

THE SCIENCE-FICTION SAVANT is an irregular amateur magazine published by Raymond W. Washington, Jr., 117 Hamilton Street, Live Oak, Florida. It is mimeographed and assembled by Mr. Harry Warner, Jr., of Hagerstown, Maryland, and is issued for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. Material is solicited subject to editorial discretion. The opinions herein expressed are those of the authors and do not represent necessarily any belief of the editor's.

HOME IS THE STUDENT

After completing my work for the current semester at the University of Florida, and packing my voluminous possessions and transporting them and myself home—a mammoth undertaking—I began to think (when I was able to think of such matters again) that it was now an appropriate time for me to release another issue of this magazine for the FAPA. My ideas as to material were vague enough; I was thinking of using a rather long, humorous prose account of some of my college follies, and perhaps an essay of the where-do-we-go-from-here type; or perhaps some discussion of Thomas Wolfe, and perchance some poems and an article on Claude Leger's mental processes. All that I knew definitely was that the time had come again to publish.

However, when I unearthed some old material from one of the mouldering pasteboard boxes that clutter my bedroom and accumulate vast stores of papers, magazines, and books over the years, I found some diverse and yet primarily scientific things I thought worth bringing to light. A curious story is behind some of them.

In 1942 I had reached the peak of my fan activity and was publishing an obscure organ of juvenility called Scientifun. It mercifully died after the third issue; and though I had on hand a good body of material for the fourth issue, no fourth issue ever came into being. In re-discovering most of these old manuscripts, I have chosen from them what was not too obviously out-dated for inclusion in this issue — as curiosia, as exhumed souvenirs, as fragmentary pictures of the more closely-knit fandom of that day. Only sections of Jenkins' and Shaw's columns appear; the fiction was of such unusual quality that I found it impossible to cut. (Mary Helen's story is recent—she never gave up writing.) The Airplane Man controversy began in the June, 1942 issue of Scientifun; the Lockemann rebuttal has not been previously published. The remainder of the issue rather speaks for itself. I believe that an occasional effort at variety is a good thing even in a highly personalized publication. And, with a bevy of top-notch writers like Delbert B. Vance, W. Somerset Maugham, Mary Helen Washington, and Algernon C. Swinburne, how could I go amiss? How, indeed. Eat Rice Crispies, Enlist in the New Army, and Prepare to Meet God. Good reading.

By

Harry Jenkins, Jr.

The Columbia Camp is a bare thing of the past. No longer do the Capitol City cops scowl with distaste as a green '41 Plymouth meanders slowly down Main Street at 1 a.m., with the three occupants bawling "Figaro" at the tops of their voices. No longer do the counter-jerks at The Double-Dip curse loudly as the three Camp members barge into the joint just as the jerks prepare to close the joint.

Lee Eastman now is practicing tree surgery in Philadelphia, having himself quite a glorious time cutting up — trees. His poetry is now beginning to satisfy his own strict standards of excellence, and you may soon be seeing some of 't in Jinx.

Joe Gilbert, after successfully crashing his way into the pulps, is now in Merchant Marine training at St. Petersburg, Florida. His fan activities are restricted, naturally, but he'll be around since he has his Royal with 'im. After Lurton Blassingame just succeeded in selling Joe's collaboration with Fred Fischer, "An Adventure For Mr. Adam", it is to be expected that Joe will finish the long detective noveltette he had 2/3 completed before he left Columbia.

W. B. "Mac" McQueen is working hard at Fort Jackson on a government job, and consequently, his activities are restricted.

Your columnist will soon return to school, where he will be a Sophomore in the School of Journalism. Despite the time required for an outside job, we will have almost as much time to spare as before.

This means, consequently, that you may soon be expecting The Fantasy Annual, Polaris, Fan Editor and Publisher, and The Southern Star to start rolling again.

((But where are the snows of yesteryear?))

