

FANTASY TIMES

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TIME WAITS FOR NO ONE

-an editorial-
by Sam Moskowitz

Ordinarily, we might have attempted to gloss over the inordinate delay in appearance of this publication, vigorously maintaining a blase front. But our own conscience tells us that a lapse of a year and three months warrants no such triviality.

The fact is, that your editor, while quite capable of writing and assembling ample material for publication, and energetic enough to type stencils well in advance, is no great shakes as a crank turner. James V. Taurasi, our co-editor, was strictly one hundred per cent in control of that department. When he left for overseas negotiations were bungled for borrowing his equipment, and the portable mimeograph I own (once the property of William H. Groveman, sold to Alex Osheroff, etc., thence...) proving wholly inoperable I attempted to get several bosom pals (?) to lend me a hand. To no avail. Apropos of which I insist on saying that past open-handedness, consistently, on my part deserved better cooperation.

As a last resort I offered my long-since completed stencils to Julius Unger to combine with Fantasy Fiction Field as a separate section. When Dunkelberger struck out on his own, Unger had to scout about for another man to take his place. He found several. Long delays no production. Eventually Fantasy Fiction Field was professionally printed as the only logical solution to its problems and the old Fantasy Times Stencils were back in my lap again.

This was particularly embarrassing since co-editor James V. Taurasi, with aid-de-camp Raymond Van Houten succeeded in turning out seven overseas editions of "Fantasy Times" in a row while in service. Where were my pretty excuses now?

Paradoxically, it was Joe Kennedy, King of the Neophyte fans, who owed me no favors who was willing to come to the rescue. For which we sincerely thank him.

All subscriptions to this publication are in an excellent state of preservation. If any one should wish refund of his remaining subscription money, this will be done promptly, without prejudice.

Need I say that future issues of this publication are incumbent upon the return of co-editor James V. Taurasi from the wars and any future kindnesses of individuals may extend me?

We recommend you send 10 cents to Joe Kennedy, 84 Baker Ave., Dover, NJ for a copy of his publication VAMPIRE--A Magazine of Fantasy. This consistently appearing publication is destined to become one of the leaders.

BY THE WATERS OF LETHE

or the Forgotten Man of Science-fiction

by Sam Moskowitz

In these afterdays when many of the old idols of science-fiction have toppled and have begun to live a sublimated existence in the memories of those who will not let themselves forget a better day, no flame burns more warmly in the candle of the mind than the name of David H. Keller, M. D.

A man of compelling intelligence and shining humanity, a doctor of the mind as well as the body he labored for love thirty years before he sold his first work at the age of forty-six!

Hugo Gernsback was well aware when the original manuscript of "The Revolt of the Pedestrians" was set down after first reading that he had stumbled upon an author who could extrapolate upon minutely exact science, apply to it the psychology of a human being and emerge with a result that made contemporary science fiction writers seem cold-blooded as icicles by comparison.

For Keller was interested in one thing predominantly. How would the inexorable advance of science affect the person as a human being? What would be the physical and mental results of a too artificial life? For Keller preached a new gospel. He believed in science as a devote man believes in God. But he believed that science must be adopted to the emotions and psychological reactions of man, and that man must never bend himself to fit the mold of science.

In his semi-classic "The Revolt of the Pedestrians" he showed how too great dependence upon vehicular conveyance would physically effect man, and the inevitable gap that would grow between those who continued to live normally and the majority who claimed superiority because they were a majority and for no other logical reason.

In over one hundred published stories he displayed a fecundity of new ideas that was absolutely astounding. In psychology written scientifically to fiction form he had discovered an inexhaustible gold mine of plot variations and he mined this rich field in his own easy going manner.

"The Pent House" gave a sketch of a money crazy world of advanced science slowly perishing by the over-incidence of dread cancer. Computing that the entire race will be dead in ten years a doctor chooses a young man and woman to live with him in a marvelous pent-house wonderfully stocked against the necessities of life and completely insulated against all infection from outside. These two, he hopes, will start a new, more perfect race when every one else is gone.

