 9/-). Cheerful, if satirical, fantasy akin to Outward Bound.

Wollheim, Donald, ed.: Every Boy's Book of Science-Fiction (Fell, $2¾). Mostly pre-1935 titles; few truly good.

---: Flight into Space (Fell, $2¾; Fantasy Books, 1/6). A truly atrocious collection. There are 12 entries.

Woodruff, Philip, pseud.(Philip Mason): The Island of Chamba (Clarke, Irwin, $2; Cape, 9/6). An imaginary island in the Indian Ocean is the locale of an otherwise mundane novel.

Wylie, Philip: The Disappearance (Gollancz, 12/6; Rinehart, $3½). Suppose all men on the planet should vanish?

Wyndham, John, pseud. (John B. Harris): Day of the Triffids (Doubleday, $2½; Joseph, 10/6). World catastrophe novel; was serialized in Collier's.

Bell, Neil, pseud.(S. Southwold): Three Pairs of Heels (Redman, 10/6). Two dozen shorts; a few fantasy.

Bennet, Kem: The Fabulous Wink (Pellegrini & Cudahy, $3; Hart-Davis, 10/6, as The Wink). Delightfully amusing account of a minor miracle. Get it.

Brooke, Jocelyn: Image of a Drawn Sword (Knopf, $2¾). A psychological, slightly supernatural thriller. Borderline.

Clarke, Arthur C.: The Sands of Mars: an Interplanetary Novel (Sidgwick & Jackson, 10/6). Readable, but too familiar.

Fles, Barthold, ed.: The Saturday Evening Post Fantasy Stories (Avon, 25¢). Nine entries: some s-f, some fantasy, one supernatural. All eminently readable. Undoubtedly a bargain!

Futuristic Science Stories (Spencer, 1/6). Mediocre British paperback.

Home-Gall, Edward R.: The Human Bat (Allen, 1/6); The Human Bat versus the Gangster (Allen, 1/6); The Phantom Ice-Demon (Panmure, 7d.). The less said about these horrors the better.

Lewis, Oscar: The Lost Years (Knopf, $3). Worlds of If: Lincoln's post-1865 life if he had not been assassinated. Good.

Neill, Robert: Elegant Witch (Doubleday, $3½). Witchcraft in Britain during the Seventeenth Century.

O'Reilly, John: The Glob (Viking, $1½). Mildly amusing fable on the origin of man, illustrated by Walter Kelly.

Stern, J. David: Eidolon (Messner, $3). Semi-s-f, embodying (another!) attempt to link science and religion.

Van Vogt, A. E.: Destination: Universe (Pellegrini & Cudahy, $3). Ten moderately satisfying short s-f stories.

---oOo---

The above list of fantasy titles is admittedly somewhat incomplete in the realm of British paperbacks. Your editor is aware of nearly a dozen pocketbooks published in England by name, but lacks knowledge of their publishers, or perhaps perpetrators would be a better word. They are relatively unimportant, however, mostly of the Fearn-Hamilton-Reed ilk. I'll include them in the next issue's "This-'n'-That" column if missing data can be located.

Likewise space limitation forbids my citing here reprints and/or any nonfiction volumes pertaining to the fantasy field. A selected listing of the latter category at least is also awaiting this column in the next Commentator.

This is probably the ideal place to thank all those subscribers and friends who wrote letters of appreciation and praise and surprise after receiving the long delayed and almost given-up-for-lost Commentator #25. I wish I were able to express gratitude to each one individually.

I wish too that each letter could be included in "Open House"---but there wouldn't be room even if F.C.'s policy didn't rule most of them out. (Pleasant as I find them to read, they're mostly too personally-directed to be of general interest. Keep 'em coming, anyway!)

Erratum in "Open House": line one, page 192: insert "writings" after "Weinbaum's"; sorry, F.T.L.!

Next issue: probably not until late Summer or early Fall. ---A.L.S.

