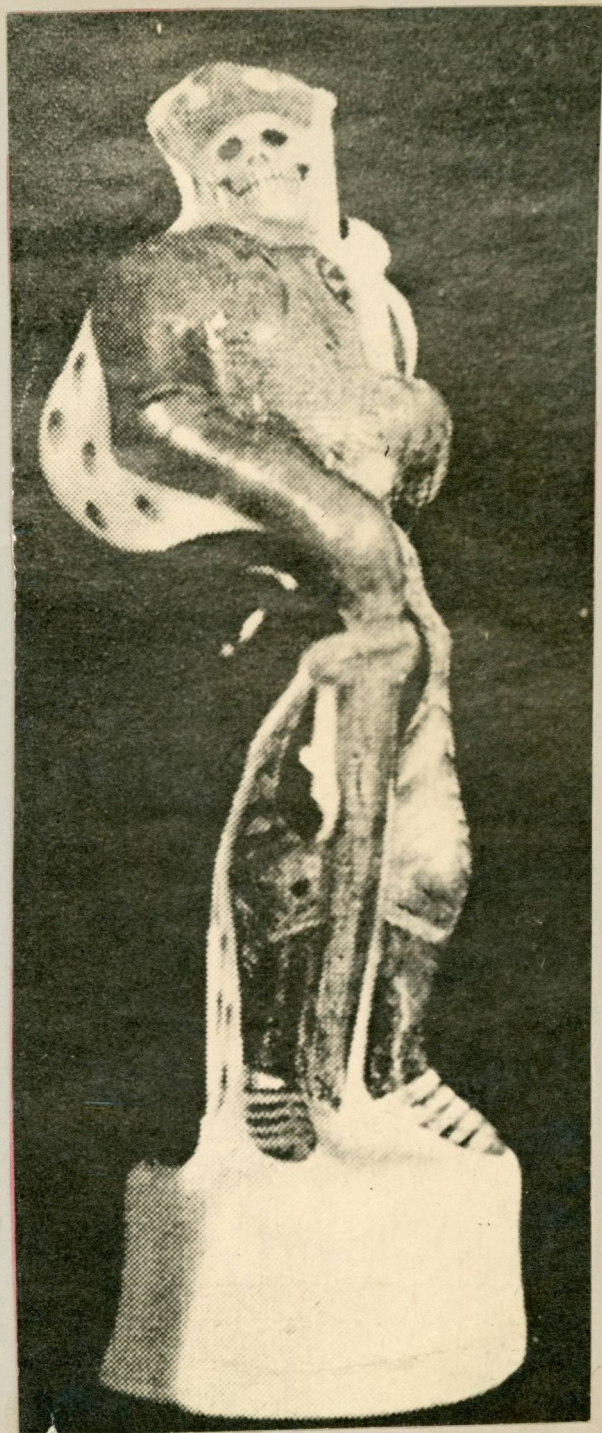
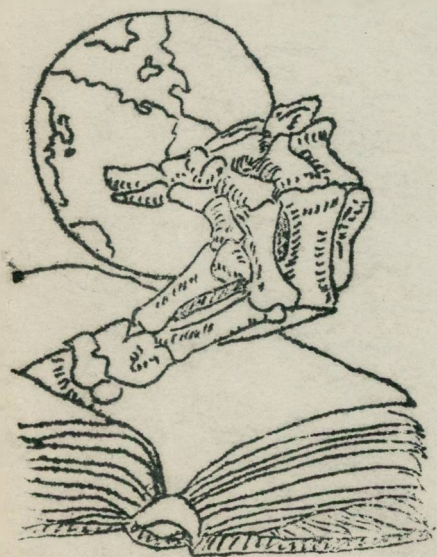


SINISTERRA
VOL. 1
NO. 1

APRIL 1950

25¢



SINISTERRA

THE PUBLICATION OF THE

NAMELESS ONES

VOLUME I

NUMBER I

Of which this is

COPY 169

SINISTERRA

APRIL 1950

VOL. I NO. I

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Production of THE NAMELESS ONES of SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

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Typewriter by courtesy of UNDERWOOD CORP. , 2126-2nd Ave.
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SINISTERRA

Dear Guys, Gals, Ghouls, and Others Who are

NAMELESS:

Here it is at last, the first issue of SINISTERRA. The SIN IS how TERRABLY hard we all worked to get it out and how little we have to offer for our efforts!. We did the best we could with the material and equipment at hand, and any of you who feel that you could have done it better are cordially invited to come and show us on the next issue!