PAGE 3

Ten years of idyllic happiness passes in which time a child is born to the couple. At the end of ten years the door swings open and the doctor emerges to view the chaos of the world. But Dr. Keller has given the victory to science. A cure for cancer has been discovered. The world still pursues its slap-happy course. The Doctor tells the couple that judging by existing conditions, nothing can save the world from extinction at their own hands in the next ten years. The couple seem to understand him, for they allow the door to be closed on them for another 10 years of serene happiness and comfort.

In the world of the future, life has been lengthened and the population stabilized to a point where only the most physically and mentally perfect couples are allowed to have children, and only at the special decree of the government.

A child is born to one happy, chosen couple. From the instant of birth the child is never there's but is cared for by the scientific state. Specially trained and guided the child becomes a veritable genius. Upon reunion with his parents he regards them as curiosities who had the good-fortune to conceive him.

Elated by his genius the government informs the parents that they will be accorded the unprecedented honor of being permitted to bear a second child.

In a single line, a line of singular quietness that fairly shrieks the agony of a broken heart the parents tell the government's courier: "Tell them", they say, "tell them, we do not care to have another child." Old timers will remember "Unto Us a Child is Born."

Fan magazine editors have often been accused of poor taste, and indeed Robert A. Mable editor of FANTASCIENCE DIGEST had a lot of explaining to do when he rejected VALLEY OF BONES by Doc Keller for his fan magazine and kept THE MOTHER. For VALLEY OF BONES was subsequently accepted and published by WEIRD TALES. BUT--time has vindicated his choice, for six years after publication I can still visualize the closing scene of THE MOTHER, in which she, mother of 20 children in the scientific world state of tomorrow receives a telegram informing her of the death of her daughter. Her husband trying to comfort her, as she cries inconsolably with the words: "Perhaps", he hesitates, "Perhaps we might adopt a baby!"

Where has an author included such subject matter in a science fiction story before or since?

"The Stenographers Hands", "The Ivy War", "The Rat Racket", "The Tree", "Air Lines", "The Yeast Men", "The White City", "White Collars", "Half-Way Hill", "A Biological Experiment", "The Boneless Horror" and dozens of others present us a string of enjoyability in reading that France and England well appreciated, judging by the rate they were reprinting these stories before the war.

Critics of Keller have flatly stated that he couldn't write.

BY THE WATERS OF LETHBRIDGE

That the powerful subject matter and authentic insight triumphed over the style and made Keller a popular writer. They say his style was as weak as dish water, that it was dead and insipid and often silly.

We wonder if these men are not too much overawed by the wild, driving, aimless power of Thomas Wolfe. A phenomenon with a writing style of such great intensity that it probably will be admitted as one of the greatest in the history of literature. Words, adjectives, expletives surged from within him. Strong words were what he needed to describe the chaotic bewilderment of his own mind. And his words were rendered useless, for despite alarmingly frank descriptions of sex-ridden degenerates he never did figure himself out and died as he had lived without plot or meaning.

Can these people brand Keller's writing style as something inferior because after years of practice he became proficient at saying what he wanted to say in as few words as possible. If he achieved by understatement what Wolfe never achieved by screeching power is he necessarily second-rate? Can it be denied that few living writers have ever written an ending as powerful as that for "The Thing in the Cellar." The psychological import of that story was numbing. The only thing comparable was his own grotesque tale "Nor More Tomorrows" which would have failed with the addition of one superfluous word. Wolfe would never have had the self-restraint to omit a last powerful expletive.

