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FLYING SAUCER

Upper left: Night view of Flying Saucer. Upper Right: Pilot lifting cockpit hood before climbing in. Lower Left: Saucer upper right center: Lower Right Another Daytime view of Saucer.

The flying saucer visited Fargo, August 19th and 20th. The model visiting was a one man job but could carry two men, if they were small. It is expected that a larger model will be able to carry two men and 1000# of bombs or pay load.

According to FLYING magazine, circulated as a trade magazine among airport & flying employees, this model is credited with a speed of 1300 to 1400 mph and carrying 500 # of load in addition to a pilot.

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The photos reproduced here were taken in the Rockies.

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FLYING SAUCER

GEORGES GALLET REVIEWS:

MICROMEGAS BY PROF. R.G. MESSAC

A review of an essay on voyages to the infinitely great and the infinitely small.

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Editor's Note: The following review was prepared by Georges Gallet for that fabulously ledgendary fanmagazine of Harry Warner, Jr's. THE SPACEWAYS.

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On Jan. 28th last, I had the great pleasure of seeing Prof. R.G. Messac's bio-bibliographical notice published in THE SCIENCE FICTION NEWS LETTER.

As it seems that some readers would like to know more about Prof. Messac's essays on scientifiction, I take this opportunity to give a review of one of the most important of these essays: "Micromegas" (published in 1935).

I believe that it is of special interest to American fans for several reasons:

1. It has been written by a Frenchman who knows much about the U.S.A., but still a Frenchman in education, thought and even character.

2. The author is a professor, Doctor of Letters, who although busy with his classes, his studies and his family, has taken a fancy in scientifiction and more, has thought about it and its evolution.

3. It is the first time that such a thorough investigation has been made on the subject.

As practically, every word of the book is of importance the personal part of the reviewer is very small and what follows is more or less an abridged version in English.

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In preliminary considerations, Prof. Messac says:

"The widening of our horizon as much in the sense of the infinitely great than in the sense of the infinitely small is, without any doubt, one of the most surprising phenomena of modern and contemporary history, and one of the biggest in possible consequences. Litterature records this phenomenum as all others and shows us its multiple incidences. But who cares studying these various incidences and their significance ?

No one within my knowledge... (I)

"It will be found in this book a collection of texts relating to same the same subject or at least to the same stream of thoughts. This kind of study, sometimes called "thematology", a rather barbarous word, is seldom amde and not at all valued in our beautiful country (France)...

"My collection of facts is necessarily incomplete.. The greater part of the texts referred to are neither unpublished (new) nor even little known. Many are on the contrary very well known. I believe nevertheless that their comparison may reveal itself suggestive. Indeed, if these texts are known, it is not by the same people. Those who read Lamartine or Fénelon rather seldom read Jules Lermina or "Amazing Stories", and those who read Meyerson or J.B.S. Haldane may ignore **that** Fénelon or Lemartine have touched slightly to subjects join the fundemental hypothesises of modern physics.

"I have tried to formulate some thoughts that may be suggested by these texts brought together. There too lacuna will be found. Besides that I have, without any doubt, not found all stories of voyages in the infinitely small: there would be a large investigation to be undertaken to find those who, like Balzac, have slightly touched the idea in a few lines and thereby contributed to diffuse and strengthen certain conceptions inspired by science. And these texts should be enlightened and completed by a paralell investigation on the development of science and the evolution of scientific theories...

"I wish above all - without great hope to be true - that the men of science, the specialists would take interest, from time to time in consequences and even deformations of their discoveries and their theories as they **are** revealed to us by litterature. Repercussions and deformations which are not without importance or interest, as much to specialists as to the community. The huge majority of the people who make the public and even those, who are called the "elite", the "cultivated people" more often know the last results of scientific research only through the fantastic and fanciful interpretation of writers. And the interpretations of vulgarisators, who besides in some way belong to literature, are but little less fanciful or fantastic. And of science are all that the mass of humans shall know of it. Would it not be good and useful that those who know exactly the truth come sometime to straighten certain extravaganzas or point out what is wrong in certain caricatures ?"

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The essay opens by a quotation from Bergson's "Duration and Simultaneity".

"There is no physic, no astronomy, no possible science if one denies to the man of science the right to figure schematically on a sheet of paper the totality of the whole universe. One admits implicitely the possibility of reducing without deforming. One estimates that dimension is not an absolute, that there are only relations between dimensions and that all would happen in the same way in a universe made little at will, if relations between parts were retained.

(I) Note of reviewer: Except stf. authors and fans, of course.

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Prof. Messac observes that it is the common practice to work on "models", of small scale in the case of airplanes, locomotives, liners, buildings, theatres and so on, of large scale for microbes (photgraphic enlargements). That is to say images or models brought to the measure of the fingers, ar[illegible] or eyes of the builder or observer.

This method who answers practical necessities is the basis of science and has a very ancient origin. It corresponds to the tendency expressed in the great axiom: "Man is the measure of everything". It is probable that the notions of greatness or smallness began to precise themselves as to man himself. Giants and dwarfs as can be found in every community led him to imagine extrordinarily great or small beings: super-giants or super-dwarfs.

Traces of this tendency would be easily found in old legends of all countries: Hercules and the pygmies may be a first sketch of Gulliver, not to speak of all medieval legends of giants and dwarfs.(I)

The first writer who, in modern times, has played with the contrasts of great and small is evidently Rabelais. It is true that he writes of giants without opposing them to pygmies but they are so much greater than ordinary men that these look like pygmies besides them and it is enough that the storyteller takes sometimes Pantagruel's point of view and sometimes Panurge's to give us the impression of going to Lilliput or Brobdingnag.

