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A
Fantascience Publication

EVANESCENCE

ISABELLE E. DINWIDDIE

The fire on the hearth burns low
And shadows dance upon the floor.
The dog lies by the fireplace
He dreams of rabbits - nothing more.

The cat upon the cushioned chair
Now rises on black, velvet feet,
Her whiskers twitch and jumping down
She makes the rounds of her night beat.

She senses things we cannot see,
The fur arches along her back,
She crouches and her ears lie low,
Preparing now for some attack.

She leaps, to seize her unknown prey
Then spitting oaths in feline ire,
Electric sparks flash from her fur
Engendered by her balked desire.

Bewildered she snarls and retreats
And cowers before the Unknown,
A faint sounding hiss is now heard;
The dog is left dreaming alone!

Silence Before Dawn

—ROBERT L. PETERS

The silence was the worst of it. We all realized it. The intense silence was worse than the thundering of cannon or cracking of rifles. The dampness and the projections of ice were bad, but the unbroken quiet just before dawn was the thing that drove fear through us; whatever emotion still remained welled up in fear to tighten and dry our throats. For months now, the only time that fear really affected us was during that single hour before dawn. Things to fear were always around us but in the immense silence when all the Martian creatures became mute, when the wind stopped, when the red foliage ceased rustling, when the entire alien world seemed ready to swallow us in noiseless terror, daily association with war and death did not prevent the fear. We had been beaten by war into a dreary dreamlike state of emotionless eating, drinking and fighting, but that one hour before dawn still affected us.

There was no front line in the Martian jungle, but only an outpost of five to ten men dug in around the company headquarters in a radius of a few miles. A smaller circle of men grouped around the headquarters tent. Sometimes, we would move forward; sometimes back, but most of the time, we waited. The front line, as we called the scattering groups of men, maintained radio contact, but the men in one group seldom saw their neighbors unless on patrol. The Martians infiltrated every evening but none seemed to worry. There was no way to prevent it and no one seemed to care. Somewhere in the rear one night, a complete headquarters company was wiped out. But, it was actually unimportant. The next day, patrols sent to the rear destroyed the Martians. It happened again. Another patrol was sent to the rear. A rumor stated that more of them were killed than us. It was hard to tell. But it happened almost every evening. And the enemy was always cleaned out. The outposts were too far apart to even attempt to prevent Martians from creeping past at night. Besides, no one worried about it. Things were not as bad as they could be. The enemy

seldom attacked and when they did, our modern weapons beat them back. During daylight, hot food was carried forward to all outposts. As we ate breakfast, the sun would always strike the jungle floor melting the ice. By noon, the mud would be warm. The rain-mists would not begin until after nightfall. At dusk we would raise the tents that we lowered at dawn. If it were not for the eerie hour of silence that we dreaded, a few of us might have smiled.

In our group, five of us were left. When we had started, there had been twelve. Of the original twelve, Red Mike, the Sarge, and myself were left. Larry and the mincing little thin-faced Angelo came from the groups of replacements. We had never been twelve again but when Angelo joined us with three others, our numbers had reached a high of ten. After four other groups, Larry arrived with Tom. That time our number was eight. Tom got it twenty minutes later. That made seven. He had stepped into the jungle alone. A few weeks later, after a patrol, we had five: Red Mike, the Sarge, Larry, Angelo, and myself.

"Hell," Red Mike grunted, "we got visitors."

I swung around pointing my rifle automatically.

"Martians!" Angelo screamed in pleasure as he aimed his rifle.

"Lay off!" the Sarge exclaimed. "Lay off, Angel! These ain't the fighting kind."

Angelo grinned. He loved to be called Angel. The nickname was his own choice. He lowered his rifle.

The Sarge was right. These were not the fighting kind. I could not understand the entire situation, but these had six legs and the others had four. The four-legged ones were the enemy. I had heard somewhere that the enemy used the six-legged ones as slaves. However, they did not greet us as liberators but seemed to take no sides at all in the fighting. They would guide us, but when shooting began, they vanished into the red foliage. They fought for neither side and seemed to consider the war as a thing apart from them.

"Don't let them near," Larry snarled.

"Why not?" Angelo minced. "Is the handsome soldier afraid?"

"Lay off, Angel," Larry growled. "I know these animals. They are just trying to lead us into a trap. Different kind of Martians? Extra set of legs don't make them better; just makes them worse. I know these two-faced animals. I know them. Believe me, I know them."

Angelo grinned.

Larry shouted, "I know these dirty six-legged animals!"

Red Mike rubbed his beard and grunted, "What'd they want?"

One of the four Martians stepped forward. Obviously he was the spokesman. We knew that the others would only speak their alien language. Perhaps, they could not speak with us, but we suspected they understood us when we spoke. But only a spokesman would communicate with us. It was always that way.

"I am called Monno," he breathed in his far-away voice.

"What do you want?" The Sarge asked.

"Are you in charge?" the creature breathed.

"What do you want?"

"Are you in charge?"

"Right."

"Headquarters sent us. You are to follow."

"The old man?"

"Captain Kinderski," the Martian sighed as he turned and scuttled toward the edge of the clearing and the jungle path that led northward.

His companions did not move. The spokesman paused at the edge of the clearing and stared back at us.

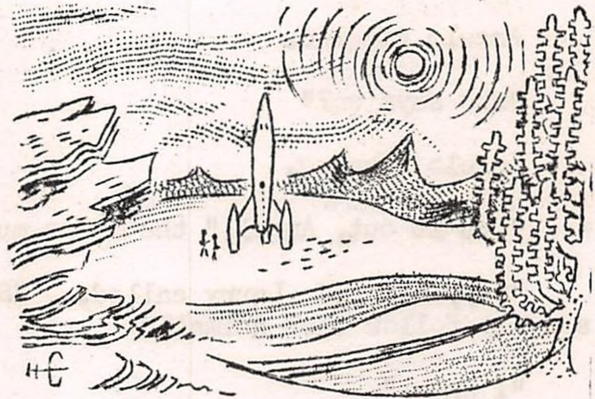
As I stood up, my back ached and legs tingled. Stretching and stamping my feet, I picked up my rifle and grenades.

"The noise has begun," Red Mike grunted, as he swung a rocket tube on his back and hung a few projectiles on his belt.

The noise was back. The terrible predawn hour had passed. The wind was back, not the cold night-wind, but a hot wind. The sound of animals, strange calls and screams, shrieks and howls, mingled with the whistling of batlike birds. Now that the danger had sound, the fear vanished into boredom.

"Let's go," the Sarge said.

We formed a single line behind the Martian spokesman. The other three



passed to our left and worked forward through the jungle to act as scouts.

"Look at them go," Larry growled. "The grotesque beasts."

But at that moment, as the Martians scuttled through the jungle and blending gracefully with the foliage, we were the ones who were grotesque. The guides were naturally a part of the landscape; they were beautiful in a strange way; we were the invaders.

Larry stared wildly at the guide. "Sarge," he shouted, "are you going to let that six legged animal lead us into a trap?"

"Old man's orders," the Sarge stated shrugging his shoulders.

"We'll get it for sure, this time," Larry grumbled.

We trudged in silence for the next few miles.

"This is beautiful country," Angelo sighed in exactly the same tone as a sixteen year old love-sick girl. His voice never sounded more like a woman's. "I love the way the red comes in so many tones. In a way, it is really wonderful."