OPEN HOUSE

(LETTERS FROM READERS)

Contributing editor Darrell Richardson comments briefly:

Frankly, I had forgotten that I had written "Master of Fantasy" until seeing it in print in the last Commentator! It was composed about two years ago and since then a number of additional facts have turned up concerning this once-legendary person. "Frances Stevens," it has now been definitely established, is the pseudonym of Mrs. Gertrude Bennett. Possibly I should have called my article "Mistress of Fantasy"! Incidentally, Lloyd Eshbach of Fantasy Press has promised that the first special limited edition his company publishes will be Frances Stevens' Thrill Book serial, "The Heads of Cerberus."

The blame for turning "Frances" into "Francis" in Mr. Richardson's article, by the way, falls on your editor's head, not on his. . . . . From New Zealand Thomas G. L. Cockcroft writes:

I still have the issue of The Acolyte in which the abridged form of Sam Moskowitz's article on Weinbaum appeared. At the time, I wished that the complete text had been published, and have often wondered since if it did appear anywhere ---so I was pleased to find it in the last Commentator. I have a few additions and corrections, though. On page 141 "Professor Ne'ant" should actually be "Professor Néant"; excuse me if you consider this quibbling, but you will probably agree that the acute accent resolves what is otherwise an ambiguity. Perhaps it is equally quibbling for me to point out that the penultimate sentence in the second paragraph on the same page might suggest to the uninformed that "The Brink of Infinity" appeared in Wonder Stories while that magazine was still being published by Gernsback.

I am afraid that Mr. Moskowitz is a trifle mistaken in what he says about "Tidal Noon." Where, pray, in this tale, do the young man and the girl flee before a Ganymedian flood? Nor do they encounter "freak animals on every page"; the freak animals---save the land leet, which is not particularly peculiar---all have been encountered before Carol Kent comes into the story. Also, I feel it is gross exaggeration to say that Helen Weinbaum "introduced enough crazy 'gadzooks' to shame her inspiration." There are actually only five "queer animals" (six if we include the land leet): the hipp, the nympus, the "metamorphosis-amoeba," the blanket bat and the unnamed beast with hypnotic powers; the gamma rorqual is mentioned only incidentally as a victim of the amoeboid creature. And if the nympus, hipp and land leet are eliminated as being fairly close to "normal," that leaves only three of the crazy variety.

Finally, in looking over the appended bibliography, I notice three omissions: from part II (A), an appreciation by D.R.Smith, "The Admirable Weinbaum," Fantasy Review II, 8 (April-May, 1948); from part II (B), a review of A Martian Odyssey and Others by Arthur F. Hillman, Science-Fantasy Review III, 16 (Autumn, 1949); and the story "Parasite Planet" has been reprinted in a paper-bound booklet of that title published by the Whitman Press Pty. Ltd., Sydney, N.S.W., Australia (48pp., 8½ x 5½, 6d.)---included also being Heinlein's "Life-Line" and a sketch "About Venus," which also appeared in the anthology Flight into Space.

I was intrigued by Wetzel's contribution. I don't think his idea has ever been precisely expressed before. "The Hound" (1922) also fits into the pattern quite distinctly. August Derleth, in his essay "The Weird Tale in English Since 1890," states unequivocally that the narrator in "The Outsider" is a ghoul, which is not, of course, completely justified---at least not by the context of

that story alone. The sentence in the penultimate paragraph of "The Outsider," "Now I ride with the mocking and friendly ghouls on the night-wind," takes on a slightly new significance when the use made by the ghouls in "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" of the night-gaunts is considered. The ghoul-changeling idea enters into stories by other authors besides---"The Nameless Offspring" of Clark Ashton Smith and "The Grinning Ghoul" of Robert Bloch can certainly be considered members of the tribe, while Henry Kuttner had a ghoul of sorts in "The Graveyard Rats." One tale that expresses the idea very plainly is "Far Below" by Robert B. Johnson, which appears strongly influenced by Lovecraft's work, although it was not listed in the Evans and Laney Tentative Bibliography of H.P.L., which included a list of Lovecraft-inspired stories.