FANCY THOUGHTS IN PASSING

By

Larry Shaw

The fact that I am suddenly engaged in grinding out a second installment of this column is a great surprise to me. Not that I expected to be knifed in the back after I had fired my opening gun as a columnist (it was just those persistent old bill-collectors that I was hiding from, of course), but somehow or other I hain't never known that said opening gun was fired at all. As I type this I still haven't seen the third issue of Scientifun. I imagine it appeared, else why would chum Washington be postaling so desperately for another hunk, but I really wouldn't mind knowing exactly what it looked like in print. I assume that it was called "Fancy Thoughts in Passing", since that is what Raym asked for this time. That ain't what I called

originally, you see - not a bad title, tho, at that. Except that I might have said "thots" myself. . . .

Pedaling a bike 500 miles is bound to produce ~~some results~~, outside of an expected strengthening of the leg muscles. My recent little jaunt to Atlantic City produced one which may not be entirely worthless, even tho it is still but a mere idea. There is, you see, an evil abroad in fandom; oh, a very great evil, I assure you. My first thots on how to combat it followed quickly. Are you drooling in anticipation? Okay, have it your own way, but I'm going to tell you about it anyway.

This evil is, admittedly, one that cannot be done away with. I'm referring to fans who for one reason or another drop out of fandom temporarily. It happened to me: I wouldn't think for a split second of dropping out completely, but other matters closer to home kept pushing my attention to fandom aside all summer. Leprechaun slumbered peacefully by the wayside, my correspondents sent urgent postals asking --- politely, of course --- what the hell was holding up my replies, I could find no time to read the few mags that I picked up in passing. I hated the condition, especially when I considered the thots --- some of them must have been very fancy --- that must have been passing thru the minds of my supposedly forgotten friends. But every time that the tiniest ray of sunshine would start to peep over the horizon, another dark cloud would rush in to smear it completely. I couldn't get a thing done before something else would come up that "had" to be taken care of.

Now I'm back, in a big way. I never really left, of course, but fandom --- a very small part of it, perhaps --- must have been wondering what had happened to me. Now I find that the same thing happened to friend Rayn during the summer. And he too is quite evidently appalled at the thot of explaining his silence to everyone. And I continue to beat around the bush, when the idea is that I have a semi-solution to the problem.

It calls for some enterprising and not-too-busy fan to handle it. This fan would issue a bulletin, at such intervals as it was needed, to as many fans as possible. The bulletin would deal only with news of these "lost" fans. Of course, it would have to have a large circulation to do any good. And any time a fan found himself too busy to keep in general contact with everyone, he would have to make it his responsibility to write the editor of the bulletin and tell in as much detail as possible just what was keeping him behind the eight-ball. The news would then go out to all fandom, everyone would understand the position of the poor harrassed chap, he could come back in at any time without feeling the need of explaining to everyone separately and in detail, no-one would get mad, and in some cases the forgotten fan's friends might be able to help him a good deal in keeping in touch with things or even in getting back into activity sooner. Naturally, it would take complete co-operation on the part of all concerned. But the fan would certainly be pretty bad off who couldn't find the time to write one letter explaining what was going on. It should work.

((...return, not into life, but into magic...))

By

Fred W. Fischer

John Herndon was the last man on earth.

He, who had once been acclaimed by millions as the world's greatest scientist and inventor, was now acclaimed by no one.

For as far as his eye could have seen from the top of the highest mountain, and beyond, he was master of all he surveyed — not only master, but sole owner, for where there is but one claimant there are no contestants.

From Tycho on the moon, immured in the first space-ship to hurl across the star-spattered void, Herndon had seen the yellow blight which had erased all animal life from the earth as if it had never been; a huge and gaseous envelope swirling from the depths of space to enshroud and suffocate a world.

Rockets flaming in a symphony of power, Herndon had cruised again the ether lanes to his homeland, but the journey was not completed until Earth had five times circled the golden sun. Then — where had been beasts and birds and crawling things, and men and the denizens of the seven seas, there was only an aching silence and a vast depopulation.