"Red!" Larry exclaimed. "It looks like any other forest! Stinking worse, that's all!"

"You're color blind," Angelo spouted.

"Who says I'm color blind!"

Angelo giggled.

"Who says so?"

Angelo laughed.

"Cut it out, Angel," the Sarge mumbled.

"Say, Sarge," Larry called. "Say, how do you know that the old man said to follow that animal?"

"I know."

"Huh? How do you know? Just because it told you, don't mean that the old man said so. It might be leading us into an ambush."

"Don't worry," the Sarge said.

"How do you know?" Larry insisted.

"It don't matter."

Larry grumbled something to himself.

The guide led us along a trail that curved wildly through the jungle. About an hour later, after the sun had risen high enough to dry the jungle floor on the higher ground and turn the lower areas into steaming swamps--we had fallen into a dreamlike silence. With the scouts fanned out ahead, there was no reason to be on guard except to avoid colliding with each other in the slow file with great distance between each man at one curve and no space at another. They trudge along changing pace only to prevent bumping into each other, or to prevent becoming separated in the jungle when the distance became too great. Occasionally, half a patrol wandered one way and the other half another way; only the guided part ever returned. Staring at Larry's back, I walked as if in a daze while I could hear Angelo humming monotonously behind me. Red Mike trudged between Larry and the Sarge.

The jungle noises did not bother me while I plodded vaguely aware of memories of home. The screams of animals did not cause fear; only the lack of noise caused fear.

Somewhere, a world away, cannon and shellfire echoed through the denseness of the jungle. The war seemed far away. The fighting was back there someplace, back in the direction from which we had come.

The guide stopped.

"We go quietly now," he breathed.

The Sarge nodded.

"Don't trust that animal!" Larry growled.

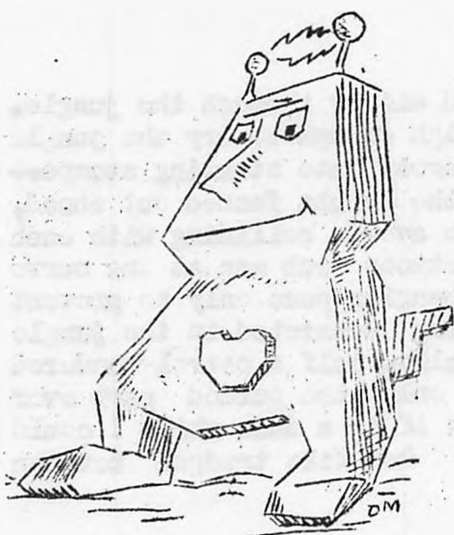
"Lay off", the Sarge commanded in a tone nearer to anger than he had ever uttered. "These people are as human as us. Lay off these animal business." As he twisted around to face Larry his face was pure emotion. "Lay off!"

"Okay," Larry mumbled, "okay."

Then I noticed something strange. The Martian guide was smiling. I had never known that six-legged Martians could smile. The placid emotionless expression was gone, and his face seemed reformed around that smile. In that instant, I would have believed that the guide would have done anything for the Sarge. Then as the Sarge turned away from Larry to face the guide, the expression vanished leaving only the normal blankness.

"We must go quietly now," the creature breathed. "We are nearly there."

"Where?" Larry demanded.



But the guide merely turned without answering and scuttled forward along the trail.

I had never thought of the creatures as human. Never had I conceived these unearthly creatures as human. They ate, talked and lived as we, but such differences as their six legs, manner of scuttling, expressionless faces and many intangible things had prevented such a concept. It was not that I thought of them as animals. In a way, I assumed that they were different from animal or human. What were they? I had merely called them Martians and let it go at that. But now, I wondered and searched for an answer. I had thought of them as some in-between-breed, but no longer. In

the back of my mind, I knew that sooner or later, I would agree with the Sarge as always.

The Martian waved his arm. We stopped, then eased forward.

The other creatures were hiding a few feet beyond the guide. They crouched behind a thick hedgelike growth of red bushes. As we neared, they waved us forward and scuttled silently into the red underbrush.

"Look forward and to the right," our guide breathed.

We worked forward to the hedge. The Sarge parted a section of the bushes. Larry sat to one side cradling his rifle in his arms. Angelo crouched close to the red bushes peering through with an expression of intense desire. Red Mike leaned his rocket tube across one knee and waited. I leaned into the bushes and stared through the hole that the Sarge made by parting the branches.

"What are we going to do?" Larry demanded in a whisper.

"How do I know?" the Sarge whispered.

"What's out there?"

"Give me time to find out," the Sarge hissed. "All I see is some huts."

"What are they for?"

"Give me some time."

"What did they bring us here for?"

"I'm trying to find out," the Sarge hissed.

"Well," Larry began.

"Shut up," Red Mike grunted.

Beyond the hedge, a circle of huts were grouped in a clearing like the rim of a wheel with the hub of a large wooden structure. The huts were primitive dwellings with thatched roofs and sides, but the central building was constructed out of red wood from the jungle trees. It seemed to be well built and contrasted with the huts. Beyond the circle of huts was a clearing where a large number of red bushes grew in rows. It was some sort of garden, perhaps to grow food for the villages. But not a single creature tilled the soil. The only activity was in and around the central building.

"Maybe," the Sarge whispered, as if to himself, "that is the place where they make their spears and such."

Red Mike grunted.

The central building had a wide entrance and a wide stairway. Dozens of the four legged Martians were running up and down the stairway carrying spears. A dense black column of smoke spiralled upward from the rear of the structure.

Angelo whispered, "If they make weapons anywhere around here, that big building is the place."

"Should we take them? What do you think, Angel?" the Sarge asked.

Angelo nodded his head while grinning in a strange manner, as if he were laughing at the rest of us. His womanish eyes were shining with desire. It made me uneasy. He seemed to get sexual pleasure out of the battles. He had been one of the first replacements, but I had never become accustomed to him. He appeared frightened like the rest of us, but relished that fear. He was so much like a woman, but fought with a strange savageness. It was easy to see that he longed for the fighting. Between battles, he was as bored as I, but whenever a struggle loomed, his eyes glowed with strange desire. There was something naked in that expression. He licked his lips and whispered, "Ready, Sarge."

"I'll blast the building," Red Mike grunted, swinging his tube around. He unhooked a rocket from his belt and slid it into the end of the tube.

I pulled the pin on a grenade and drew back my arm.

"Let go!" the Sarge commanded.

Red's rocket tube swished. Instants later, the wooden structure swelled on a crest of smoke. Then the roar of the explosion sounded,

almost at the same time. It seemed to happen slowly. The building rose with the smoke for a moment before it folded back into itself and collapsed into rubble.

I swung my arm upward and hurled the grenade into a mass of Martian warriors who streamed out of the huts. It landed and rolled among the leaders who had spotted us. It boomed and the creatures fell writhing. Three other grenades exploded almost in the same instant. Out of the corner of my eyes, I saw Angelo pulling a pin just as I threw my other one.

The Martians drew back in confusion for a few seconds, then swarmed toward us. They fanned out into an arc of flesh to encircle us, but as we fired bullet after bullet into their ranks, they were forced to climb over their own dead.

"They are getting behind us!" Larry shouted, as he jumped to his feet and darted toward the cover of the jungle.

I did not see whether he reached safety or not, but the Sarge answered the unspoken question, when he murmured, "Larry got his.....right between the shoulder blades....."