Mr. Cockcroft is the compiler of the excellent brochure The Tales of Clark Ashton Smith: a Bibliography (1951). This is being distributed in England by G.L. Chapman, and in the U.S.A. by Russell J. Hodgkins. Those who wish to obtain it direct may contact Mr. Cockcroft at 3 Stilling St., Melling, Lower Hutt, New Zealand. . . . . Next we hear from Francis T. Laney:

Sam Moskowitz, that exhumer of picayune minutiae from the past, found it necessary to preface his Weinbaum article with an extraneous, insulting, inaccurate and (unintentionally) amusing account of its history. I don't know what his meretricious attack on me has to do with Weinbaum---it must be sublimating his desire to exclude me from a convention.

In 1945, when The Acolyte was in its heyday, the name of Sam Moskowitz appeared on its mailing list. Since he was known as a prolific writer and reviewer, I sent him the routine come-on for material that I habitually dispatched two or three times a week to anyone who might possibly contribute. Moskowitz took the request more seriously than most recipients, and promptly submitted the Weinbaum manuscript.

I did not read it when received---glancing at it only enough to see that with a bit of revision here and there it would be okay---and accepted it for use as soon as possible.

Starting with the Winter, 1942 issue, the masthead of every number of The Acolyte bore the legend "Accepted material is subject to editorial revision when necessary." It is the considered opinion of both co-editor Samuel D. Russell and myself that this policy of revising mss. was one of the major reasons the magazine won honors as number one fanzine two years running. Certainly there was no reason for anyone to be surprised if their stuff was edited, since thirteen consecutive Acolytes advertised the fact on the masthead.

When I came to stencil Moskowitz's article, I collided head on with the fact that, as submitted, it had to be drastically edited in order to make it readable; and with the further fact that it was too bad to be edited as I stencilled it. A rewrite was in order.

Here is where I made my big mistake. I should have rejected the article. I should have told Moskowitz that I had accepted it unread on the strength of his perhaps over-rated reputation as a writer, and that on reading it I felt it was too poorly written to meet The Acolyte's standards.

I guess I had some romantic notion about not going back on my word. So I sent out a frantic SOS for Russell, and we spent an entire evening revising. (Russell, incidentally, was all for rejecting the article.) I recall only one specific incident from the revision session: Russell had been frantically pruning superfluous verbiage for a whole page; I was looking over his shoulder and said, "Sam, why not just cut out the whole page? It says nothing." He looked at it a moment, and then ran a heavy mark through it all. "I couldn't see the forest for the trees," he said sadly.

There was no bibliography of Weinbaum's published submitted by Moskowitz, so I compiled one myself.

I was congratulating myself on having saved the day until Moskowitz blew his wig because I had altered some of his prose, which like God's evidently is divine and not to be tampered with. (If he'd tamper with it a little himself it would improve his style by 100%. What gives some of these amateur writers a pseudo-Narcissism about their own work?)

He submitted a hot-tempered statement and ordered me to publish it in the next Acolyte. Since then---as now---I can't be ordered worth a damn, I submitted to him an equally hot-tempered answer and proposed to run the two together. I also wrote a calm and impartial statement which covered the facts in the case, and suggested he might prefer it instead.

It is regrettable that his name came out "Dam Moskowitz," but I actually did not catch this typographical error until the page was being mimeographed. He of course knows I did it all on purpose.

He also knows, "all prevarications to the contrary," that six pages of space were available, and that we had just slashed a fourteen-paged article to make it fit.

It's nice to be so infallible.

The fact is, we would have run an article of any length if the space were filled by meaningful words instead of mere verbiage. Russell's article on M. R. James ran a full twenty-four pages as published, for example.