Keller all his life strove for the "beautiful story." He achieved that beauty of style many times, incomparably blended with a note of horror that Lovecraft might have envied. He mistakenly believed that he was writing the "beautiful story" when he wrote "The Golden Bough," "Men of Avalon", "Binding Deluxe", "Creation Unforgivable" and the likeable Cornwall series for old Weird Tales. These were readable but ineffective sort of things. It was in the novel that Keller achieved his dream of literary beauty (yet never the sheer beauty of omission of all-horror that Lovecraft achieved in "Quest of Iranon"). In "The Metal Doom" he chronicled the break-down and rebuilding of civilization in a manner surpassed only by McClary's "Rebirth." And in "Life Everlasting" he paints an unforgettable canvas of the human race at long last attaining immortality--but at a price--sterility! No disease, no fear of death, a boundless future in which to live and love and be happy. And step by step, incident by incident, with incisive, indefatigable logic, Dr. Keller, Master of psychology shows discontent, and finally open rebellion against the childless state of immortality. Led by the women the people appeal for and achieve their normal, mortal state, attendant with all its ills and disasters. Perpetuation of the race is the true immortality.

"The Conquerors" was a fine novel as science fiction novels go, but in its sequel, "The Evening Star" David H. Keller reached his zenith. Rarely have beauty of style and fecundity of ideas blended in a happier union. The great science of man unaccountably defeated by unsuspected natural laws. Pell-mell in retreat from the Evening Star he had hoped to conquer; the very genes of his body altered by unknown emanations, man turns at bay, defeated, his science gone and retrieves

the secret weapon of his soul--courage. With all hope of retreat blasted he achieves a victory of spirit that halts for a moment the blind, mindless course of natural law. "The Evening Star" is Keller's great science-fiction novel.

David H. Keller's style was as studied and deliberate in its own fashion as that of the late H. P. Lovecraft. Keller deliberately wrote the way he did. Sometimes the results were sorry duds, as were all-too-many of Lovecrafts. But occasionally his style and subject-matter "clicked" and the result was stories possessing the great power and scope of "Life Everlasting", "The Evening Star", "No More Tomorrows", "The Thing in the Cellar", and others. But more often than any other author in the history of science fiction, his style and his stories were readable. He was consistently readable and enjoyable to a greater extent than any other writer in the history of fantastic literature.

In this own inimitable style he created the lovable detective "Taine, of San Francisco", who is undoubtedly the finest "scientific" detective to appear in fiction to date. This little man, so naive in the ways and manners of the world, and brilliant exclusively in his knack for ingenious scientific sleuthing, left a warm glow in the minds of those who read of his doings. His reply to all those who offered him tobacco in any form is immortal: "No thank you. I used to smoke, but I found that tobacco was bad for the delicate enamel of my teeth, and once that is destroyed, it is never replaced." Some day Ellery Queen will discover Taine of San Francisco and brag about it.

Despite a testimonial dinner in New York and some excellent reviews calling him the find of the year, Dr. Keller's book "The Devil and the Doctor", was a failure. Doctor Keller's previous books "The Sign of the Burning Heart" and "By the Waters of Lethe" privately published and distributed were also failures. Let this be no criterion of the man's ability. Lovecraft's first two books failed miserably, one of them selling less than 50 copies.

Dr. Keller's stories have the necessary quality to charm millions. Some day, a volume of his stories published at the right time may give him his mark in the world. Let us hope it is soon, for Dr. Keller, a very sick man, will probably never live to hear the final word on his works.

-----THE END-----

AFTER TEN YEARS -- A TRIBUTE TO STANLEY G. WEINBAUM

Edited by Sam Moskowitz and Gerry de la Ree, Jr.

25 cents for a limited time only

This 30 paged, large sized publication, with a professionally printed cover is an absolute must for every fantasy fan. To commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the date of Weinbaums death (Dec. 14, 1935) the editors have obtained hitherto unpublished letters of Stanley G. Weinbaum to his agent Julius Schwartz, opinions of his unpublished novel "The Mad Brain" by John W. Campbell, Jr., Robert O. Erismann, and Margeret Weinbaum, and a terrific line-up of associational material. Obtainable from Gerry de la Ree, Jr., 9 Bogart Place, Westwood, N.J.