Shrugging, I continued shooting. The creatures surged toward us until a few reached the hedge, but before any came through the bushes, the warriors began falling back to the cover of the huts.

"Don't waste your bullets," the Sarge warned.

Red Mike grunted, "Next time, they'll come from the rear." He swung around to face the jungle.

Angelo grinned,

"From the rear," I agreed.

"We could try something," Angelo said.

"What now, Angel?" the Sarge asked.

"Suppose Red drops one in that patch of bushes over there," he suggested, pointing to a clump of trees between the huts and the jungle to our left. "There's a good chance that they'll go that way to get around us."

Red slipped another rocket into his tube, aimed it and sent the projectile hissing toward the bushes in one smooth motion. The red undergrowth erupted into a maze of torn foliage, smoke, and Martian bodies.

Half a dozen warriors came out of nearby huts and rushed at us hurling their weapons. The spear flew toward the Sarge.

From the underbrush behind us, a body hurled in front of the Sarge.

The spear struck. The body hissed and fell. It was the guide.

The battle stopped. The Martian warriors stared. Angelo looked back. The Sarge moaned. We all paused to gaze at the dead guide.

Never before had a six-legged Martian entered any battle. When our guide rushed in on our side, it was unbelievable.

Again the Sarge moaned. But he had not been hurt.

Suddenly, a raging fire sliced into me. A spear struck at an angle through my stomach. As I fell, automatically I clutched at the shaft.

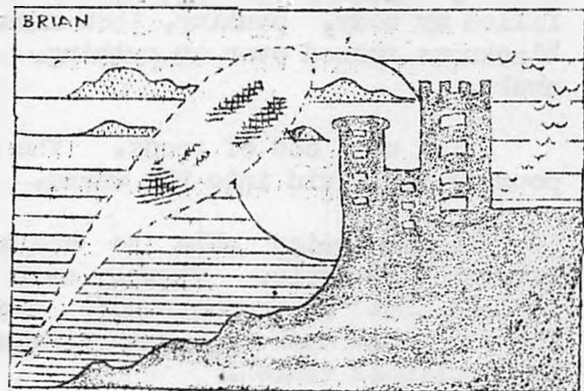
I could not tell whether the Sarge was killed or escaped, but Angelo's womanish voice in a hungry scream suddenly went mute.

For what seemed hours, a red and blue fire spun around in my head and through my stomach. When I opened my eyes as if awakening from a dream, bodies were strewn around me. The Sarge could not be seen; perhaps he had escaped. Maybe it was only the angle that prevented the Sarge's body from being seen. I was twisted around the spear in my belly, so that only a section of the field was visible. Actually, I was not really interested for if he got his, he got it and that was that. The pain around the spear burned and swelled until it filled my entire being; then, in a dizzying sinking spiral of red and blue fire, the pain exploded into a dull ache like a numb echo.

The Martian women were searching among the bodies for loved ones. A few warriors limped back toward the huts. The fighting had died minutes before but seemed hours away. The women prowled among the dead for wounded husbands, brothers, or fathers to carry back to the huts. The dead were left where they fell until later. These creatures were concerned with the living. But, intense whispered moans like a wounded animal, yet strangely like a weeping earthwoman, disclosed each Martian woman who found dead instead of wounded. After an hour of laying twisted around the spear and staring at the women, I noticed only a few women remained among the dead.

Watching them carrying warriors back to the huts, I shivered, not with pain or cold, but with a sensation of complete loneliness. Realizing that death would come, I knew that I would die alone. It was a horrible idea--to die alone. I did not fear death, but wanted someone with me when I died. Shivering, I watched the women carrying warriors home.

A woman a few feet away suddenly crouched beside a Martian



warrior. She emitted a hushed moan drawing her breath in sharp little gasps. Her moans came in tight whispers as if her throat was almost closed. She rocked to and fro gazing at one of the warriors who might have fallen before my rifle.

Unable to control my mouth, a sound escaped. It was like another's moan, but I knew it came from my lips. Fighting to close my mouth, the sound continued in my ears. It was partially a gasping for breath and partially a distinct moan.

The woman heard me and became silent. Arising, she stared at me.

At least, I thought, it will be quick. A few seconds while she plunges a knife savagely and then it would be over. Better than waiting to die alone.

She came closer and peered down at me.

My breath continued in moaning gasps.

Her shadow fell across my face.

I closed my eyes and waited. Nothing happened. After a long time, I opened my eyes.

She was still standing peering down at me.

Then she did a strange thing. Crouching beside me, she fingered my face, while staring intently into my eyes. Then she touched the shaft of the spear in my belly. There was no expression on her face. Reaching her hands under me, she slid me into her arms and lifted me like a child. Carrying me like a Martian warrior, she crossed the field with a gentle swaying motion that lifted like an ocean wave whenever she stepped over the dead.

As we passed the entrance to a hut, red and blue fire shot across my vision, drowning and plunging me into deep uncontrolled slumber. Pain filled my body, pausing, then rushing headlong in dizzy spirals. Then, blackness rushed over everything. A great flash of violent pain forced me awake.

I lay on a bed of reeds. The spear was gone. The Martian woman was pouring red fluid into the wound.

Without being able to see her face in the dimness of the hut, I attempted to smile. Vaguely aware of the fact that dusk had arrived, I noticed that other women were starting a fire in the center of the hut. The red fluid made the pain disappear and the nearness of the woman made my loneliness vanish.

My eyes burned with sleepiness and my lids became so heavy that I drifted back into sleep.

When I awoke again, her face was clear in the light of the small fire in the center of the huts as she sat watching me. Around the walls, the breathing of sleepers sounded and occasionally a woman sat beside a bed. The woman beside me showed no hate in her expression.

My pain was gone. There was a strange numbness in my side and belly, but all pain was gone. The wound oozed slightly, but the burning pain had vanished. There seemed a chance for survival.

I wondered how long I had been out. How could I find out? It would do no good to ask her; she would not understand. I dared not move enough to see stars through the doorway. There was no way to find out.

It was in that moment that the expression on her face became clear in my mind. It was not hate, but far from it. There was a mixture of pity and worry in her eyes. Gazing steadily at me, her expression was that of a mother with a sick child.

The jungle sounds ceased. The silence before dawn muted the jungle far and near. Then I knew the time. It was the hour of silence and fear.

Suddenly, she huddled against me.

Without any hesitation, she encircled me with her arms and pressed her head against my shoulder.

These Martians were afraid of that pre-dawn noiseless ominous hour as we were in our front lines. They were afraid.

She huddled against me, huddled against the one who might have killed her husband, lover, father or who-ever she moaned for among the dead. She huddled against me in the dimness of the hut, burying her head against me in the dreaded silence and shivered.

In a corner of a Martian hut, on a bed of rushes, I suddenly felt like weeping.

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CHARLES LEE RIDDLE, 108 DUNHAM ST., NORWICH, CONNECTICUT

HARMONY

JIM HARMON

I lean over me, and place a hand on my shoulder confidentially. "You know," I say, "you should send 'Harmony' off to PEON pretty soon."

I jump up on the desk with both feet and scream a word.

"Come, come", I say, "let's not get dirty. Time and Tide wait for no man."

I watch as I look over my desk. There are opening chapters, opening pages, outlines, and an assignment for a 45,000 word novel, and stacks and stacks of clean white paper. Across the desk are some letters, grey and webbed with age. The correspondence file contains an oblong nothing of deadly silence.