Moskowitz takes violent exception to our editing job. I have compared the two versions, and think on the contrary that the editing was good. I can find no place where words were put into his mouth. While the Acolyte version often replaces a paragraph in the original with a single sentence, the single sentence uses his own key phrases and the meaning is basically the same.

And I'll stick by my guns and say that the Acolyte version is far better than this current augmented one. It highlights Moskowitz's extremely sensitive and discerning taste in short descriptive phrases, and eliminates the wordy flounderings and verbose ramifications that make most of his writings so stuffy, pompous and unreadable. It indicates that Moskowitz could become a very good writer, even by professional standards, if he could learn an economy of words. I wish that I could publish the two versions in parallel columns and show you what I mean.

Contributing editor Sam Moskowitz replies:

Francis T. Laney, author, editor and publisher of Ah! Sweet Idiocy!, whose 80,000 words are devoted almost completely to his own trivial experiences, would seem an incredibly unqualified judge of what is or is not "picayune minutiae" and verboseness. To unravel the tangled web he has woven one needs rely only on orderly thinking and objective facts.

First, the genesis of the Weinbaum ms. Mr. Laney states that on receipt of a "routine come-on for material" I submitted it "promptly." Unfortunately for him, I happen to be one of those systematic individuals who saves and files all of his correspondence. Here are Francis T. Laney's own words on this matter, quoted from letters to me. The first is dated May 13, 1945; the second, July 1, 1945:

> Acolytes's columns would be open to a contribution from you, if you don't mind my tossing a hint in your general direction.
>
> You mention an article in the event I'm caught short. I'm OK on this coming issue . . . but the one after that looks pretty bad. I've nothing in sight aside from a couple of promised articles . . . this means that the cupboard is bare, as my article backlog is all going into #11. So if you

think you could get something to me by September 10th or 15th (or preferably, by Sept. 1) I would be grateful as all heck.

I am not particular what you write about.

These quotations show that Laney's come-on received a polite brush-off (to the effect that I was very busy on my fan history) but adding that if ever he were in a really bad spot he should let me know and I would try to help. Back he then came, hat in hand. His magazine had a good reputation and I tried hard to give him something decent. In due time I completed the article, dispatched it to him, and received the following acknowledgement (dated September 16, 1945):

I'm sorry not to have written sooner and acknowledged the much appreciated Weinbaum article. As you've probably noticed The Acolyte has been playing tag with co-editor Russell's article on M. R. James for around a year now.... we got it. As a result, we are using it for this issue, and scheduling your article for the issue of Jan. 15. This is no reflection on your article, but simply a reflection of the fact that the James opus has been promised in at least three different issues and failed to materialize.

Oddly enough, in reading over the article carefully, I am struck by the different light in which you and I regard Weinbaum. You dismiss the New Adam with pretty much of a shrug, whereas I consider it to be worth all the rest of Weinbaum's writings put together, and one of the best stftales of all time. Of course, I'll not change your article in this respect, but we probably will use a review of New Adam by John Hollis Mason, the Canadian fan who is one of NA's chief admirers.

Thanks enormously for all your work and support.

In 1945 Laney said he read the ms. "carefully." In 1952 he claims to have just glanced at it. Was he telling the truth then, or is he doing so now?

Laney also speaks of "amateur writers" who have "a pseudo-Narcissism about their own work." He says nothing, however, about the delusions of grandeur afflicting many equally amateur editors. I do claim to be an amateur writer in spirit, but technically I can qualify as a professional, having had three stories published in 1941-42. Such work of course does not make my every phrase sacred, but it does seem significant to me that these were printed with only one change of any kind that I could discover---and this one, I was told, was a typographical error. I regard F. Orlin Tremaine and Malcolm Reiss, who bought the stories, to be more competent judges of writing than Francis T. Laney. August Derleth, who solicited several articles from me for The Arkham Sampler, went to the trouble to write me that he had found in two of my mss. a wrong word usage, one grammatical error and two omitted commas, and asked permission to correct them. I hope I am not breaking Mr. Laney's heart when I say that I regard Mr. Derleth as a more experienced editor than he, and at all times a busier man.