The only editorial policy followed to any extent was to keep the quality of the material used at the highest possible level; and as far as we know all material used is original, and all of it has been produced by our own members. Any similarity to persons living or dead is a coincidence highly flattering to the skill of our writers.

We are looking forward to the next issue with mingled dread and anticipation, and hope that with you it is only the latter. Many thanks to all who submitted material and suggestions, and may we remind you that a Fanzine is only as good as the support it receives.

Ye Editors

(Also Nameless, Naturally!)

SLIGHT ERROR

by R.P. Allen

Three ants met on the nose of a man who was lying asleep in the sun. And after they had saluted one another, each according to the custom of his tribe, they stood there conversing.

The first ant said, "These hills and plains are the most barren I have known. I have searched all day for a grain of some sort and there is none to be found."

Said the second ant, "I too have found nothing, though I have visited every nook and glade. This, I believe, is what my people call the soft moving land where nothing grows."

Then the third ant raised his head and said, "My friends, we are standing now on the nose of the Supreme Ant, the mighty and infinite Ant, whose body is so great that we cannot see it, whose shadow is so vast that we cannot trace it, whose voice is so loud that we cannot hear it and he is omnipresent!"

When the third ant spoke thus the other ants looked at each other and laughed.

At that moment the man moved and in his sleep raised his hand and scratched his nose, and the three ants were crushed.

from -

The Madman, His Parables and Poems

by Kahlil Gibram

* * *

From every corridor, from every street, from the lowest of the sublevels to the highest, came streaming the masses of the ultimate commune. Workers and scientists, technicians and engineers, guardsmen and statisticians, important and unimportant were pushing against each other in their eagerness to arrive at the central meeting place. The Commissar of Science and Progress was to speak on the subject of "Service to the State." The very air was expectant, and snatches of conversation, overheard in passing, reflected the common mind. "It's not the first time he's spoken publicly, but from what I hear--."

"They say he is more brilliant than the last one. Of course, according to the Eugenicist, he's a perfect duplicate."

"This will be the thirtieth time I've heard this speech, but it gets better and better each---."

At last the immense throng was seated, and quiet was finally obtained by the chairman on the dais. By "quiet" we understand that the expectant multitude was united in mental reception. Communication by sound waves had been supplanted by mental telepathy so long ago that the speech organs had degenerated to mere vestiges.

The Scientist was the center of all eyes as he approached the dais with quiet dignity.

Suddenly, the tremendous quiet was shattered by shocks of surprise. Pushing the approaching scientist out of the way, a strange figure was seen climbing to the dais. With eyes over-bright and with quick gestures, he was projecting above the normal level. "The time has come! The time has come, my people. I am the Messiah foretold in the old forgotten prophesies. I have come straight from the world beyond the veil, the paradise to which all true believers will go after death. The Supreme Being, appearing many times to me in visions, has shown the way to your salvation."

Things like this just didn't happen. The Messiah was carried out jerking and cursing by a detachment of guards.

As though nothing out of the ordinary had occurred, the Scientist proceeded to deliver his usual polished address. "Our historians tell us that back through the countless ages we have maintained superiority over the lower animals because of our high intelligence. In the very dim past, we all lived together in tribes; then, as labor and ingenuity strengthened our position, communal states were formed and in time living was reduced to a science. Where before, we had the chaos of individual action, we now have the corporate state, the perfect social structure. What more could we ask? Such things as disease, crime, poverty, and unhappiness have been unknown so long that it requires fatal stimulation of our most specialized historians to learn any significant details.

"We have come a long way from our rustic ancestors who were constantly in fear of famine and pestilence. The adaptation of the body to division of labor and the perfection

6 of racial memory are the most obvious criteria of our advancement. But suffice to say, geneticdietetic control has indeed made of us a super-race wherein the individuals achieve immortality to all intents and purposes! For the State!" he saluted and stepped down from the platform.

The countless mass snapped to its feet as one, saluting, "For the State!"