Only plant life survived, preserved by some miraculous property of chlorophyll from the universal doom. The only sounds were the voices of the hurricane, the stormy thunder, and the mournful winds; or the lapping of waves upon deserted strands, the tinkle of water falling, the whispering breezes in the leafy trees.

Herndon perforce retired to the place he loved, his laboratory with its white cottage beside it, to live out his days. A pact with loneliness to be ended with his death.

For ten long years, by the old earth system of calendaring the monotonous days which slowly dragged by, he lived there in his small house, putting by day over his fruitless experiments in the laboratory — experiments which could never be beneficial to any save himself.

And one sunlit summer afternoon, as he relaxed in the depths of a comfortable lawn chair and silently contemplated the green lush valleys far below his mountain retreat — valleys fast becoming again the forest primeval — he felt that his time on earth was come to an end. He knew with a calm and satisfied certainty beyond mere premonition, that this night he would die.

He was not unhappy that this should be so. His tired and lonely spirit longed to wing again among its kindred souls so long since vanished from the blessed sphere he had so catastrophically inherited. It would even be good to die, to penetrate the darkness beyond life, and to solve the ultimate problem.

Let tonight, then, be the time.

Thoughtfully, Herndon arose and went into the house to prepare one last tasteless and vegetarian meal before settling down to his nightly routine of reading. He would go on to the very end with the same routine as always, and whenever a bony finger beckoned or a

voice spoke to his soul, he would go.

In his little kitchen he picked up a skillet, musing over the irony of using a frying implement for cookery, in a world where there was naught to fry or fry with. Nothing lived to provide greases. — Only himself!

He was the last—the only man, on earth, and he was about to die.

He felt that death was no further away than the next room.

Quaker—!

Suddenly, startled, he dropped the skillet and it went clattering to the floor.

Loudly and clearly, there had been a knocking upon the front door.

Herndon took a deep breath. He threw back his shoulders and gave himself a quick glance in the mirror across the room. Slowly, he walked toward the living room — through it. He extended his hand and opened the door.

THE DRIPDRUDGE DRAM

By

Delbert B. Vance

Mr. Blanken mount Percevil Dredgewater was a tycoon—or was it a goon?—oh, well, anyway, he headed the Facts and Figures Typewriter Company. They had sold over one million typewriters and five hundred thousand adding machines in the last year. To top things off he also owned a publishing company, which in turn published (purely spasmodically) text books and the like.

Now Mr. Dredgewater was rich, filthy rich, he had something like six automobiles, but alas only one set of tires. The sad part of that was they were for an ancient relic of a car, a Stanley Steamer I think —no—no, it was a Crosley—yes a Crosley. In his thirty years, he had totaled over seven hundred million dollars. This year was rather low; he only made seven million, that's on the income tax; however he gives the government his income and keeps the tax. From all sources of information he is still living quite comfortably in his forty room cottage.

Everything was rosy for Mr. Dredgewater until about three o'clock one bright day when a gentleman with a definite apple green complexion sauntered into his room, a small brief case tucked under his arm.

"May, I see you Mr. Droopwater," he asked in his flute pitched voice.

"Dredgewater,"

"So sorry to correct you, but it is tread water, Mr. Droopwater," came the little green man's reply.

"I mean my name is Dredgewater," was the tycoon's insistent reply.

"Dredgewater, Dredgewater," muttered the green personage. "Well, anyway Mr. Droopwater, I've come here on business and so let's get down to it."

The Adding Machine Wolf seated himself and stared.

"Well, aren't you going to offer me a smoke," demanded the little

"O—O— Certainly, h— h— here, have one, Mr. —er —er —er."