It is quite possible that some episodes of Rabelias inspired Swift but between their times events of incalculable importance come to pass and Gulliver's Travels appeared in an altogether different intellectual atmosphere.

The microscope had been invented in 1590 by Hans and Zacharias Jansen, spectale-makers of Middelburg. Twenty years later Galileo published some microscopical observations. Then, with Athanase Kircher (1646), Robert Hooke (1665) and Swammerdam the microscope came of current use in biological research.

It had a prodigious influence on the development of sciences and modified completely all notions of greatness. A drop of stagnant water became a lake teeming with beings. Everwhere the golden tube was pointed there was life, the whole nature was peopled. Therefore, why the infinitely small could not be infinitely great for another infinitely small and so on ? Speculations on the macrocosmos and the microcosmos, although yet familiar with certain philosophers in the Antiquity, and echoing in the fathers of the church, became more frequent and more convicted from the end of the XVI Century - Pascal's famous page on the infinitely great and the infinitely small is only the result. Father Nicolas Caussin in 1610 is enraptured by the subtility of an ant's organs and in 1641 the author of "Francion" have one of his heroes the pendant Hortensius say: "You must hear of other designs that I have. Know that if the world seems great to us, our body do not seem less so to a louse or a mite. He finds there his countries and his cities. Now there is no body so little that cannot be divided in innumerable parts, so much that is well possible that inside or out a mite there are still other smaller animals that live there as if in a very spacious world, and they may be little men to whom beautiful things happen. Thus, there is no part in the universe where it cannot be imagined that there are little worlds. There is within: plants, small pebbles, and ants. I will

(I) Note: Snow White and the seven dwarfs.

(1) Robert Sheckley and two seven dwarfs.

write romances of their people; I will sing their loves, their wars, and the revolutions of their empires and principally, I will stop to represent the state where the peoples that inhabit the body of man may be and I will show that it is not without subject that it has been called microcosmos."

Some time will elapse before modern Hortensiuses achieve these designs. In the meantime these ideas shall not cease to haunt the minds. Cyrano de Bergerac in "Les Estats and Empires de la Lune (States and Empyres of the Moon)writes:

"For, tell me, if you please, is it hard to believe that a louse takes your body for a world, at that, when one of them has traveled from one of your ears to the other its companions say that he has traveled to both ends of the world or that he has run from one to the other pole ? Yes, without doubt this little people takes your hair for the forests of his country, the pores full of pituite for fountains, the pimples for lakes and ponds, the apostemes for seas, the swellings for deluges."

Hobbes in his "Elements of Philosophy", Malebranche (1674) in "The Quest for Truth", La Bruyère (1692) in this "Characters", Fénelon in "Telemachus" and his "Treatise on God's Existence", Bernouilli, Leibnitz, Tyssot de Patot the author of a curious book: "Voyages and Adventures of Jacques Massé "(1710), the Cardinal de Polignac in his "Anti-Lucrece" all play in a more or less important way with the ideas of infinitely reat and infinitely small.

Then comes (1726) Swifts' "Gulliver's Travels" of which English speaking readers know too much for me to deal much with. Its great merit is the realism of affabulation, its "matter of fact" accent.

In 1735/1737 appears a confuse but curious and original story entitled "Lamekis" by le Chevalier de Mouchy.

The hero is carried to the stars by sylps using the laws of gravitation, attracting and repulsing forces as means of travel. He is kidnapped by a monstruous worm-man stronger, more intelligent, more learned than ordinary man.

The crowning of this period is without doubt "Micromegas" by Voltaire.

The inhabitant of Sirius and the dwarf of Saturne are always pleasingly evoked in all episodes of the story:

Micromegas' ordinary step is about 12,000 feet long when the dwarf of Saturne must walk ten steps for one stride of his companion. those are the figures , the precision of science. Crossing what to them was an imperceptible pool "The Mediterranean" and the very small pond we call "The Ocean" the dwarf was only knee deep and the other only wetted his heel (IV). The Saturnian's mistress is a lovely little brunette only six hundred yards high, but who makes up by many charms for the smallness of her stature... Saturne is but 900 times bigger than earth and the citizens of this country are dwarfs if only a thousand yards high or about."

This continuous and skillfully dosed mixture of picturesque precision and familiar arithmetic is what makes Voltaire's tale the type of this kind of story in the eyes of many critics.

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The central theme is yet susceptible of many variations: in 1795 Francois Felix Nogaret published "La Terre est un animal, ou Conversation d'une courtisane philosophe"(Earth is an animal).

During the first half of the XIXth century, with the progress of science appear many interesting fantasies: Edgar Poe's "The Sphinx" (Arthur's Magazine, Jan. 1846) amongst others.

They are but details and side dishes. It is in 1858 in "The Atlantic Monthly" that appears the work that inaugurates the brillant series of modern stories on the theme of Micromegas, renewed, amplified and enriched: "The Diamond Lens" by Fitz James O'Brien. We enter the time of the technically based romances.

Linly, hero and relater, begins at the age of ten to play with microscopes. Then buys a real one and dreams of making a super-microscope but without practical result. He meets a spiritist Mrs. Vulpes who evokes Leeuwenhoek's shadow, who obligingly, gives him the means to fulfill his dream, a 140 carat diamond, submitted to electro magnetic current for a long period shall sustain an interior arrangement of its atoms and after being bored along its axis will enable him to make the universal microscope.