Meanwhile, in the eugenic laboratory, a disorderly figure was being examined. The procedure was quite impersonal. Small portions of flesh from here and there were being analyzed by the assistants while the Commissar, himself, was testing certain bodily reactions by dexterous prodding and probing. Practically no attention was paid to the subject's violent projections-sometimes degenerating into actual sounds.

His investigation concluded, the Eugenicist turned to the waiting guards. "Place the Messiah in meditation, pending judgement of the council." and to his assistants, "If there is an urgent call for me, I shall be in the Science and Progress laboratory."

The Commissar of Science and Progress stared myopically at the Commissars of Coordination and Integration. As they attained synchronization, their reception concepts sharpened. "All these investigations prove to me that there is a correlation factor of about ninety-eight percent between the Change and the appearance of this so-called Messiah. After only slightly unpleasant questioning of the late Commissar of Historical Investigation, I have determined that there was a period in our history of a peculiar mental condition known as religious fervor. Cults following certain radical principles were active in retarding the perfection of our social system.

"It seems that there was a world wide cataclysm involving purely natural forces, you understand, which seriously threatened our continuity, and at that time several opportunists seized control of the masses with supernatural propaganda. I might add that, having developed neither racial memory nor the power of thought projection, at that time, we were still limited more or less to individual initiative."

The smooth flow of these stimulating concepts was interrupted by the Coordinator. "This is all very interesting, but what has it to do with this Messiah and the Change?"

"I am coming to that," snapped the Scientist, "As I was

just going to say, this fool claiming to be a Messiah, is 7
trying to revive the old concept of life after death and my
agents report that he is even advocating the abolition of
certain traditional customs--'the Converters,' for instance."

Blasé though their mentalities were, the Coordinator
and the Integrator drew back, shocked. "Not that!" they
whispered, as though the idea were too unclean to project.

Having paused for effect, the Scientist continued, "As
you know, he claims to come from beyond the boundaries of
our world where there are forces so incomprehensible that
they must be attributed to the supernatural, 'God' as he
calls it. Although the Change happened slightly before our
time individually, we are well aware of what happened. Be-
fore the Change, our world was determined by our greatest
scientist to be almost infinite in extent with an abundance
of food, air, water, and all the things of the perfect en-
vironment; then suddenly the catastrophe destroyed our world
and the survivors found themselves apparently marooned on one
of the fragments.

"Making the best of what they had, the colonists suc-
ceeded in producing the highly organized community we now
have. But, as the pressure for survival has lessened, so
has grown the question of the Barrier until today the Masses
are more than a little concerned about it. My engineers
have been unable to break through, and all my data point to
the fact that the boundaries of our world are walls of sheer
force impenetrable to any device at our command."

The Coordinator exchanged glances with the Integrator
and, turning back to the Scientist, added, "Yes, my workers
have reported that several sublevel passages terminate sud-
denly in a glowing wall, which though cold, seems to radiate
energy and dulls the sharpest of instruments."

The Integrator, seeing his coordinator's success, pro-
jected, "The wall barrier does not glow all the time. Ac-
cording to my calculations, there is a correlation of ninety-
nine percent between the wall radiation and the light period.
In regard to the rate of change of intensity, there is actu-
ally a negative correlation which is still being studied."

The Scientist continued as though his collaborators had
not spoken. "It has been my opinion for some time that this
self-styled savior is not really of extraterrestrial origin.
You recall that when he first appeared in the public meeting

8 place, he was taken into custody, examined very closely, and found to differ in no detail from the average normal adult of our commune save for the peculiar color of his back, and the large proportion who can accept his projections means he has genes identical to ours. At any rate, I was not on the Board when he was released or, I assure you, he would have been fed to the Converters just on general principles. Our learned Commissar of Eugenics will be held to account if anything goes wrong; his time is about up anyway. In the meantime, we'll keep an eye on the Messiah."

It was a dismissal, and nodding agreement, the Coordinator and the Integrator returned to their duties much impressed.

Meanwhile, the Messiah was holding forth in one of the lowest sublevel passages beneath the Commune. The walls of the passage were as yet rough hewn. The air was excessively humid and some-what lacking in oxygen. Some of the workers were smoothing and finishing, while others were conveying materials here and there. They required no overseer since each knew its job and did it without question or hesitation. There was scarcely any abstract thinking or conversation going on other than the usual vague thoughts of food or the good of the whole. The Messiah was getting very little attention.