"At least," I reassure me, "it's not like the days of those ridiculous feuds when you were just a crazy mixed-up fan."

I speak for the first time. "No. Only two agents and one editor have threatened assault with intent to kill."

"Not so bad," I reply.

"That's for this week, up to Tuesday."

"Ha-ha. Big, good-natured, fun-loving Harmon."

I see a proud look come into my eyes. "I may be stupid, but I'm a good boy. This I treasure always. Maybe I don't eat so good on it, but this I can treasure."

"You look pretty silly standing up there on that desk, spouting esoteric jokes," I confide.

I see me climb down and cast a look at the tanned, crisp correspondence. I walk over to me with a Geiger-Muller counter. "You'd better answer them in rotation. Find out their ages by counting the half-life of their carbon. The calendar reform will throw you off with the dates."

"Not very funny," comes the answer from me. "I only got 17 Xmas cards this year. I always like to get Xmas cards--they're so Xmas. And Redd Boggs asks me why I keep 5 loaded guns around me. Anybody with only 17 friends needs 5 guns. I tell you it makes my chest swell with emotion."

"Oh, is this a Dagmar I see before me?" I quote to me.

I see me sneer at I. "Your snide critical comments are not helping me get out a contribution for Lee Riddle. I attacked all the strawmen I could stack up last time with all dazzling play capable with a seven pound broad sword."

"I have it!" I shout at me.

"Ah-ha!" Me shouts back at I. "I've long suspected it."

"No, no," I reply, "I have the answer. Here among your manuscripts is the beginning of a serious essay. All you have to do is to finish it, and write an introduction in your typical sophonic style. Then let Riddle have it."

I watch as my eyes glaze fiendishly. "Yes, let him have it right in the...."

I tried to look pained. "I wish you'd get your mind off of that--that's all you've thought of since somebody told you what sodomy was."

"The things people think of!" me exclaims.

"Never mind," I tell me, "You're a good boy, as sure as Ackerman is Mr. Science Fiction!"

I watch me sit down with a faith-restored-in-human-nature smile, type an introduction, and then write the title.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCIENCE FICTION IN MAGAZINES AND PAPERBOUND BOOKS

By Jim Harmon

"It's not quite clear what broke down the barriers between science fiction and a larger public; perhaps, ironically, it was the discovery that the atomic bomb had been quite clearly prophesied in its pages. Whatever the reason; the field is now well established and

here to stay, and Ballantine Books intends to provide for this new and constantly increasing readership a series of books of the highest quality, both by established writers and newcomers....." (1)

So Ballantine Books introduces their line of paper-backed science fiction books, published at the same time with the hard cover editions; probably the most important event in a half-century of science fiction in soft covers.

There is no question but that pocket-size books have gained science fiction its greatest popularity, just as there is no question that book publishers -- both hard cover and soft cover -- have left all the improving of the standards of the field in the hands of the magazine editors. These inexpensive reprint editions began appearing after an onslaught of hard covered volumes that left the fantasy collector weak from bleeding, but willing for more. But whatever these books did for the collectors and their publishers, they did little for the field as a whole. All of these many post-war high-priced selections were limited editions, published by specialist, trade, hobby, and even amateur publishers, and they were all bought by the same two or three thousand avid enthusiasts, often eagerly purchased by competitors with an inbreeding approaching incest. It was left to the inexpensive reprint editions of some of these books to reach the uninitiated public and bring that public back for more of the imagination, escape, and speculation that the modern reader can only find in science fiction: books, magazines, and drama.

The forerunner of the modern paper-backed book was the "dime novel" at the turn of the century. Science fiction had its representatives in the colorful field: Rom Wright, Young Tom Edison, and, of course, the famed Frank Reade Jr. Library (2). The lurid exploits of these young heroes still have a semantic influence on contemporary thinking, which associates the paper-bound book with a certain kind of cheap sensationalism. While many modern publishers have earned that opinion, it certainly isn't universally true. There are no more respectable and intellectual books to be found anywhere than in the Penguin-Pelican and Mentor Series. Actually these early thrillers have had little influence on modern science fiction. As Anthony Boucher once stated, "Science fiction is basically a magazine field," (3) and is true to the extent that the elements that were shaping science fiction at the time of the dime novels, were not to be found in the paper-backed books of the day, but in such magazines as Argosy, All-Story, and the popular science magazines of Hugo Gernsback (4).

We might briefly note the inventiveness of Frank Reade, which often did prophesy in the accepted science fiction manner. Much of these early novels were devoted to air-ships of various kinds (5), powered alternately by steam (which was considered more practical) and by electricity (which was thought more visionary). The books were full of "Electric Men," "Electric Ships", and even an "Electric Eagle". In those days, too, the hapless American Indians not only had to contend with William F. Cody, but with contemporary science fiction heroes trying out all manner of fiendish

super-scientific weapons on them. Young Reade came up with a parallel of the modern Snooperscope, an infra-red ray sight on rifles for night viewing. Reade's device was much more direct. He engineered a pistol which fired a ball of fire. Then in its light, the user could spot an Indian and blow the poor devil's brains out. Presumably, even if the bullet missed the fire ball might do some damage. Clearly, the Indians didn't have a chance in those days between the U. S. Cavalry and science fiction. The degree of subtlety in the invention shows the standards of the dime novel science fiction stories.

These early books were chiefly concerned with action made as colorful as possible. Writers like "Noname" (6) might draw acclaim from Jules Verne, but they were interested in science fiction elements only to give local color to the story in the same manner they would use horses and six guns, as can be said of some modern writers. Meanwhile, in adventure magazines, there was a new group of writers springing up who used the elements of science fiction to produce wonder and awe, and in Gernsback's science magazines, to attempt to give some scientific education.

This school of science fiction writing was not to find its way into book form, until Hugo Gernsback left the original science fiction magazine Amazing Stories, and started two competitors, Science Wonder Stories, and Air Wonder Stories. Along with these two magazines and subsequent quarterlies, Gernsback issued what he called The Science Fiction Series, a line of paper-covered booklets. They were written by the popular authors of the day, such as Edmond Hamilton, Bob Olson, and David H. Keller, M.D., who contributed what was probably the best of the series, "The Thought Projector" (7). It was a typical Keller story, at once sensitive to human problems, but harsh with their faults, built around the invention of a magic lantern device to give body to mental concepts. In its own way, it stands up well today.

From the time of the Science Fiction Series, until the late thirties, the paper backed science fiction book was virtually unknown. The magazine had taken the field, and under the hands of John W. Campbell, Jr., had changed it from the wonder and education aspects of Gernsback to stories of human problems arising out of scientific extrapolation.

Suddenly in 1939, a new development hit the publishing world. A new company called Pocket Books, Inc. (a silly name for any company except one dealing in leather goods) launched a series of small paperbound reprints. Although this was standard practice in Europe and many American companies quietly issued pamphlets and regulation books minus boards, Pocket Books was the first company to employ magazine distribution and mass production techniques.

Their very first selection was James Hilton's "Lost Horizon", a sensitive fantasy that added the words "Shangra-La" in Hilton's meaning to our language.

Science Fiction was scarcely to notice this event in the eventful year

of 1939, when Startling Stories, Captain Future, and Planet Stories were to burst on the scene. This was the time of the Juveniles. Both science fiction and literature were at a low ebb. The field was beginning to discover it had Glamour, that different planets, ray guns, spaceships, and beams could capture public fancy. Atmosphere and action clouded the times in the magazines.

