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TRUE TERROR TALE

Twas the week before Christmas and all thru the House of Gillespie a Futurian Society meeting was taking place. John B. Michel happened to be visiting Doc Lowndes in Connecticut at the time, and therefore wasn't present; rumor had it that Frederik Pohl was home having a hangover, or perhaps merely spending the day in bed, as is his occasional wont. Other members from high and far off places (like Staten Island) were obviously spending the day in meditation or in prayer, for the only members present were Jack Gillespie, Cyril Kornbluth, Donald A. Wollheim and Sleeping Giant Wilson, which four spent the afternoon in academic discussion and in the chorusing of seasonal carols. After night had fallen (with the dull thud customary in Washington Heights) all four visited Ye Automatte and also a motion picture palace, where Kornbluth was thrice reprimanded for smoking in the Children's Section.

The movie over and it being but 10 o' the clock or so Genius Gillespie decided that the Thing to Do was to purchase a string of frankfurters and go roast them somewhere. The roasting was accomplished beneath the high eastern end of the George Washington Bridge, whilst what waves the Hudson could muster lapped dismally on the shore and a nearby lighthouse wank (wunk, wonk, winkt...?) redly on & off, silently and with laudable persistency, since no one paid the slightest attention to it.

"Now," said the scarcely kexlike Kornbluth in his most profound manner, "is the time propitious to the seeking of The Wall." Or perhaps he said "the wall." And he (or maybe it was the gillsp) led the way over hill and over dale and thru dark trees and between speeding automobiles and around whistling minions of the law, until, finally, he said "Voila!" and indicated a deserted stone bridge and more particularly a manhole cover in the center of it. This obstruction lifted, now without difficulty, was laid aside. The four seekers of the unknown gazed, awestruck, into the impenetrable blackness thus revealed: Kornbluth called upon his tribal gods for strength, then lowered himself into the depths. Gillespie and Wilson followed. D. A. ("Dewey") Wollheim, being girt in unsuitable raiment for the Adventure, remained topside as sentry and lookout. The Three found themselves in a low, narrow passage which arched alarmingly downward into the vertical and pressed on at right angles and thru passageways and over boulders and over things that crackled and went squoosh underfoot. The only light was that which wanly filtered thru narrow crenelles high above. On and on went The Three, and not a falter was discernible, til there came a splash, soft, yet pregnant with meaning in that Awful Place; then another, and louder. A torch was hastily improvised and lit: the flame revealed Gillespie gibbering in water to his knees. And, across the underground lake, revealed in all its awe-inspiring inaccessibility--was The Wall!

We left it there; and Jack Gillespie went home to court aridity.

...it is told...

FAPA FIRMNESS

50 members of the Fantasy Amateur Press Assn failed to find Novacious (as announced in Nell #54) amongst the 13 items comprising the latest selection because, explained Milton Rothman, "Very sorry, but Novacious arrived just a few hours too late to get in the mailing; I found it when returning home from sending out the envelopes. I wasn't joking when I said the deadline is here to stay." Mirta Forsto, mag's maker, applauds MAR's stern decree; only wishes to explain it was not clear to him-her, from the notice rcvd from HQs, that material had to b in the mailer's hands by 3 Dec; rather, it was interpreted by them that the farthest Fapates shoud see to it their pubs had postdates not later'n the 3d. As Vasha (the Novacious) is undated (numericly, not masculinely!), her appearance will b left til the next mailing. Morojo & the J will not publish a new number at that time; rather, will cooperate with J. Chapman Miske to publish for him a 1500 word story. WW

THRILL-OH-GEE TRILOGY, etc.

Jack Williamson has completed "One Against the Legion". --AKKaman...Russell J., better known as "WOW" Hodgkins, was unanimously re-elected, at the Annual Xmas Party, Director of the LASFL for his 3d consecutive term. --fja

In the Dec. 24 issue of The Saturday Evening Post will be found a superb fantasy by Stephen Vincent Benét, entitled "Doc Mellhorn and the Pearly Gates," which shows heaven to have the benefit of motorcycle cops, traffic lights and reception clerks. Hades is also there, an auto journey away, a place of interminable coal-mining, but an improvement on Peabodyville, N. J. Our favorite passage is from that part where a Hadean inspector protests against Doc Mellhorn setting up a clinic: "Miss Smith has no business working for you. She's supposed to be gnawed by a never-dying worm every Monday, Wednesday and Friday." ... This issue's Post Scripts boasts of a piece called "My Own Explained Horror Tales. 1. The Vampire of Saint-Domique, 2. The Disappearing Ghost, & 3. Evil Things Ride in the Moonlight," by Barbara Collyer.

A sign over the door to the set where Universal is filming "The Son of Frankenstein" reads: "Through these portals pass the characters of a Hollywood nightmare!"...The Ella Cinders comic strip is again stf'al, with its actors partaking of a personality-changing drug...Writes Forrest J Ackerman: "Just lost my job--cause, 'Quota reduction; let off for want of work'... Y...it's enuf to make a man take to scientifiction..."...From a reader who desires anonymity: "Did you pass up this one? I don't know inasmuch as I haven't seen last few numbers of 'Letter', but Felix the Cat has in some form or another endowed himself with the powers of invisibility and is finding it minimizes many of his daily problems."

AT HAND

Vol. 1, No. 5, Le Vombiteur, which involves, as well as comment & such, Xmas-New Year wishes & a vombicatry by Leslie Perri (pictorial and, we say, utterly horrible).

Happy New Year! - Dick Wilson