He commits murder to have the diamond, makes his hypermicroscope. As soon as he can use it, he understands that his sight goes much farther than the usual realm of microbes and bacteriums inside the gaseous molecule. This humid and luminous kingdom is full of fantastic plants and inhabited by sylphs. Our micrograph falls in love with an Animula. This impossible and romantic love ends tragically; Linley inadvertently let the drop of water dry up. The universe of Animula dies of dryness and the well beloved with it. Linley goes mad.

Fitz James O'Brien has realized perfection in the treatment of this theme as it could be conceived in his time. The most pathetic element of his story is the insuperable barrier which separates Linley from his love, so near and yet so far. The romantic author thought impossible even in imagination to cross the abyss between our world and the atomic world.

The Diamond Lens was a success in America but Europe seems to have ignored it. France knew of Poe only on account of Beaudelaire's patient and stubborn efforts (1860/1880).

In "Histoires Incroyables" (1885) (Unbelievable Stories) Jules Lermina tells in "Maison tranquille" (Quiet House) the story of two scientists: Aloysius and Truphemus of Hoboken (N.Y.) that have solved the problem of chemical food. But if they are happy with their meals of C48 H36 Az16 and so on, Aloysius' wife and his daughter Netty do not. They both decline, Truphemus has an idea: if plants submitted to violet rays grow faster than plants exposed to usual daylight, why not it on the girl ? "Girls are flowers". Netty is placed in a crystal house in which only violet rays are filtered and inside a park with violet plants. She is dressed of violet gauze. In three months the little girl of five 4 feet 8 inches, a woman in stature, but still a kid in mind. Aloysius and Truphemus have arguements and Truphemus thinks of perfecting the miracle by an operation. A young traveler, Franz Kerry who has seen Netty in her crystal tower is madly in love with her and asks for her hand.

As he discusses with the scientists, Netty unwatched, plays with the electrical gadgets in the laboratory and provokes a catastroph that destroys the "quiet house" and its inhabitants.

The idea of foof is in the air about the same time. Andre Laurie published "Siridon-le Muet" (Spiridon-the-Mute). A physician Aristide Cordat, yachting along the coast of Sardinia discovers in the ruins of an ancient phoenician tower a colony of giant and learned ants. Their king is almost man high. He has a passion for vivisection. He is ready to disect Cordat but the doctor succeeds in wounding and capturing him. They make a pact, Spiridon goes with Cordat to visit men's society. With a mask and various rags he has an almost human appearance and passes for a Japanese Scientist, Baron Tasimoura, muto anddeaf. The adventure ends in the wrong way. Spiridon, deprived of all sense of good and bad commits several murders. Cordat is arrested and Spiridon half killed by the daughter of one of his victims. Nevertheless everything turns well. Spiridon comes back to life but almost unconscient. He passes his time in a garden looking at the ants going to and fro.

(Spiridon's conversation is very instructive, though it is made by a kind of mental telepathy and Cordat learns that his stature is not accidental but the result of an appopriate treatment.)

Anyway, with both these stories we see new possibilities and the theme broadens. Hercule, Pantagruel, the dwarfs of Lilliput and the giants of Brobdingnag were given, ready made, products of nature or of magic, without bothering to explain.

When it was deemed necessary to explain, sight was enough, as for Fitz James O'Brien's hero who observes minute beings but retains his normal height.

From now on we have possibilities of varying the observers' stature.

III

The period between 1880 and 1914 was particularly favourable for the development of the scientific romance. All sorts of possibilities were given by science to the imagination of authors:

William Crookes saying that what we know is so slight that it could be wrong to deny the reality of spiritualistic phenomena or even the possibility of an invisible world. There are proofs of the existence, near us, of an invisible world, the world of the infinitely small. This world, if we considered it attentively, would overturn all our given ideas as do the spiritualistic theories.

To H.G.Wells goes the honour to have been the first to give life to scientifiction (1904) with "Food of the Gods". It is Pantagruel manufactured with the help of science.(I)

In the great French Weekly "L'Illustration" appears in 1909 "Une invasion de Macrobes" (an Invasion of Microbes) by Abdre Couvreur.

(I) Compare with "The Demi-Gods" by Alfred Gordon Bennet (Jarrolds, London 8/6)

The hero is Jean Gerard, laboratory head at the Institut Pasteur, and betrothed to the daughter of Professeur Vernet of this Institution. A bizarre scientist at least half mad, if not altogether: Tornada, is furious beacuse he has been unable to be a member of the Institute and because they have refused to admit the reality of his discovery: the existence of a special microbe special to alcaline mediums, the "micrococcus aspirator". To take revenge he builds, near Mantes (30 miles from Paris) huge takns where he lets his microbes grow up until they attain, under the influence of orange-red light, enormous proportions: they are thirty meters large and reach to the fourth floor in height. These monsters are provided with a gyratory tentacle that serves both as a propulsive and nutritive organ. The macrobe leans on it to walk and jump, and sucks up through this kind of trunk. The whole story, or near so, is devoted to the description of the march: nocturnal terrors, destruction of forests and houses, lone people, groups and then crowds. Paris is surrounded, half destroyed, cellars and sewers are taken as shelters where people fight and starve. The macrobes resist artillery and bombs, they are invulnerable. But mollified by Miss Vernet's supplications, Tornado will destroy them and will blow his head off.