Two writers were to dominate the paperbound science fiction scene as completely as Edmond Hamilton represented the true stage of the magazines, despite the excellent but minority guidance of Campbell. These two were Merritt and Thorne Smith.

Abe Merritt's works were among the most popular Avon Publications ever issued. They have been reprinted countless times and will probably see future editions. Donald A. Wollheim selected (and attempted to improve) such Merritt novels as "Seven Footsteps to Satan" (a semi-fantasy-mystery) for "Murder Mystery Monthly", a semi-magazine pocket-book series. "The Moon Pool (or rather "The Conquest of...") saw print along with others, but Avon had seen they had a good thing going for them in the nineteen forties. They reprinted a magazine serial, "The Metal Monster", as a paperbound book even though it had not seen hardcovers -- an unheard-of move. Then, after his death, they brought out "The Fox-Woman", a volume completely out of place in the mass-appeal market for it contained largely fragments of novels -- literary curiosity seldom seen out of limited edition memorials. But the magic name of Merritt, a name that made Hollywood technicolor drab by comparison, could sell even this and continues to sell these books today.

As Avon reprinted Merritt and Campbell struggled for supremacy against Captain Future, who was forced out of the running by the paper shortage, Pocket Books had discovered Thorne Smith had magic, too. Sex. Blending this titillating ingredient with clever humor and pointed fantasy in the Swift tradition, Smith turned out book after book that sold exceptionally well.

As the war drew to an end, paper restrictions had driven science fiction to the wall. The juvenile division magazines were literally few and far between. But Campbell's Astounding was still a monthly, and for that reason selling well in a time of magazine scarcity. It was probably more due to the backing of an extremely large publisher (7) than to any more discerning taste of the public, that the most mature magazine ended up on top at the end of the war.

During those years, Wollheim had also performed a task for the original Pocket Book publishers. He edited "The Pocket Book of Science Fiction" one of the first and best such anthologies.

Encouraged by the sales of science fiction magazines and the Merritt and Pocket Book works, Wollheim again acted as editor of Avon Books, and again proved that he had done more for paperbound science fiction books than any other person. His taste, however, was terrible. He chose such

out-dated and slight works as Jack Williamson's "Green Girl" (8), Stanley A. Coblentz's "Into Plutonian Depths", and Ray Cummings' "Girl In The Golden Atom."

Meanwhile, Signet cautiously experimented with Edmond Hamilton's "Beyond The Moon" (9) and Century Books (10) brought out an original by Rog Phillips (11), "Time Trap", a modern but undistinguished book.

Magazines fought each other with cutthroat determination, but paper-bound book publishers entered into science fiction slowly. Bantam came up with Judith Merrill's "Shot In The Dark", a large and excellent anthology, and Signet continued with works of Robert A. Heinlein, such as "The Man Who Sold The Moon", and other authors. It was not until 1952 that Pocket Books followed its own lead, and began publishing science fiction novels, such as Leinster's juvenile (on purpose) "Space Platform" and "Planet of the Dreamers" (12), an excellent one by John D. MacDonald.

Campbell had set forth a trend away from both science and atmosphere and towards human elements in the magazines, a trend he couldn't reverse, even though he tried to some extent. His supremacy had to be divided with H. L. Gold's Galaxy, which competed with him on the same terms, and with The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, edited by Anthony Boucher and J. Francis McCommas. This last one competed with him on other terms: fantasy such as he had originated in his Unknown and by a blasphemous blending of such fantasy and science fiction. As these three fight it out in rarified altitudes, others fight for lesser rewards. The magazine field is turbulent, realigning, and diminishing.

The paperbound books of science fiction are just getting started.

Ballentine's offering of simultaneous publication has lured forth such fine works as Fredrik Pohl's outstanding original and representative anthology "Star Science Fiction", Pohl's and Kornbluth's outcry against over commercialization, "The Space Merchants" (13), Bradbury's best and bitterest "Fahrenheit 451", and one of the great novels of science fiction, "Childhood's End" by Arthur C. Clarke.

Still, it was in the magazines that Phillip Jose Farmer's "The Lovers" (14) and "The Demolished Man" by Alfred Bester (15) first appeared, to set new standards for the field. But at last, the paperbound publisher and the book publisher in general is helping to formulate the policies and framework of modern science fiction. Today, the magazine editors are not alone in guiding science fiction's destiny.

NOTES

- (1) First published in Pohl's "Star Science Fiction," 1953.
- (2) Published by Frank Tousey, 1892-96. Pulp-paper, digest-size, averaging 32 pages.
- (3) "Rocket To The Morgue" by H. H. Holmes, circa 1939. Dell Pocket Reprint, 1952, as by Anthony Boucher.

- (4) Including "Electrical Experimenter", circa 1911, and "Science and Invention", 1920's.
- (5) Titles such as "Jack Wright and His Electric Air Rocket" and "Frank Reade Jr., and His Queen Clipper of the Clouds" were frequent.
- (6) Actually seventeen year old Lou Senarens.
- (7) They were pamphlets, not really books, issued by Gernsback, circa 1929.
- (8) His first novel, written when he was seventeen.
- (9) Originally "The Star Kings" from Amazing Stories. As the story first appeared in pocketbook form, it was reprinted along with another novel in Two Complete Science Adventure Books Magazine.
- (10) A company owned and/or operated by Raymond A. Palmer.
- (11) Actually Roger P. Graham, as you all must surely know.
- (12) Originally "Wine of the Dreamers" from Startling Stories.
- (13) Originally "Gravy Planet" from Galaxy.
- (14) From Startling Stories.
- (15) From Galaxy.

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DECAMP PASSES THE WORD

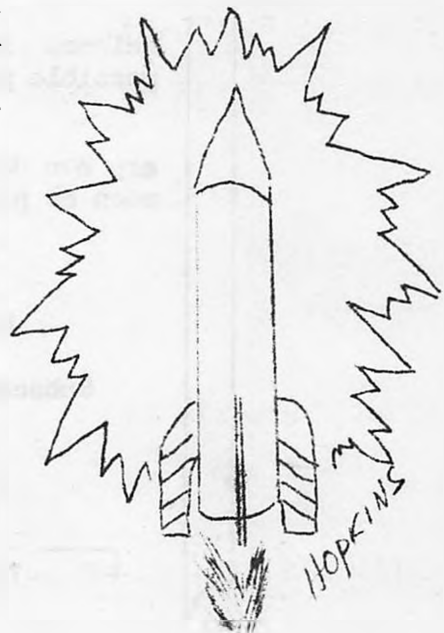
PEON'S BOOK OF THE MONTH:

SCIENCE FICTION HANDBOOK, by L. Sprague de Camp, Hermitage House, New York, N. Y., 1953, \$3.50

A history of fandom and the science fiction movement has at last appeared in hardcover book form, but surprisingly, it is the work of L. Sprague de Camp, and not the long-advertised Moskowitz volume due from the Atlanta fan press. The history was not actually intended as such, but was designed as a guide to new and would-be writers, hoping to break into the field; as a writer's guidebook it is reasonably competent; jam-packed with information and instructions on the fine art of science fiction writing. It is on the second level, the background of the field, that fannish history has been preserved for whatever posterity that may care.

de Camp traces the rise of science fiction from Plato's day down to the present one, and gives an interesting picture of one aspect never enjoyed: the fans. Commenting on the critters and their works, he names some 17 clubs, 13 fan magazines, and about 25 individuals. Where space permits, he delves into the origins of the conventions, the communist infiltration, the exclusion acts, the libel suits, the disrupted meetings, and other dramatic scenes our grandfathers so frequently displayed. Here is the story of a club which broke up when Gernsback presented a bill covering the rent of a meeting room; the early attempt of Wollheim and Michel to introduce communism into fandom, and vice versa; and a tale of Charlie Hornig and the old Science Fiction League — Hornig expelled from League membership those fans who criticized him in a rival club bulletin. The aftermath of this was a raid, led by Wollheim and Sykora, who stormed a League meeting and chased Hornig from the building. De Camp says ".... fans in general are sometimes scorned for eccentricity. And it does seem true that they run to high intelligence combined with the schizoid type of personality that finds it hard to get along with the common sensual man."