SEX IN SCIENCE FICTION

by

Thos. S. Gardner

Fans are a queer bunch! They fight and scrap about uncut edges, staples, authors, departments, and get along amicably together in spite of it. But just mention SEX and one has not only a figurative fight but a literal fight on his hands. Actual fistfuffs would be indulged in except that most fans are too weak to fight from reading all the junk that is published now under the banner of science fiction. Just the same, Sex is very, very tabu, and can cause the most violent disagreements possible. Just why that is so is hard to understand. Perhaps we can analyze their position and find out. Let's try anyway.

Early science fiction was written as a means of sociological expression of utopias and it was assumed that problems of sex had been solved. Thus sex was considered unnecessary and of little importance compared to the political systems described. This does not apply to Swift's Gullivers Travels, that in the original, is so sexy, dirty and plain vulgar that only a few people have ever read the unexpurgated edition. The father of modern science fiction is undoubtedly H. G. Wells. His stories were written to describe his ideas as to society and in a few places only does he touch on sex--but when he does, it is a natural and wholesome expression. Thus "Men Like Gods" had nudism as a natural life pattern and sex a necessary form just as civilized conversation, while "In the Days of the Comet", berates the narrowness of modern sex tabus. For many years science fiction had to be printed along with love stories, adventure stories, political tracts, and was written for the average, middle class reader with the same type of psychology--which is very solid, substantial and also very boring and inconvenient at times. Consequently sex was seldom treated in early science fiction and if touched upon, it was in a half humorous way. Thus, Burrough's characters appeared so ignorant, Sir Galahadish, (Give me Lancelot to Galahad, anytime) and prudish that sometimes one wonders if they were men or robots. The villains, on the other hand, were depicted as sex motif characters. Thus, just as in primer books taught in the first grades, sex was made the villain. This attitude is so unreasonable that we will not dwell upon it.

There can be no admonition from books of theology as to barring sex literature. The Bible has some of the spiciest sex stories ever told--written in old English that the average person cannot understand. One of the books of Shinto is so spicy that it has never been translated into English--only an expurgated edition with latin footnotes. The writings of the theologians are quite sexy and show every sign of Freudism.

All the world's literatures consider that sex, in all its forms, is the most interesting side light on life. You, science fiction fan chortle with delight and gleefully read Voltaire's "Candide", Balzac's "Droll Stories", etc. Yet you have the nerve to bar sex from science fiction. A visitor to the Queens SF in the Winter of 1939 intimated

that the author had a trashy mind because he enjoyed Kuttner's "Avengers of Space" in the first issue of MARVEL SCIENCE STORIES. I presume that he wanted the inhabitants of Mars, who had never seen humans before, to keep the red headed girl well clothed, and not embarrass the male members of the space party? When men do not keep women clothed under such conditions, how can you expect alien minds to do so? The story of Kuttner's was real, men and creatures act like that in life. That is one of the weaknesses of science fiction in the past. It was not real. Kuttner's story and Don Lemon's "Scarlet Planet" in the old WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY have received more kicks from the sex side than all the rest of science fiction published. The fact is that Lemon's story is not science fiction, but some of the best Fantasy ever published. Re-read it with a more mature mind and give your verdict now! MARVEL would have done well to publish all stories like Kuttner's and Lemon's than the trash they later published. The editor listened to his correspondents, not realizing that they were experts on the old stuff and unfit to criticize the mature literature of science fiction. (See article by the author in August 1959 Science Fiction.) The first issue of MARVEL sold out in East Tennessee as the author could not find an extra copy in three cities, but the later issues did not sell nearly as well. I heard as many comments on the sex angle that were favorable as on "Survival" by Burks which is one of the greatest stories ever written. But it takes more than great stories to sell a magazine--only permanent, nature appeal can attract and hold readers. Sex should be incorporated in science fiction as a standard life pattern and treated from all phases just as political systems are discussed. Laurance Manning in the last part of his "Man Who Awoke" series gives an intelligent viewpoint on sex--too far ahead of us now, but realizable someday, unless mankind destroys himself.