To kill the monsters it only needs an explosive glass bottle charged with acetic acid. And to walk with impunity in their midst, a sponge overal soaked in vinegar. Because these beings, grown in an alcaline medium, are neutralized by acids.

It is very ingenious, but there are still questions: are not microbes monocellular organisms ? Have they changed their structure when growing : Or do the divisions we call cells include still other divisions too small to be seen ? It seems that the author favors this last solution which he does not try to reconcile with the atomic theory.

In spite of these imperfections and uncertainties much way has been made since "The Diamond Lens". The observer and the observed being are no longer separated by an impassable space. Their dimensions may vary, man becomes giant with Wells; this variation applied to a microbe and it leaves its universe to come to ours. (I) And would it not be possible to turn it the other way round: a human body could vary in the sense of smallness instead of greatness and Linley's desire would be fulfilled, he could go and meet Animula in her fantastic submarine forest.

This new travel will be made with the imagination of modern authors.

(I) Cf. too G. de Pawlowski, "Voyage au pays de la 4ème dimension".

IV

Not without comebacks and detours.

Some stories of which it must be spoken are not based upon modern atomic theories but upon the archaic conceptions of Cyrano and Francois Felix Nogaret: "Le Meurtrier du Globe" (Globe's Murderer) by Commandant de Wailly (about 1910).

Claude Rolland, his sister and a multimillionaire, Williamson, look for the lysterious "Old Sinker" whose real name is Lobanief and who has sworn to kill the globe. After a thousand vicissitudes, chased by Jonathan Loeb, president of the Globe Defenders' League, who has a personal hate against Lobanief they all find Old Sinker in Japan where he

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Claude Holland, his sister and a multimillionaire, William, look for the lighthouse "Old Sinker" whose real name is Lobanief and who has sworn to kill the globe. After a thousand vicissitudes, chased by Ralph Hockey, sergeant of the Globe Defenders' League, who has a personal hate against Lobanief they all find Old Sinker in Japan where he

is boring a gigantic mine shaft near a volcano. Old Sinker believes the earth to be a huge beast and hates it because his wife and children have been killed in the Chicago earthquake. But Old Sinker instead of stabbing the earth with his "bistoury" at a vital point to kill it, only prevokes an eruption and dies. "It was not an artery or an organ, sadly whispers Rose of the Snows. It was a tumor or an abcess. The master, giving his life, wanted to wound mortally the monster... may be, he only relieved it".

Later even, Conan Doyle took again this idea rather poorly in "When The World Screamed".

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About the same time many stories about mysterious pygmies appeared. All this was not too new and it seems that authors had little of giving a new interest to such worn out theories. But on account of a serious medical and physiological documentation Marcel Berger succeeded in giving an air of newness to the old idea of the human body being microcosmos in "Quarante de Fievre" (40 degrees C. Fever). The central figure is a woman who has not even a name. Her body is the scene of the action. She has fever after child birth, because she found a letter from another woman in her husband's pocket. She wants to die and lets the sickness grow then gets better of it when she has seen her child and recovers. In alternate chapters the author shows the episodes of the fight, now on the level of conscience and then on the level of cellular life. In this last case he takes for a hero sometimes a leucocythe: Great Pale, Sometimes the hematie No 2.274.349.632 or even epithelial cells. There is fighting between the white globules and the "monsters" that are infections bacteries, voyages to the "central vortex" (the heart) and to the "parks of wind and fire" (the lungs). Colloidal gold particles brought in by the physian intervene and the battlefield of the fixation abcess is depicted.

This tempting idea has since many times been rewritten in American scientifiction magazine. "The White Army" by Dr. Daniel Dressler (Amazing Stories Sept. 1929) amongst others. These do not add much to Berger's story. But in Benson Herbert's dyptic "The World Within" (Wonder Stories - Feb. 1931) and "The World Without" (id. Aug. 1931) more skill and more pleasure are found although they are but modernized Rabelias.

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To "The Diamond Lens" is directly related Ray Cummings' very American adventure story, "The Girl in the Golden Atom" (Harper & Bro., N.Y. 1923 maybe in a magazine in 1919). ((Ed's Note: Reprinted by early FANTASIC NOVELS)).

It is nearly nearly a fairy tale - an almost unavoidable defect inthis kind of story -, but still leads us to ask questions with more precision that had been done until then. The problems of space and time, for instance, although the scientific information of the author is insufficient. Later other American authors have tried to solve this problem with curious consequences as will be shown.

Nevertheless it is a happy thing to be able to find in such stories something of the charm of actual fairy tales because we are too

often offered poor and scholarly imitations.

For instance Marcel Morel's "Petite Jungle"(Little Jungle 1928).

Doctor Gambrinus, professor of natural sciences at the University of Grenoble (S.E. of France) discovers during one of his walks a black spider of a new genus that he calls Satan's Spider. Stinged by it, he falls in lethargy. When he awakes after some months, he is inside a cocoon and considerably smaller. His advantures are more comic than tragic. He is adopted by ants, fights with a caterpillar that he kills with a thorn, lives in a cavern between two pebbles near a streamlet of water, is the host of a bee, goes into an attic where he fights bugs and flies from a louse, comes back to his former ant-heap where he reigns in reward of his cleverness in a battle with other ants. But the use of power spoils him, he becomes tyranical and unbearable and the ants leave him alone. Luckily, he awakes, recovers, and finds his normal height. From now on he will live for his family, and shall not worry insects for the love of an idel science.