The rpo side is more thoroughly discussed. Some 125 writers and their works are examined or used for examples, with eighteen in particular being singled out for brief reviews of their lives and output. In a careful detailing of present day markets, Mr. de Camp presents a list of 35 magazines, their policies, what they buy and what they pay,



and again capsule reviews of their 24 editors. He thinks most of the magazines enjoy circulations in the 100,000 to 200,000 bracket. He recounts the beginnings of Palmer, Shaver and the derocs; Hubbard, Campbell and dianetics; and tells the famous anecdote of the Weird Tales writer who was offered a free one "on the house" while visiting a New Orleans bordello, because the girls there were crazy about the magazine.

Many years ago, Marie Rodell wrote the last word in instruction books on how to write mystery stories; after studying her excellent guide, none but the downright incompetent could fail to construct a mystery novel. Several authorities have since tried to repeat her success for science fiction writers, but none have produced a comparable volume. de Camp, while not measuring up to the Rodell superiority, nevertheless has published an instruction book which, if studied, will not only provide the tyro with a thorough grounding, but give him a long boost toward sales.

--BOB TUCKER

Announcing the forthcoming publication
of

NEBI

which will be a quarterly fanzine, publishing the best of both fantasy and science fiction poetry. Subscription price will be 15¢ per issue, or four issues for fifty cents. The first issue will be dated July 1954.

Science fiction and fantasy poems for possible publication in

NEBI

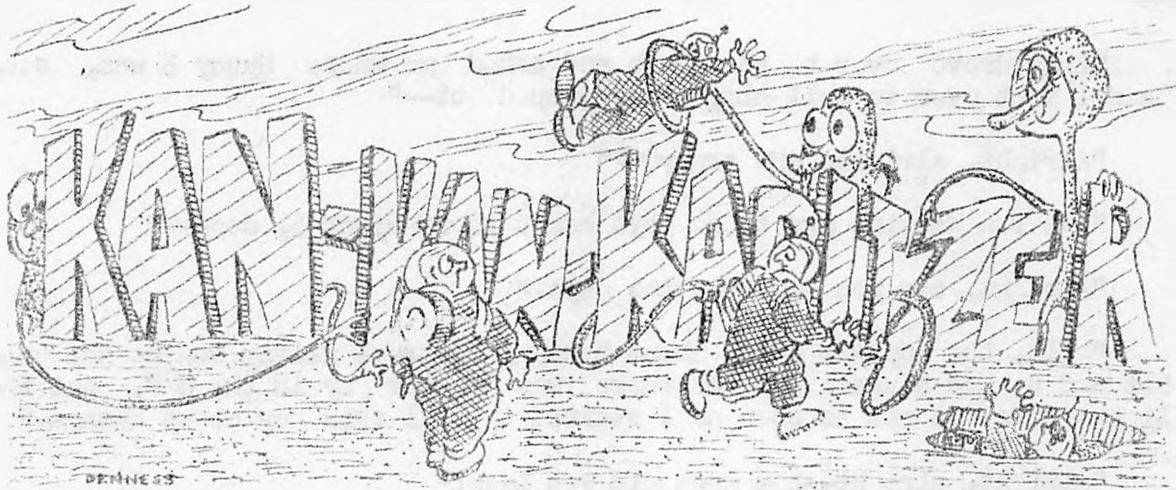
are now desired and should be sent in as soon as possible, to:

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A
FANTASCIENCE PUBLICATION



T. E. WATKINS.

The big theft of all the columns from the Riddle automobile in New London a couple of months ago reminds me of the only time I got held up. It was back in the early 30ths, and bandits, that is, the lucky ones, were the only people with money. I was returning from the movies one night about 9 p.m. and only a block from home. It was a dark street. A car drove up and a guy called out, "Hey, bub, where is hyway 5?"

I moved over to a curb to give directions and a skinny guy stepped out of the car and threw a gun on me. "This is a hold-up," he said.

Those were the days when we played poker around our house with street car transfers. Who ever heard of money? I worked as an errand boy for a printing company and rode all over town on street cars delivering proofs. I saved the street car transfers for the poker games. I had my pockets full of them. I didn't have any money. When I went to the movies I was taking 25¢ to get in and 15¢ for the street car and on the way home I was always as clean as a sober sailor the day before pay day.

This bandit fished in my pockets and pulled out these transfers. It was dark and they were about the size of dollar bills. They might even have been ten dollar bills, what the hell. The more transfers he pulled out and shoved into his pockets, the more excited he got. He missed the only thing of value I had on me; an Elgin pocket watch sans chain, that was deep in my watch pocket. As soon as he had cleaned me out of transfers, he jumped back in the car and his buddy, who has kept the engine running, turned out the lights and they took off. Of course in the dark, I couldn't get the license number of the car.

I called the cops anyway; I was mad as hell. "I got held up—I've been robbed!" I shouted over the phone.

"Who are you, and where were you robbed?" asked a tired voice at police headquarters.

"They drove over to the curb and asked me where Hyway 5 was, see. When I went over to tell him, a guy jumped out--"

"Alright, alright, who are you?"

"I'm Tom Watkins and these guys asked about Hyway 5, see---"

"Alright, can you describe the guys?"

"Well, the guy who asked about Hyway 5 was real skinny and he had on a hat and he had a small gun and there was another guy in the car, but the lights were out and as soon as I started to tell this guy about hyway--"

"Alright, alright--how much did you lose?"

"What?"

"How much did you lose?"

"Well, I lost all my street car transfers. He took every one I had."

"Do you work for the street car company?"

"No, but I collect street car transfers. You see, I didn't have any money and we play poker with these transfers and he took every one of 'em. He missed my watch--hello."

He hung up. I haven't consulted the police on anything since. All they think about is money. You lose money and they'll write it down, but you get held up and lose all your street car transfers that are just as good as money in our poker games, and you're hung up on. I was sure sore. I talked about it for days.

And now, years later, the Kabitzer for November is stolen right out of an automobile. I immediately got out my carbon copy to assess the loss. After reading it over, I decided to write another column. He who steals from Watkins still steals trash, by golly!

PEON GETS AROUND: Last summer, I received a package from England. On the outside it said, "Unsolicited gift to T. E. Watkins, Esq." In the package were about two dozen Post Office magazines from England.

Of course, I work for the Post Office. I couldn't imagine why anyone in England would send me two dozen post office magazines. I play a lot of postal chess, have been engaged in Letter Carrier Union activities, and have written for science fiction fanzines. Which activity produced this "unsolicited gift" from England? So I wrote this fellow Ashford to find out. He had his name and return address on the package.