The critics of Sex are either sincere or insincere. If sincere, then they need emotional maturity and the very thing they criticize is necessary to them to attain a more broad and intelligent viewpoint of life. Why go to Voltaire, Chaucer, and the old masters to get a viewpoint, when Science Fiction should and can present it with a modern touch that gives it the exquisite coloring that fans enjoy? The critics say that if they want to read sex, they will read any one of a dozen or so spicy magazines--but that stuff is so poorly written and lacks plot so that the intelligent fan cannot stand to read it. Must he be warped mentally and live in a fog of perfect worlds and machines because science fiction cannot or will not aid in his education? If the critics are insincere, then they simply want to attract attention to themselves. I assume that all who have talked to me are sincere. Why not give your viewpoint in an answer to the following challenge:

Science Fiction does not only need Sex but must use Sex in all its aspects to become a well rounded literature.

One of the best magazines on the market, WEIRD TIMES, does not hesitate to use sex, (with a capital S dear reader) in its stories. Conan of Howard fame used the sex motif as a virile man would, and thus Man Tengri or Prester John of Page's "Flame Winds" in the June UNKNOWN fell flat in comparison to Conan as an adventurer. Man Tengri did not have the psychology of the soldier-of-fortune or the free lance of arms. The unexpurgated edition of Dumas "Twenty Years After" cleverly handles a

a sexy situation just as "The Three Musketeers" did in several places. Why can't science fiction do the same? Kuttner's story "The Adventurers of Space" failed only in coherence of plot and not in the sex angle. Perhaps the critics of sex would want to educate all the life forms imagined by writers to the point that a girl is a mechanical robot and treat her as such? If so, then the sword of Conan was laid down too soon and all the brave warriors, adventurers, sorcerers and troubadours that have lived should form their shadowy legions and march once again to free the earth of their poor descendants who forgot that they have a heritage of sixteen hundred millions of years of sex back of them; since the first cells were synthesized in the warm seas in the long ago. Let's make science fiction a real vital, living literature, and forget any utopian mission that we fans have wasted our strengths on. Let's quit breaking our lances against the wind-mills of empty idealism and realize that stf. is written by men, for men, and last but not least their women.

There is a lusty sex phase as in Kuttner and Lemon's stories and then there are magazines as AMAZING under Palmer that treat's sex in a romantic, victorian, prudish love story sense. Allah forbid that stf. degenerate into love stories. Lets have our sex straight from the shoulder and burn incense on the tombs of Conan, Winters, Rold, and the legion of fiction characters that were men and knew it.

THE END

MAYA

by
Clark Ashton Smith

Fools of the world, who dream that dreams are true,
Believing still that life is what it seems,
And trustful that the world is more than dreams-
Free for a little, I have laughed at you---
Knowing all this a ghostly gossamer
In some eternal room of darkness spun;
A laughter of forgotten gods that were,
Echoing still in waste oblivion.

But once again, as others, I have lent
myself to earthly ways and earthly walls:
Illusion of illusions, fantasy
Of doubtful phantoms, nevermore to be
When slumber on the last delirium falls,
And lulls the tossing shadows turbulent.

taken from SANDELWOOD.

A REMARKABLE BIT OF PROPHECY by Gerry de la Ree, Jr.

The following piece of work is an excerpt from an article written by Sam Moskowitz during late Summer, 1940, and printed in the Oct., 1940 issue of SUN SPOTS. We recently came across this article and after rereading it were amazed at the clearness with which Sam foresaw what was to come when science fiction finally "hit the skids." With the exception of his claim that the magazine SCIENCE FICTION would stick through "hell and high water", most of his predictions have come into reality. And this was written, remember, almost four years ago when science fiction was at the pinnacle of success...GDLR, Jr.

FANTASY MAY COME AND FANTASY MAY GO
by Sam Moskowitz

Now we reach the problem of life expectancy of the various magazines. Agreed that ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, THRILLING WONDER STORIES and AMAZING STORIES, the league leaders, will continue to survive. If the bottom should drop out of science fiction, AMAZING STORIES and TWS would probably adopt a bi-monthly schedule, but could be expected to keep publishing.