The author ignores the technique of credibility elaborated by Poe under the influence of science; this story is rather a setback.

Others are standstills, second or third grinding of Wells' ideas. In the sudden flourishing in the United States about 1927 of scientifiction magazines: Amazing, Wonder, Astounding Stories, Weird, etc.....it is easy to find examples. "The Hollister Experiment" (by Walter Kately, Amazing Quarterly Winter 1929) "The Day of the Beast" (by D.D.Sharp Wonder Stories, May 1930) "The Tragedy of Spider's Island" (by Captain S.P.Meek, Wonder Stories Sept.1930) "The Island of Giants" (by Rowley Hilliard, Wonder Stories Aug. 1931) "The Thousandth Frog" (by Wynant Davis Hubbard, Blackie & Son, London 1935) - even in France "La Revolte des Monstres "(Monster's Revolt) by Norbert Sevestre, etc.

Two stories of this kind are worth more commentaries "The World of Giant Ants" by A. Hyatt Verril (Amazing Quarterly 1928) rather long but well done in accordance with Poe's technique. By a patient accumulation of details, the author succeeds in creating an atmosphere of wonder around his heroes; an astonishing likelyness in spite of length.

More daring and with freer run to his imagination the writer who signed Horner Eon Flint "The Nth Man" (Amazing Quarterly Spring 1928) did not flinch in front of the most formidable difficulties.

His Brobdingnagian Giant calls for some remarks - could it live? (without speaking of the inherent difficulties of its creation) Two miles high when he stands he must find up there an air too rarefied for his huge lungs and what if he climbs mountains ?

The human form is conditioned by a certain medium: the "biosphere". If by its dimensions, the human organism outgrows his medium limits, it ceases thereby to find living conditions that are necessary or favorable. It has every chance of dying.

It shows that the possibilities of increase or reduction of living organisms are strictly limited.

In regard of increase a French author has taken the reduction angle: Octave Beliard in "Les Petits Hommes de la Pinere" (The Little Men In The Pine Wood).

The story is based upon biology. It is known that all living forms derive from a cell called egg. After fecundation this cell divides in two, then in four, in eight, and so on. The agglomeration of these cells forms a tissue that doubles by involution and becomes an embryo. In certain animals, killing one of the primitive cells immediately after bipartition, the other cell remains uninjured and living out well. In this case, the growth process nevertheless carries on and it gives a complete individual, but one which shall only have half the normal size and weight. If the same operation is done after the second bipartition the individual shall be reduced to a fourth. After the third bipartition, to an eighth. That is the proceedure followed by Dr. Dofre the hero of the "Little Men" but its originality consists only in that, instead of operating inferior animals he practices his experiences his experiences on human embryos. He thereby obtains a race of homo-unculuses that he lets grow and multiply in a vast abandoned pine wood, carefully cut from the rest of the rest of the world. The life of these more-than-pygmies is as short as their size and Dofre and his assistant Dr. Morane, see generations follow one another without interruption. The little men form tribes, then peoples, invent arts, found religions. One religion, chiefly, and it is Dr. Dofre that plays the Eternal Father's part for them as he is in fact their Creator. But he will have his contemptors, too, as all gods. And there will be theological discussions, then factions and revolutions. It is all human history in short. And there is felt the influence of sociological progress. It is not the individual idyll studied through a microscope as in "The Diamond Lens", as when psychology reigned without claim on literature, but social movements. The true hero is the crowd, the whole people of the little men. That is a way to renovate a literary theme that seemed exhausted: Ideas and theories are under the microscope. (I)

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Nevertheless, we are far from having reached human imagination's limits and it is wondered why life could not be placed upon the atom-planet ? It is true that Ray Cummings tried and almost failed as his story is full of unlikely things. But it can be done again and several authors will try.

M. Maurice Renard seems to have been the first in 1928 to exhaust the subject with all possible developments in "Un Homme Chez Les Microbes" (A Man with the Microbes). An inaccurate title, that shows how insufficient is the ordinary vocabulary for such new speculations.

It is not with Microbes that M. Renard's hero goes but with beings to whom our microbes would be cosmic leviathans.

Flechameau, a barrister, friend of Doctor Pons is in love with Mademoiselle Olga Monempoix. But the Monempoix refuse to give their daughter to Flechambeau as he is 1 meter 96 tall, when charming Olga is but 1 meter 55. They think this union ill assorted. Flechambeau despairs. His friend Pons, to comfort him undertakes to find a drug to make him smaller. The house-cat, Mary Stuart, is brought back to kitten proportions. Flechambeau enthusiastically swallows two reddish pills and in a few days stands only 1 m 76. He asks for Olga's hand and is accepted. The event is solemnized by a bethrothal dinner. But during the feast Flechambeau finds with terror that he walks on his trousers' lower ends. He is still reducing. He flees, despairing again and in

(I) Cf. Minimum Man by Andrew Marvel, Gollancz 8/6 London.

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(I) [illegible] London.

spite of Pons' efforts the reducing process goes on relentlessly Flechambeauquickly has the size of a doll, then of an insect. Soon he must be seen with a lens. At last Pons must place him on his microscopets objective. But it is certain that Flechambeau will rapidly go out of visibility's range and disappear in the infinitely small. Flechambeau on the polished surface of the objective that is rough, rocky and cavernous to him, sees an hideous whitish monster coming bristling with prickles and legs with suckers: a "mange sarcopt", which has got away from Pons' entomological collections. Happily, the Doctor intervenes - all-powerful demigod, and destroys without delay the formidable beast, though smaller than the most derisive flea.