Ashford wrote me a letter. He was a post office clerk in England and a science fiction fan. He had written an article for the old SPACEWARP to

which I was also a contributor, and he had seen my name in PEON, noticing that I worked in the Post Office.

PILTDOWN AND THE AGE OF MAN::If you have taken any general science in school, you have heard of Pithecanthropus and Piltdown. These ~~are~~ the fossil bones left by our ancestors and from them and other fossils the anthropologists have erected the fragile theory of the evolution of man. Just how fragile this theory might be was revealed recently when the Piltdown man, a bit of skull and part of a lower jaw discovered in a peat bog in England by an English lawyer named Dawson, was proved recently by the British Museum to be a hoax. (Fans forgive me--I will no longer try to clean up fandom. If scientists are capable of such gigantic hoaxes, why not fans?)

The Piltdown man was advertised to be 500,000 years old, and was thought to be half way between ape and man. He had the brain case of a man and the jaw of an ape. It now turns out that the skull fragments were only 50,000 years old (quite a find at that) and the jaw fragments were only 50 years old and actually from an ape. They had been cleverly stained and filed to fool the scientists of the last century. Just who pulled the hoax is not known. It couldn't have been lawyer Dawson.

Dr. Loren C. Eiseley, anthropologist of Penn Univ., writes about the problems of man's evolution in an excellent article, "Fossil Man" in Dec. 1953 Scientific American. It would seem that the more fossils that are discovered the clearer would be the picture of man's evolution. This is not so. The more fossils they find, the more problems appear to be cleared up. (And when you consider that there are a few wise guys in the crowd who are willing to use their knowledge to stain up an ape's jaw and throw it in there just for the hell of it, you can see why there might be confusion.)

For many years, it has been considered that modern man was a recent development. He developed, they thought, as a mutation from one of the many types of "Ape-like" creatures that stalked the earth in the Pleistocene age of a million years ago. However, recent discoveries have hinted that modern man may have been an early independent development from the primate family. They have a skull from Africa, Proconsul africanus, from the Miocene period of 15 million years ago, that appears to be about right for a common ancestor. It is now considered that this divergence took place in Africa and not in Asia.

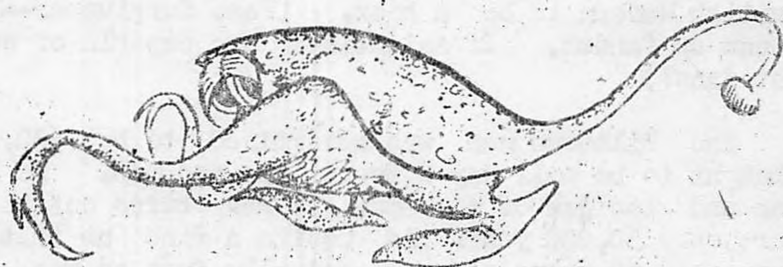
After reading about the Piltdown scandal and Dr. Eiseley's complex paradoxes, it is my suspicion that these wise guys don't have the slightest notion how man evolved, and they might as well collect Kansas City street car transfers as these fossil bones. They can play poker with Kansas City street car transfers, that is, if they don't get robbed.

(Note to Boggs--as you see, Redd, remote items like transfers and bones can be tied up. It's an art!)

-oOo-

Deness's Menaces

BY
Deness Morton



Fantastuff

FROM

TERRY CARR

JUST PLAIN HMM DEPT.:: "Shadow of Tomorrow", the Perma anthology edited by Frederick Pohl, carried a cover-comment by H. L. Gold, running thusly: "An outstanding new collection of science fiction...tops!" Eleven out of the seventeen stories in the collection were from Galaxy. Then, just to even things up, Perma set Groff Conklin to work reprinting stories from Astounding (odd though, that Conklin reviews books for Galaxy...); Conklin came up with "Crossroads in Time", which contained, out of eighteen stories in all, nine from ASF and one more from Unknown. On the cover: "A fine job!"---John W. Campbell, Jr.

FANZINESTUFF:: QUISCUSTODIET, one of the fanzines mentioned last issue, as being on the newsstands in Southern California, has folded, after supposedly a year of consecutive monthly publication of the best in fandom. Funny, I'd never heard of the thing until a couple of months ago... QC is immediately replaced by HA!, a semi-stfanzine pubbed by Peter Vorzimer, mimeographed with photo-offset covers. A satire-zine. ## Another fanzine soon to be on the newsstands is Gilbert E. Menicucci's PEGASUS SCIENCE FICTION, which will be printed, with either mimeographed or multilithed illos, and which will be paying rather good money for material. ## New fanzines from the San Francisco area, aside from PEGASUS, are FOG (Don Wegars), CHAMBER OF SCIENCE FANTASY (Fred Malz), EROTICA (Bill Collins and Keith Joseph), and INKY (Gilbert E. Menicucci). FOG has seen one issue, hektographed, but Wegars says he's getting a mimeo for the second issue. CHAMBER OF S-F will be printed when its first issue comes out, and EROTICA and INKY will be mimeo'ed. Neither of these is out as yet. XX They Come AND Go: GREMLIN, one of the best efforts from San Fran yet, folded after three issues because of financial difficulties. In San Francisco, though, when a fanzine folds, it's replaced by two more, as evidenced above. Other soon-to-fold SanFranzines are Menicucci's FAN NEWS, Boob Stewart's BOO (in its place Boob will issue a small bi-weekly mag along the lines of FANTASTA), and NONSENSE, my own fanzine. This latter will see one more issue before folding. ## On the national front, new fanzines seem to be sprouting everywhere. Carol McKinney will soon have the first issue of DEVIANT out, while James Chamlee is working on IT now, and Hillel Handloff is planning CRUD, to mention just a few. ## Ian Macauley is again in Atlanta, at his old 57 East Park Lane address. Says he was accomplishing nothing in New York, and in Atlanta he can go to college and still live. Due to shortness of cash, however, there'll be no COSMAG forthcoming. Rumor has it that Ian is tottering on the brink of matrimony, incidentally.....

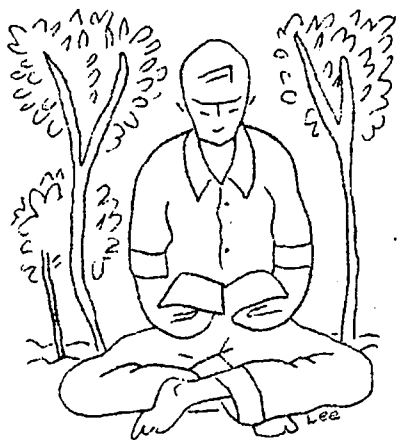
NOTES 'N' QUOTES:: The cover of the 3-D comic, "The First Christmas", is a good 'un by Kelly Freas, fantasy artist extraordinaire. ## Joel Nydahl, in his editorial in the VEGAnnish: "Starting with VEGA #13, VEGA will be a bi-monthly publication instead of a money." Those 100 pages seem to have left Joel with money on his mind. ## "Man Drowning," the Bantam pocket-book by Henry Kuttner, is a non-stf, in case you were wondering. ## Is Karl Olsen, editor of KOMET, dead? When I sent him a trade copy of VULCAN it was returned "Deceased". Also, when called upon to pay dues for entrance into FAPA, Olsen did not respond. ## Bob Lowndes' discussion of null-A in Science Fiction Quarterly, February, 1954, came out at an opportune time, what with van Vogt's "World of Null-A" on the newsstands in Ace Double-Novel edition.