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION would continue its monthly policy even if it were losing money, until Street and Smith had given up all hope for a renaissance in the field. Then it would be unceremoniously dropped until science fiction revived.

Many fans point knowingly at SCIENCE FICTION and FUTURE FICTION and mutter, "it won't be long here." Ha, ha. Don't kid yourself pal. SCIENCE FICTION at least, is here to stay. Even if Silberkliet only publishes one issue a year, he'll still keep it going. SCIENCE FICTION has a lower expense account than probably any other science fiction magazine. It is at present one of the better sellers on the Blue Ribbon pulp chain. FUTURE FICTION outsells it slightly; mainly because it is on the newsstands longer. These two magazines have always had more appeal for the fans because of their many pages of fan feature. There, at least, they have a stable audience--and I'll take bets that at least one of the Blue Ribbon pulps will keep publishing come hell and high water.

SUPER SCIENCE STORIES and ASTONISHING STORIES would be one of the first two swept away in the even of a science fiction lull. That is, eliminating the possibility that they build up a group of readers of their own, which is possible, but not any too probable. BOTH of these fellows impress me as being Populars attempt to make a few dollars out of the fantasy field while there are a few dollars to be made. Of the two, SUPER SCIENCE and ASTONISHING, I would give the latter preference in the fight for survival.

PLANET STORIES is supposed to be operating on a slender margin of profit, but Fiction House has a reputation for holding their magazine. Fiction House policies give it a fair chance for survival despite anything common sense may tell us.

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES, providing the science-fantasy field did not enjoy a sudden surge of popularity, would go fast....If UNKNOWN has been able to build up the clientele she has been aiming for, will last. If her audience is of the fair weather nature, however, the hatchet would descend drastically here....WEIRD TALES has been around through quite a few depressions. The worst that could happen there would be sale to a new publisher--any publisher would keep her coming through--at least on a bi-monthly basis.

MARVEL TALES wouldn't stick at all. Here, lack of editorial policies would condemn it from the start...Also in the event that it should become unpopular again, you would find ARCOSY deserting her traditional fantasy policy, and FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES and FANTASTIC NOVELS, if they aren't doing exceptionally well now, could hardly be expected to do any better during a lull in fantasy.

A dearth of science fiction would be a boon to collectors, who, now assured that the two or three years' popularity of science fiction was not permanent, would quickly go to work to fill all the gaps in their collections, with the knowledge that their resources would not be stretched so badly during the next ten years as they had been from late 1938 until?????

THE END

THAT SCOUNDEREL "T"

by Donald A. Wollheim

Several new fans have asked who first noted Ray Cummings' constant use of "T" as the first letter in his villains' names as mentioned by Thos. S. Gardner in "Psychological Quirks of Writers." We reprint the original mention of this Cummings quirk from June, 1937 HELIOS--

Ray Cummings is today disregarded as an outstanding science-fiction author. His deliberate duplications of plot carried on so long has lost him the numerous fan-friends he used to have. Yet, it is still amusing to think over some of his characteristic writing items. The most outstanding quirk to my mind was the name of his villain. It was always alike. You may read in the April (1937) THRILLING WONDER his latest story, and you will recall the villain Toro. Toro is the latest of a long line of super-scoundrels. Here are a few taken at random from nine different Cummings yarns:--Targo, (his first who did his dirt in "The Girl in the Golden Atom", Toroh, Tao, Togaro, Tolon, Tako, Tugh, and Turber. We'll bet somebody with a name like that did him dirt once.

Willis Conover, Jr. from OBSERVATIONS in the Aug.-Sept., 1937 issue of HELIOS ADDS:

"I recently paid Ray Cummings a visit in New York City; and during the course of the conversation asked him about the name-similarity--which Don had previously called to my attention. Cummings, a tall, lean man who looks about 50 but is younger, smiled and said he had dubbed his chief nasty man Taro, Tagaro, Tore, etc. simply for good luck. His first novel was so successful that he decided the black name through the rest of the stories, in the faintly superstitious hope that they would prove equally popular."