If you'll pardon my impoliteness for not using quotation marks, you see I'm the author and well it was my own fault, but I guess I just forgot to ask this character his name so pardon me a moment while I inquire—I say there fellow, what is your name—the little green man eyed me intently, then spoke:

"It's people like this jerk Droopwater and authors like you who cause a lot of trouble—" At this point I simply had to ask him what his name was. He again drew himself to his full size and proudly expounded—"I am Droprun Dripdrudge, and I represent the Associated Letters, Numerals, and Short Hand Symbols of the Universe—" I'm very sorry to have to close his quotation marks, but he was getting to the personal stage. Now let me pick up the story—let me see—that's not the line—AH! Here it is—well, Mr. Droprun had just confronted Mr. Drudgewater—er—er Dredgewater. "I, Mr. Droopwater," continued Mr. Dripdrudge, "am a personal representative of the Associated Letters, Numerals, and Short-Hand Symbols of the Universe. We've been knocked around and shoved into all kinds of messes for thousands of years, the letters have been put into so many impossible combinations that it's not even funny. After all, don't you think we get tired of having ourselves shaped into such words as Antidiscestablishmentism, and the like. Also, we numbers are getting fagged out."

"Why?" inquired Dredgewater.

"Why!" exploded Dripdrudge. "Have you ever been juggled around and forced into such combinations as 256, 343, 768,000,000,000?"

"Well—ll—ll no—oo—oo."

"All right then, shut up and listen to a guy who knows."

Mr. Blankenmount Perccevil Dredgewater's mouth hung open, exposing his beautiful tonsils.

"Close your mouth," ordered Dripdrudge. "You look like a fish."

Dripdrudge looked at Dredgewater, who closed his mouth with such rapidity that it jarred his teeth, and knocked out a few fillings, which he consequently swallowed.

"Look here, you pre-fermented jug of apple cider—"

That was as far as he got with his insult; Dripdrudge slowly came over to him, pushing him into an over stuffed chair. Dripdrudge leaned over his victim and spoke in a rather threatening voice.

"Listen, you sacrilege to all forms of Letters, Numerals, and Short Hand Symbols of the Universe, either you take some of those stinking love stories off the market along with those broken down text books, or we'll fix you."

Mr. Dripdrudge would have gone on for hours, if the telephone hadn't interrupted him. The bewildered businessman answered the phone, he handed it to Dripdrudge with a rather disgust in his manner. "It's for you."

"Don't sound so disgusted Droopwater."

He then took the phone in his small hand and conversed in a run-together manner. He hung up, then stood in the middle of the floor and scowled at the adding machine magnet. "I warned you, you penny pinching jerk! Ups, what have I said? I must never use that word again, jerk, after all one must not use profanity; however I've warned you, now you've gone and published a book on how to make out your income tax. We of the Associated Letters, Numerals, and Short

Hand Symbols of the Universe. ~~Mr. Droopwater~~ prepare for the worst!"
Mr. Droopwater Dripdrudge—then vanished.

* * * * *

Droopwater—darn— Dredgewater would have slept until two p.m., but not today. His rest was abruptly terminated at ten o'clock a.m. by the bassoon voice of Mr. Slip, the business brains of Facts and Figures Typewriter Company. He pulled his boss out of bed and immediately began his excited chatter.

"What's wrong?" yawned Dredgewater.

"What's wrong! What's wrong!" Do you know what has been happening?"

"No."

Mr. Slip beat his bald head, pulled his fuzz, which he seriously called a beard.

"Well Droopwater!" demanded Slip.

"Dredgewater!"

"Look you moron," shrieked Slip. "All our adding machines are subtracting. Our typewriters write long hand. To say nothing of your love stories turning into mush!"

"Weren't they that before?" questioned Dredgewater.

* * * * *

At the desk sat a bedraggled person. His hair hung down over his eyes. He groped about his desk hunting for a cigar butt; finding it he dejectedly thrust it into his bare fangs.

"Well—ll—ll, Mr. Droopwater!"

Dredgewater cringed, that flute pitched voice belonged to only one person.

"Yes," gulped Dredgewater.

"I see you've had enough. Well I can't blame you a bit. I've been sent here to negotiate a peace with you. My terms are as follows.

"Do you promise never to publish such stuff as the following under the title of humor—?"

'I don't kiss and I don't neck,
I don't say darn and I don't say heck,
I don't play poker and I don't shoot dice,
I'm never naughty, I'm always nice.
I have no line, I don't play tricks.
But what the hell, I'm only six.'