Already an ultra-violet ray hypermicroscope must be used giving 40,000 diameter magnifying power, soon it is not even enough. Flechambeau becomes molecular and then atomic.

After a period of insensibility due to the cold intermolecular spaces he lands on a planet called Ourrh. The inhabitants, will tell him later that they have seen in their sky a prodigious mass appearing from far away and shrinking on the way.

This planet is inhabited by learned "mandarins" that succeed where Pons failed. They stop Flechambeau's shrinking...He is like Micromegas a being fallen from the sky.

Sub-atomic planet Ourrh is a place of wonders. Of small size, lighted by twin sunstars, one yellow, the other violet, when one sets, the other rises: there is no night on Ourrh but alternate violet and yellow days. Either there is a night but artifical as the inhabitants have learned the blessings of darkness and have built dark rays generating towers and at fixed times the "light the night".

The Ourrheans are almost like men very intelligent, highly learned, rather tired men: that is why our traveler calls them "mandarins" They have senses unknown to men. One has a kind of flesh tuff on the top of the head as its organ, it enables them to communicate by a form of telepathy, therefore their language is very rudimentary. Nevertheless they have a very active social life, especially so, as it is their custom to marry by threes, instead of couples. Every woman has two mates, the "husband" for serious things and a "cherub" for pleasures. Notwhithstanding, under the polished and brilliant surface of this society, there are deep anxieties. The mandarins have had to fight in the past terrible enemies. The Hons a species of giant mushrooms that reproduce with terrific speed. These have been wiped out but seeds are kept as samples in a museum. If they should grow again, would the mandarins be able to resist ? They have almost lost all their fighting ardour.

Agathos, Flechambeau's scientist friend works to find a product that will enable the terrestrial to grow again and come back to his native size. He succeeds after sixty years (Ourrhian years of course). Hardly has he done it, that by accident, the Hon' seed falls on favorable ground and spreads with dizzing speed. The giant mushrooms rise, grow, cover a large space under their toadstools and then burst with a thunderous noise shooting far away their spawn which begins to develop and grow .....like mushrooms. Nothing can be done against this menace. The mandarins are condemned. Flechambeau can do nothing but swallow his pill and fly to the infinitely great. He grows quicker than the fungi and finds himself under Pons' microscope, small enough to walk out from under the glass cover that protects the instrument and completes his growth in

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Pons' room. But he ends it a shaky old man. His sixty Ourrhians years still bear heavily on him and it is a finished man that Pons' finds in his bed when he comes back.

It must be said that the author uses to the full and very clevarly all resources offered to him by scientists and philosophs' speculations.

But even with his cleverness and his brilliant talent, M. Renard has not avoided all the snares in which had fallen his predecessors. Especially as regards time relativity Flechambeau aged sixty years (during the time a few weeks elapsed in earth time. The difference in vital rythm is better than in Cummings' story but still too insufficient. The number of revolutions of atomic planet Ourrh must be compared in a given time to earth's ? It is easy to guess the result...

D(?). F. Starzl has foreseen this objection in his brief and very suggestive tale: "Out of the sub universe" (Amazing Stories quarterly, summer 1928).

... But there are still many questions left unanswered, of course, it is too easy to criticize these "fantasies" and we do not wish to belittle the authors' talent but rather to thank them to have lead us to ask such questions.

It is almost the end of the journey: some stories are worth mentioning as particularly interesting variations on the theme.

"In Two Worlds" by Edward E. Chappelow (Science Wonder Stories Oct. 1929) - More original still is "Into the Green Prism" (Amazing Stories - March 1929) by A. Hyatt Verrill (I)

As knowledge increases, universe appears more complex and speculations on other worlds are familar to French readers with J.H. Rosny Aine's works and to English readers with Olaf Stapledon's.

For instance, there are still difficulties which our authors do not seem to have seen: for instance, if the mass of the reduced bodies remains the same. they must acquire an enormouse density which should be the source of astonishing phenomena (Cf. D.D.Sharp's "The Eternal Man Revives", Wonder Stories Quarterly, summer 1930). These remarks prove that the subject is far from exhausted and still keeps surprises in store.

V

Professor Messac then tries to draw conclusions - provisional conclusions for the time being - from the examination of these stories.

First of all a remark must be made that the theme is incompletely covered: no one has ever tried to explore the super-universe.

Of course there are many stories of space travel most of them are dull. Still they only show us stars and galaxies but not the hyper-universe of which they may be a minute composing particle.

(I) Cf. Also "The Green Man of Graypec" (Wonder Stories) published in England under the title: "The Green Man of Kilsona" by Festus Pragnell.

In this world so far away that it dominates and contains us; the island universes, of which our Milky Way is but a sample, may be the molecules of an organic substance or of a mineral. And the whole of this universe out of which we can only guess blind darkness; this universe of which Einstein has shown the curvature and the limits, may be a micro-organism sunk in the superior universe: a microbe swimming in the virus of some best; or, on the contrary, a white or red globule in the blood of some animal: may be an intelligent being that dreams of us and wonders who we may be in the infinitely small.

It is not easy even in thought ...

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In a much simpler case, for instance, the giant ants of A. Hyatt Verrill. He seems to take for granted that such insects would be proportionately powerful.