RAISED EYEBROW DEPT.: or Speaking of Ace... The latest Ace Double Novel is "Conan the Conqueror" bound with Leigh Brackett's "Sword of Rhiannon", a rewrite of "The Sea-Kings of Mars" from Thrilling Wonder, June 1949, with the original title tacked on. It struck me as odd (but welcome) that Donald Wollheim, well-known for his newsstand play and sensationalism (the two are becoming synonymous, anyway), as evidenced by COTWA and the Avon Fantasy Reader, resisted the urge to put this comment by the New York Herald Tribune book-reviewer on the cover in blaring letters, and instead put it inside: "Approximately as tough and lusty as the fifth power of Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer." ## Ace's next double-novel, incidentally, will be out in March, with one being a stf-collection by Wollheim, and the other a stf-novel, the name of which I have forgotten. More Raised Eyebrow Stuff: What happened to the highly-touted Seventh Fandom APA, boys? Seventh Fandom (say it reverently, please?) is supposed to be composed of the leading publishers in fandom, yet its first mailing ran to less than fifty pages. FAPA, which is supposedly where old fans go to die (like us decadent Sixth Fandomites), has two-and three-hundred-page mailings all the time.

HOW, NOW, BROWNE?: Howard Browne, apparently trying to pacify the outraged fans who have been screaming about the lack of a letter-column in either Amazing Stories or Fantastic, finally broke down and tried a one-page excerpt-type lettercolumn in Fantastic for Jan-Feb, 1954. But what pacification! Here's his answer to the first letter: "In the opinion of the editors, reader Keller wouldn't know humor if it bit him in the leg." This seems to be Browne's attitude toward fandom, but until now he's never evidenced it so openly: the reader is stupid.

DON'T MAKE ME TAKE THE RAP:: Since the folding of Other Worlds, Ray Palmer and Bea Mahaffey teamed up and are now partners in Palmer Publications, Inc. Palmer says that the folding of OW was a necessity, due to the fact that the mag was selling extremely poorly. The new Science Stories and newly-acquisitioned Universe S-F are selling just as bad, though. Seems the end of the stf boom is coming, as has been predicted quite a few times recently. Palmer says also that he'll have a new saucer book out in about a year, and that he is neither George Bell nor Robert N. Webster. The first I can believe, but as to him not being Webster...well, maybe not now (I believe Chester S. Geier is handling Fate now), but he was a few years ago....

CONTRADICTION DEPT.:: You're A Dirty Liar Section... In Publisher's Week-
ly for December 19, 1953, there appeared an article by Stanley Kauffman,
 an editor at Ballantine Books, titled "1953: Year of the Blast Off," con-
 cerning science fiction pocketbooks. One of his statements was: "S-F
 books in paper generally have a very high initial velocity of sale, but
 this velocity tapers off more quickly than with other kinds of books.
 There is an increasing but--at any given moment--fairly limited market for
 s-f." In S-F NEWSLETTER #29, Bob Tucker quotes Anthony Boucher's state-
 ment that "...a mystery is dead within six weeks after its publication; it
 will never sell another copy in its original edition. Whereas the science
 fiction book runs up the same initial sales...then continues to sell in-
 definitely in a steady slow trickle, even after it has appeared in a paper
 back edition... ### in Space S-F, May, 1953, Lester del Rey leads off with
 an editorial on Simplicity, praising T. L. Sherred's "Cue for Quiet" thus-



ly: "Take an ordinary man, put
 him in a situation where even one
 single thing is unusual, and then
 really see what happens--and you
 will have a good story. And that
 is what Sherred can do as few oth-
 ers can. Without complicated
 gadgetry, without violating human
 nature, and without ever depart-
 ing from or complicating his bas-
 ic premise, he builds his story
 by doing what would be inevitable
 under the given circumstances."
 He also says: "Simplicity! It's
 something we've been urging on
 writers, and crying for. And
 from the response, it's something
 most people don't even believe
 possible in science fiction." And

now, as we jump forward just two issues, to the September, 1953, issue of
 the same magazine, and to del Rey's editorial for that issue, the plot
 thickens. Says del Rey: "We're somewhat sick of all the stories that com-
 in with a nice economy of ideas covered up by words and more words that
 would look just as well in any other kind of fiction. We're still looking
 for the story that is done for the pure delight of seeing how much can be
 done to work out every possible angle and permutation, and where the
 writer isn't afraid that if he uses more than one idea in a story, he'll
 run out." I wish del Rey would make up his mind whether he wants only one
 idea per story, fully carried out, or as many as the writer can think of!
 In these two editorials he completely contradicts himself.

AD INFITEMS:: Speaking of the end of the stf boom as we were back there a
 way, the latest magazine to bite the dust is Vortex Science Fiction, which
 is hardly a surprise to anybody. Other likely suspects are Wonder Story
Annual, Fantasy Fiction, and Science Fiction Plus, all good mags. Why
 these mags had to fold, and leave such crudzines as Cosmos S-F around is
 beyond me! However, I'd like to insert a good word here for Orbit S-F,

which seems to be a pretty good mag after all. Certainly, it has one of the most attractive formats in the field, and the fiction, what I've read of it at least, isn't half bad. ## An editorial blurb in Fantasy & S-F for January, 1954: "Previous stories by Aberdeen's ablest young writer have been over the by-line of M'Intosh. He has abandoned this traditional Scottish spelling because too many Americans, and Englishmen .. have read, and pronounced, the name as Mintosh!" Well, now, as a sidelight to this, it might be noted that the real name of "J. T. M'Intosh-McIntosh" is James Murdock Macgregor... ## You older readers of this column (if there are any over the age of three who bother to read it) might be interested to know that Tom Swift is back. Yes, that ingenious purveyor of inventions will soon be Rube Goldberging again, in a new series. This time, however, it's Tom Swift, Jr., does the mental creative gymnastics, and the series is by Victor Appelton II. This, like the first Victor Appelton, is a penname. What amused me about the series was that Tom Swift, Jr., is portrayed as a handsome, blonde young man with a crew cut. Ah, progress, there is thy sting!.....

FILTHY HUCKSTERING:: It seems that a recent project of mine is meeting with quite a bit of approval. Hence, I thought that possibly it would be nice to let the readers of PEON in on it. The name of the project is The Fanzine Material Pool, and it's an endeavor whereby rejections from various fanzines are sent my way, tossed into the Pool, and divvied up to other zineds who are searching for material. I began this with a bit of trepidation, fearing that anything that a fanzine would reject must be hopeless. However, my fears were not realized; most of the stuff is quite salvagable. Oh sure, some of it is pitiful, but I've included a stipulation that will clear that stuff out after a certain length of time. A monthly newsletter is issued, listing the types of material desired by the various members of the Pool, and enumerating the material on hand, and is sent free to interested parties. If this intrigues you, contact me at 134 Cambridge Street, San Francisco 12, California.

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IT'S SAN FRANCISCO FOR '54 FUN!

Yes, the World Science Fiction Convention in San Francisco this year is going to be remembered for the fun that was had during the four days of convention. Keep up on the news and progress of the convention, by sending in your dollar for membership to: Science Fiction Convention, P. O. Box 335, Station "A", Richmond, California. Don't hesitate, DO IT TODAY!!