"Never print any descriptions like this: 'She drew up to him, her sapphire lips shaped in a graceful Cupid bow, ready to release a gold tipped shaft of love.'

"If you violate these terms, we of the Associated Letters, Numerals, and Short Hand Symbols of the Universe will ————."

Parlon me again, but I'll just have to close his quotation marks. You have already heard the line of Mr. Droopwater Dripdrudge. So long dear readers.

By

Mary Helen Washington

You, have always heard that "crime does not pay." But here is a startling story where crime did pay! One man out of a million who had brains & the nerve enough to murder for Love & revenge & lay the blame on his brother-----

The clock struck two, two o'clock in the morning, just then a Big Black sedan pulled up. In front of a cheap "boarding house". A rather small girl stepped out, although she was 18 years of age. She was a thin, slender girl with the loveable name "Suesan". She had long Black hair & light Brown eyes, & a complexion like a baby! She walked slowly to her room, seeming almost afraid to go in. Suddenly she rammed the key into the keyhole & turned in quickly. But, but, it was already unlocked! She was too petrified to move with fear. & when she finally did start to run away a long arm reached for her covering her mouth with large fingers & dragging her in to her room! The next few horrible seconds were silent; everything was so quiet. Then out of the quietness of the night came a muffled scream. But only once did she scream for it was over so fast, all over again there was quietness.

Suddenly the people under her room began calling the landlady, & said that something was dripping down from the room upstairs! It, it was blood. During this time, Dick, the man she was with in the car had gone to her room & was now ringing furiously at the Doorbell. But there came no answer. He burst open the Door & stumbled in the darkness over something warm & soft, He struck a match, It was Suesan's Body, or what was left of her body. He couldn't think, all he wanted to do was to run like the devil! So he did & on his way down he ran into the people downstairs.

"Don't try to get away," they said, "you've got a little explaining to do!" Dick was too bewildered with grief & shock to argue so he went with them. His mother had always told him if he wanted to get out of anything always to tell the truth. So he was going to take her advice, He needed it NOW! So this is what he told the detectives

"I have a brother, He & I were both deeply in love with Suesan. She turned him down for me & he swore he would get even with her someday. But we really never take him seriously. Several nights ago I proposed to Suesan & she accepted. Well, last night she started fussing about me having dinner with my secretary & she kept on until I lost my temper & said, 'I told you, you little jealous Brat that I just happened to meet her there & that was the only vacant table left & so naturally I paid for her dinner! Remember, we aren't married yet!'

"I spoke so hard to her that she threw her ring in my face, & said, 'As for me, I wouldn't marry you in a million years!' We "

talked so loud that I guess she heard me. I said we were arguing. I, I told her she'd be sorry for this & drove off. I went straight home & cooled off. I made up my mind not to let a silly fuss come between our future. So I went back to her apartment to tell her I was sorry & to ask her if she wanted the ring back. Well you know the rest, sir. I did go back & found her body. That's all there is to tell.

"Is it?" asks the D.A.

"Yes, what else is there?"

"One thing that you practically threatened her when you left her. How do I know you aren't lying?"

"But, it's the truth I tell you, the truth! It sounds so true that it sounds 'fishy' if you get what I mean?"

"And besides your ~~brother~~ was shot in a Bank robbery. So he could not have killed her. But you had a reason for killing her & you admit threatening to."

"But, but—"

All this went on for over 2 hours; finally they decided to give a trial. He told the same story to the court. But he had no proof & he was heard telling her "she'd be sorry for this". No hope my poor innocent friend. NO HOPE. The police will regret it when they find they sent an innocent friend to the "electric chair"! Ho, so now you want to know who the murderer really is. How do I know all this, who am I? HA, HA, HA, I think I can answer all these questions in 4 words!

"I am the murderer!!" HA HA HA HA....

The moral of this story is - Don't ever look up at the ceiling, you might see blood dripping through - HA, HA, HA....