This reasoning is seducing but false. If something living or inert grows a thousand times in length, if proportions are retained, must grow a tousand times in breadth and height. That is to say that if its lineal measurements are multiplied by 1000 its surface shall be multiplied by the square of 1000 and its volume by the cube of 1000. One cube centimeter of water weighs one gram; if its dimensions are multiplied by 100, it is a cubic meter weighing exactly a metric ton. It will be approximately the same for the insect of length enlarged to one meter length. Only if its muscular energy is increased in enormous proportions (and one wonders why and how ?) the beast would be crushed by its own wieght.

J.B.S. Haldane has studied these problems in a remarkable essay: "On being the right size" and shows that the increase in dimensions carries necessarily change in shape (form). Their breathing system, for instance, prohibits insects the size of man. The muscles of insects may contract more rapidly than man's but are inferior in performance (with man's performance a flea or a grasshopper should jump six feet high).

The same goes for men. If his heighth was multiplied by ten, his weight would be multiplied by a thousand and the thickness of his bones would only be multiplied by a hundred. A twenty meter giant could not stand up without breaking his thigh bones.

For the same fundemental reasons the decrease in size of human form or any known living form would meet as much obstacles for instance warm blood animals are in contact with the air (or the water) generally cooler with the whole surface of their skin. If size decreases the radiating surface will become much greater relatively to the wight of the animal. It will be difficult for the animal to keep his temperature and it will compel him to a greater expense of energy for that object. That is why small animals connot live in cold countries and migrates in winter to warmer lands. Insects die, it is only their eggs that resist the cold.

Further certain well known physic phenomena negligible with our size would be awful, for instance: superficial tension.

It makes us wonder whether the laws of nature would not be absolutely different when passing from one step of the universe to another.

In this case the extrapolations of our authors would not only be impossible, unpracticable but perfectly absurd too.

Prof. Messac is sorry to feel drawn to this conclusion following Maurice Maeterlink, Emil Meyerson and W. Wernadsky.

... Good bye, their beautiful dream of travels to atoms, good bye, explorations of electronic planets with twin suns. Too bad, so bad even that he feels like trying to hold on to a last hope. For even if we must admit the discontinuous structure of universe still analogies and ressemblances may be found from one step to another and perhaps, the possibility of going from one to the other may be conceived.

But even this hope must be abandonned, ressemblances between atomic worlds and ours are, less and less certain, not to say that they vanish altogether as science goes on (Cf. Eddington).

The likeness between the atom and a planetary system between contestable and is contested. Various hypothesises have been brought forward (Shröding's atom energy bundle was nearly adopted but rejected for mathematical reasons if not to avoid disheartening our imagination). It seems almost sure that inside the atom the concept of matter vanishes or at least is subject to revision. The seemingly evident dogma of impenetrability of matter is opposed by the fact that two or more electric fields can be superposed completely and continuously, that is to say: compenetrate. That gose far, even shakes the very foundation of logic and opens the way to new forms of reasoning.

VI

If it has been often repeated that the ordinary laws of physics were not valid in the interatomic world: one of the effects or relativity shows that the same goes with superuniverse, ordinary laws do not apply. Famous experiences on the speed of light and astronomical observation confirm it (Cf. Eddington's comments on the fact that dimensions and masses of stars do not vary much from a certain mean value). Relativity leads us to conceive a closed universe, a kind of bubble lost in the infinite and the unknown.

So, many trials to fathom the mysteries of the infinitely great or the infinitely small end in a blind alley.

As much from an artistic than from a scientific point of view it is not very much encouraging. But we must not abandon all hope. Even if observation deforms or destroys in part the observed object, it does not prevent science's progress. Now comes the Electronic Microscope, which will show what even light leaves in shadow new inventions shall come to puch back the frontiers of the infinitely great and the infinitely small. It is already spoken of an electronic telescope (Henriiotaux's invention).

Authors will assimilate new concepts and write new fantasies. Who knows what surprises the electronic microscope holds in store for us ? It maydiscover a world full of wonders which may revive the enthusiasm of the first micrographs of Leeuwenhoek or Spallanzani and a new stream of imagination shall follow to give us new and better stories beside which, those of today will look as old as Wright's plane beside our round the world record breakers.

Professor Messac concludes:

With science's spectacles we see the world more easily and we measure more easily our powerlessness and the impossibility to raise us even in imagination, to the part of the All-Powerful. But the show is fascinating and we do not get tired of looking. It broadens, moreover it amplifies and it diversifies itself without ceasing. Let us be assured that many new perspectives yet undreamed of shall still come to vary and imbellish it.

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Of course, in this short "resume" of Prof. Messac's work, I have only given the titles of the American Stories as the American fans know them even better than I do. The synopsises of French books are given for reference and comparison.

I have only added very few supplementary notes.

Furthermore my satisfaction would be immense if some fans would find time to point out to me other books or stories that may have been overlooked or are unknown to Professor Messac and me.

But most important is the gist of Professor Messac's careful survey of a vast theme and I hope to have been able to give you an honest rendering of his thought with all due apologies in case of unvoluntary treason.

My aim is fulfilled if you have read this long article with interest and realize that on both sides of the Herring Pond people of all age and condition take pleasure and interest in such stories that some judge childish with undue haste.

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Editor's Note: This article has been set up exactly as sent to us by Harry Warner, Jr. Editor of the now defunct but fabulous SPACEWAYS. We do not know when it was written, but we do believe that it renders a great service to stfandom.