Laney claims he cannot find any place in the Weinbaum article where he has altered my opinions by injudicious editing. Below is a paragraph as it was originally. The capitalized portions are what The Acolyte published; the rest, what was cut out. I ask the reader to study it himself and decide whether the meaning is the same. And this, of course, is merely one sample of many I might quote:

"THE BLACK FLAME" lacked much of the beauty of writing style so noticeable in "Dawn of Flame." This feature novel in the first issue of Startling Stories TELLS AN ENTHRALLING

> TALE OF A MAN OF THE PRESENT WHO AWAKES IN THE FUTURE AND AFTER AN UNUSUAL SERIES OF ADVENTURES LIVES TO MARRY THE BLACK FLAME AND GAIN IMMORTALITY FOR HIMSELF. "THE BLACK FLAME" PAINTS A VAST CANVAS OF WEINBAUM'S WORLD OF THE FUTURE. Divergent trends of human evolution are shown AND woven into an adventure story of undeniable excellence. Still, a bit of cutting might not have been amiss to remove passages of inferior quality which drag down the average of the work. "The Black Flame" as it stands is not a great story. It IS, however, a NICELY DONE romantic adventure of the future, EMINENTLY READABLE AND ENJOYABLE.

Francis T. Laney is not the only fan magazine editor who has altered material unwisely---he is to my mind merely one of the most conscienceless flagrant. In a letter to me dated March 3, 1946 he states:

> The revision of this essay was the joint work of Russell and myself, and in the considered opinion of both of us, improved the article at least 500%.

Now in his current communication he remarks that with a little "tampering" I can look forward to only a 100% improvement by my own feeble efforts. It is a bleak and dismal future indeed when my most carefully revised mss. will achieve but a third of the Laney-Russell greatness.

A careful reading of Laney's statement about the bibliography shows that it is not a complete denial of what I said at all, but merely a careful equivocation that sounds like one. It is true that I did not compile a complete "bibliography of Weinbaum's published writings," as he says, but I did compile a bibliography (complete as of that date) of his books, contributions to fan magazines and the writings of others about him---these comprising the bulk of the listing as printed in the last Fantasy Commentator, parts I (B) and (C) and II. To dispel any doubts that such was submitted to The Acolyte, I need only quote from the editorial in the Fall, 1945 number (III, 4, p.2):

> Certain to appear in the next issue is a long article on the late Stanley Weinbaum and his writings together with a detailed bibliography by Sam Moskowitz.

As usual, the clinching proof of what really happened is furnished by the words of Francis T. Laney himself.

Finally, the question of whether "Dam Moskowitz" was or was not a purposeful error. Obviously this is a point on which neither of us can furnish rigid proof. That is why I never outrightly accused Laney (contrary to his letter) of perpetrating the deed, though since he has brought up the matter I don't mind admitting I think he did. Here's why: It is certainly true that everybody makes typographical errors. I maintain, however, that if a typist corrects an error he will very, very seldom fail to notice if he replaces it by a new error. But that, if we are to believe Laney's story, is precisely what happened in this instance. For under the "D" of "Dam" there is a faint outline of an "A". Interested readers can see this in the Spring, 1946 Acolyte (IV, 2, p. 24).

Anyone who desires may make arrangements with me to view any or all of the source-material I have cited. The above may be considered my last statement on the matter in "Open House," which I think is better devoted to other things than replying to recriminations. If Mr. Laney wishes, I shall of course be glad to reply by letter to any new arguments he wishes to bring up.

In conclusion, I want to thank Tom Cockcroft for his interesting comments and for the welcome additions to the Weinbaum bibliography.