AN AIRPLANE FAN'S OUTLOOK ON THE SCIENTIFAN'S WORLD

By Driscoll P. Redwood

I cannot tell a lie. I'll tell the truth about this engrossing question. "Why don't you be a science fiction fan?" A science fiction fan's world is full of marvelous distortions. His stories are about pipe - dreams he cooks up in his sleep. He at once jumps to his typewriter to write a letter to all the other fans he knows to see if they can use it for a story. He thinks of monsters, giants, and strange, man-eating plants, of other planets, of destroying entire worlds, and galloping about space in a rocket. A normal person, reading these stories, has terrible dreams of being chased by huge monsters, and carried away by six-inch people but the scientifan seems hardened to these and sleeps peacefully. Very often I have wakened up under the mattress after some of these dreams. When a scientifan finds a fan that differs from his breed he tries frantically to change his thread of thought. But I am a model airplane fan, and I do not change my thoughts easily. Every small insect or reptile a scientifan sees he asks "What would I do if this thing was as big as me?" These eggs that hatch into little monsters that crawl around sucking people's blood are nothing but tripe. But model airplanes teach you the construction of airplanes. What good does this science fiction junk do you anyway?

By Ex-Airplane Fan, Henry Eckermann

According to Mr. D. P. Redwood's version, a science fiction fan is a cross between a cocaine addict and a nut with a persecution complex. Sometimes I wonder if there can really be such a character as D. P. Redwood. Frankly, I think he is a clinic case. After all, he mentions so much about having bad dreams that it makes one suspect. Let me tell you, Mr. Redwood, very few science fiction fans even dream much less have such grotesque nightmares as you evidently undergo. This is significant.

All science fiction fans do not try to change non-fans over to an appreciation of science and science fiction. I, for one, have tried it a few times and frankly, it is like casting pearls before swine so very little do these petty, narrow-minded non-fans think. Their limited brain-pans will not expand sufficiently for them to admit the healing ideals of science fiction; consequently their sub-normal minds continue on their same degenerate courses of thought.

Where you, D. P. Redwood, state "Every small insect or reptile a scientist sees he asks 'What would I do if this thing was as big as me?'" I answer, "Yes, that is true. That healthy mental attitude acts as a preparatory exercise so that the fan's mental capacities will grow and whenever that fan meets with a problem in real-life he is better fitted to cope with it than less prepared people such as non-fans. Science fiction foretold the present American-Japanese conflict more than a decade ago. It is science fiction's task to prepare the minds of the human race to readily accept any new calamity Mother Nature or Man poses in the future. Even the young boy scouts believe in being prepared. Do you remember Orson Wells' famous broadcast a few years ago of H. G. Wells' "War of the Worlds?" As you might remember, hundreds of people evacuated New York city and its vicinity because they really believed that the Martians had invaded Earth. And this in spite of the fact that the announcer interrupted the story four times to say that the story you are now hearing is only a radio drama broadcast. But did the science fiction fans evacuate? No. That is what I mean by the difference in mental attitude of fans and non-fans. Now who are the opium-smokers?

Model airplanes do not teach the construction of real airplanes because there is no resemblance between the modeller working with his razor, knife, balsa, banana oil, dope, etc. and the tools used in actually building real 'planes. Only the outward form (in proportion) is the same. The inward form is not. Building model airplanes is still a child's pasttime. Science Fiction is a training for the mind.

In conclusion I present the following verse to sum up my opinion:

SCIENCE FICTION ENLIGHTENS THE MASSES

Part One: The Actual Model

An airplane has its wings;
A science-fictionist knows things.
An airplane speeds at four-hundred-four;
A science-fictionist goes on a tour,
Moving book pages with the speed of light;
Visioning new vistas with clear sight.

Fleshy fingers fabricate the frame.
Lips inert, though the brain is never lame.
The tissue paper is tautly plastered.
Concepts vast are rapidly mastered.
Ignorance vanquished in battle.
Ha! Hear its death-rattle!