Should anyone wish to discuss the subject further we will be happy to forward copies of your information to M. Georges Gallet or you may do so yourself at his current address of:

Georges H. Gallet
3, square du Thimerais,
Paris 17, FRANCE

While this issue of MAG WITHOUT A NAME is mailed postmailed for the 52nd mailing of F.A.P.A. for the Summer of 1950. It is individually mailed to protect the copyright privileges of Georges H. Gallet, who, tho not a member of FAPA must and will receive copies of this issue to distribute as he sees fit. FAPA copyright does not allow for this.

Dunk Sez - - - -

The chaff and chatter re: recording and records that has been running rife in FAPA of recent months has been most interesting and informative to me. For myself I am now using a Philco chasis with RCA magnetic pickup (12v) on my 78 and standard Columbia LP with an Astatic Crystal. My 45 is the standard put out by RCA. I'm sorry that due to some financial trouble I had to dispose of my ULTRAPHONE THEATRE AMPLIFIER (this is a Western Electric product). I had a small model VOICE OF THE THEATRE SPEAKER on it. I hope to replace it later.

I was fortunate in having a large record collection (between 5 & 6,000) and was able to use them in programing 2 to 3 hours of dejay shows a week over local stations during the past couple of years.

The experience of that period has caused me to forumlate a series of plans for a transcription service. One independent recording service exists locally but turns out very poor quality stuff. They are not equipt to turn out programs.

Original plans called for the building of a separate building containing studios, office, etc. with leased wires to radio stations but that plan has been temporarily abandoned in favor of using the small converted studio now in use to which a control room will be added this winter. Equipment will not be installed permanently though as it is hoped that the original plan can be pursued in the near future.

The equipment settled on is Western Electric turntables (the 78s are now ready for installation); Miesner disc recording equipment for both 78 & 33 1/3 with 2 Eicor tape recorders adapted for 2500 foot (64 minute rolls). These Eicor's will be revamped in their response circuits to fit the situation. As they come out from the factory they place the emphasis on the base end of the response curve to compensate for the microphone with which they are equipt. It has an exceptionally good response in the high frequencies (a desireable feature for "Candid Microphone" productions where the mike cannot be used out in the open and an extra sensitive mike is needed). Wire recordings were tested but discarded immediately as worthless in quality work, especially for musical reproduction. Some new equipment is now on the market (ABC uses it) which has a wonderful quality but basically it is the same as the Eicor only using a tape speed double that of the Eicor. At the moment its cost is prohibitive.

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It is suggested that stfans might be interested in Raymond Scott's original compositions as recorded in a limited edition by MASTER RECORDS, NYC. The surfaces, responses, etc. are exceptionally good and each record has its own album and program notes. The first release (the series so far includes five releases) was Dedicatory Piece to the Crew and Passengers of the First Experimental Rocket to the Moon, a Raymond Scott original. The flip over is a new treatment of the oldie Sometimes I'm Happy. All are Scott arrangements and recorded by his Quintet (the only such group with six members). All of the originals should be of interest to fantasy addicts: Bird Life In The Bronx; A Street Corner In Paris; Snake Woman; and Ectoplasm. The flipovers are (respectively): Dinah; Singing In The Rain; Tiger Rag; Song of India.

If anyone would be interested I'll publish a list of Raymond Scott originals (I think its practically complete).

It might be well to publish a list of record dealers with which I have done business - some to my great joy and others to my sorrow. I hope that others will pass on names and addresses to me that I can use to

help keep my sponsor happy.

I have done business with the following:

REVERE RECORD EXCHANGE
344 Mountain Avenue
Revere 51, Mass.

Anthony Rizzo - owner manager - gives the collector a break both as to price and as to meaning what he says. When he lists a record as new or excellent he means it. Altogether dependable and honest. No padding.

JAZZ NEST
Box 562
G.P.O.
New York 1, NY

Edward J. Novak - a good source of reissue Jazz I have found this source to be dependable, although a little slow (probably due to volume of business). Handles complaints promptly and with great understanding. If you supply an exact description of what you want he will endeavor to fill it exactly.

I unqualifiedly recommend both of the above dealers.

FALKENER BROS.
383 Columbus Ave.
Boston 16 Mas.

"Cuz" Falkener - a don't know what kind of a source this is. I have written several times, sending want lists, etc. but receive confused and confusing letters and cards in reply. Possibly, if I could figure out what this dealer expects I could do business with him, but to date nothing but confusion.

LEITHOLD PIANO CO.
221-223 Main Street
La Crosse, Wisc.

"Lindy" Leithold - Lindy has had some tough luck lately with his father being forced to retire because of ill health. One of the best dealers in the country. The added burden thrown on his shoulders has slowed him down, but Lindy still does his best to give very satisfactory service from his large collection. Send want list though. In my list I include him with Revere Record Exchg.

Amalgamated Record Group
P.O.Box 341, Cooper Stn.
New York City, NY

No personal touch to their service but satisfactory.

Paramount Serv.
313 East Market St.
Wilke-Barre, Pa.

Source of used juke box records at very low prices, but I'm still waiting for an order sent in 3 months ago. Receive periodic cards saying "Thanks for order. Will be sent in a few days."

LEWIN RECORD "Paradise"
5600 Hollywood Blvd.
Los Angeles 28, Calif.

The less said about this one the better - I'm prejudice. I sent a want list of 23 records, received quotes on all, ordered 15,(all were quoted and listed as new or mint) received 5, 1 was new, 2 were good, the other two were so poor as to be unuseable. No reply to 3 complaints. Subsequently received additional quotes with prices on items jacked up 100%.