RONDEL

These many years since we began to be,
What have the gods done with us? what with me,
What with my love? they have shown no fates and fears,
Harsh springs, and fountains bitterer than the sea,
Grief a fixed star, and joy a vane that veers,
These many years.

With her, my love, with her have they done well?
But who shall answer for her? who shall tell
Sweet things or sad, such things as no man hears?
May no tears fall, if no tears ever fell,
From eyes more dear to me than starriest spheres
These many years!

But if tears ever touched, for any grief,
Those eyelids folded like a white-rose leaf,
Deep double shells where through the eye-flower peers,
Let them weep once more only, sweet and brief,
Brief tears and bright, for one who gave her tears
These many years.

— Algernon Charles Swinburne

"If then one puts aside the existence of God and the possibility of survival as too doubtful to have any effect on one's behaviour, one has to make up one's mind what is the meaning and use of life. If death ends all, if I have neither to hope for good to come nor to fear evil, I must ask myself what I am here for and how in these circumstances I must conduct myself. Now the answer to one of these questions is plain, but it is so unpalatable that most men will not face it. There is no reason for life and life has no meaning. We are here, inhabitants for a little while of a small planet, revolving around a minor star which in its turn is a member of one of unnumbered galaxies. It may be that this planet alone can support life, or it may be that in other parts of the universe other planets have had the possibility of forming a suitable environment to that substance from which, we suppose, along the vast course of time the men we are have been gradually created. And if the astronomer tells us

Corpse In Boat Discovered by Knights and Burghers

CAMELOT, ENGLAND, OCT. 6, 1261 (AP)—Residents of Camelot were startled early this morning by the appearance of a small boat bearing the legend "The Lady of Shalott" around its prow. Investigation disclosed the figure of a woman, clothed in white, lying dead inside. She was identified by local Reapers as a fairy-like being who had inhabited the myth-haunted castle of Shalott nearby. She had apparently boated down to Camelot during the night by way of the river, perishing from unascertained causes during the course of her voyage.

The Reapers, who came to view the body late in the afternoon, declared that they had, on occasion, seen her standing at a casement in her castle; and others testified that they had, while piling sheaves in the airy uplands, heard her sing.

Little was known of the deceased. She had received no visitors, and had lived in strict seclusion. Travellers passing back and forth on the road by her castle had never seen her, but many believed that they had heard the whirr of a spinning-loom. A Sheriff's posse, exploring the castle of Shalott, verified the travelers by discovering an intact spinning loom by a strangely cracked mirror, and many bolts of marvelously colored cloth. The mistress of the establishment had, to judge by the condition of her estate, been weaving cloth for years, having no contact with the outside world. This theory was supported by the widespread belief that she had labored under the spell of a curse that had, as prophesied, destroyed her when she ventured to gaze longingly on the vistas outside.

The afternoon previous to the discovery of the body, Sir Lancelot had ridden by the Shalott castle in full sunlight, but was unable to recall seeing any notion inside. No one knew anything of the Lady's background or origin, but it was universally believed that she was of noble blood. A few witnesses stated that they had heard her singing a weird melody the night before she was discovered dead. This must have been during her journey down the river.

The Coroner was unable to state the cause of her death, but placed the time of her demise as shortly before dawn. Pending an autopsy, she is currently interred in the Camelot Morgue.

King Arthur and other high officials of the city had nothing to offer in the way of explanation, but all who commented paid tribute to the Lady's rare beauty. Pressed for a statement by reporters, Sir Lancelot spoke briefly of her lovely face, and expressed a hope that God would be merciful to her. Other knights questioned generally echoed his sentiments.

truth this planet will eventually reach a condition when living things can no longer exist upon at and at long last the universe will attain that final stage of equilibrium when nothing more can happen. Aeons and aeons before this man will have disappeared. Is it possible to suppose that it will matter then that he ever existed? He will have been a chapter in the history of the universe as pointless as the chapter in which is written the life stories of the strange monsters that inhabited the primeval earth."

-- W. Somerset Maugham: The Summing Up