The more they ignored the Messiah, the more excited and intense became his gestures. The fact that he did not seem to be doing any work was not their affair, but to be called faceless slaves one minute and senseless clods the next was quite another matter. Sensing his momentary advantage, the heckler changed his tone to that of a fanatical prophet. "I tell you I have come from the world beyond the veil. I have talked with God. Yes, that's it; I've talked with God! You were not meant to slave your lives away as cogs in a monstrous machine only to be rewarded at the first sign of weakness by a one way trip to the Converters. Why should you live a sexless, distorted life when the Favored Ones indulge their sensual appetites in ease and luxury?"

"Do you see the insignia on my back? I am the chosen one to lead you out of the depths of your misery to the promised land and, there, everyone of you will be a law unto himself forever free of the shadow of the Converters.

As the Prophet paused, the workers turned to each other

and gabbled in confused excitement. Calling for silence, 9
the Prophet continued, "It is no longer safe for me to stay
in this spot. I see that the Listeners have already taken a
bearing on my position and have learned most of what I have
said. I must go, but in the meantime, wait for my signal.
Then comes the revolution!" Staring them all down with a
fanatical gleam in his eye, the Prophet turned and dashed
down the corridor.

A moment later, a contingent of guards came clanking
down the passage from the opposite direction. Stopping at
the sight of the group of workers, the leader jerked one to
its feet and leering into its face shouted, "Where did he
go?" Getting no immediate reply other than a slight gurgle,
he promptly sheared off the worker's head with one swift move-
ment. "For the State!" he saluted. Not waiting for the wor-
kers to salute, the detachment rushed off as one down the cor-
ridor.

The workers jerked to attention and saluted, "For the
State." and turned mechanically back to their work.

* * *

The Commissar of Coordination was conferring with the
Eugenicist. "Statistics show that our birth rate as well as
death rate have altered markedly since the Change. Since
other factors such as incubator technique and living sched-
ules are constant, this must be due, I think, to the varia-
tions in the nature of the food now available."

"I am very glad you see my point," put in the Commissar
of Eugenics. "I have held all along that it is no fault with-
in my control. I might add that some unusable portions of
food actually impaired the efficiency of the Converters tem-
porarily. By the way, what about this rumor I've heard of
the connection between the Change and the appearance of the
Messiah? You surely don't believe any of those preposterous
ideas he has projected, I hope. In my comprehensive report
I submitted to the Board, I carefully pointed out that the
trouble-maker is definitely not an alien in any respect.
My most exhaustive tests proved that his genealogical struc-
ture is identical with ours. I will admit that his bodily
functions are not specialized; for instance, he is capable of
breeding, but that may simply denote careless incubator tech-
nique. There is a probability of between eighty and ninety
percent that he is the same individual that was stolen a dec-

10 ade ago from the state nursery. The scandal was--"

The Coordinator interjected, "Of course I don't believe any part of his fantastic stories. There obviously isn't any Superior Being called God. That myth was exploded so long ago that even the myth itself is forgotten and only the most intensive research into the darkest periods of our history can reveal the slightest hint of such ignorant superstition. Obviously, since we have communicated with all the lower animals for our practical needs and have found none superior, then it follows that we are the pinnacle of creation. If there were a superior being, we could communicate with it or it would communicate with us in some way. As it is, we know everything, and what little we can't readily explain, can be ignored as of little consequence. "For example, the peculiar rains of food, colored liquids, and certain small animals are probably due to the interaction of the walls of force and the surrounding atmosphere--spontaneous generation, you know."

The Eugenacist nodded, "I know what you mean, but I can't agree with your explanation. Even though that sort of thing is a little out of my line, I find it a matter of interesting speculation. I know we have all personally observed, from time to time, some strange lights in the sky; bright enough to be plainly visible even in broad daylight, but have been careful not to mention it to anyone, however, for fear of being accused of incompetence. But as I started to say, it is common knowledge that the imposter vanished right in the middle of a speech to his followers. Several eyewitnesses reported a flash of light, a rush of wind as a blazing chariot carried him straight up."

During the discussion, the state officers had been oblivious to a growing rumbling which now was rising to a clamor. It was increasingly difficult to concentrate on the point at hand with such cries impinging on consciousness.

"We want a place in the sun!"

"Down with the Converters!"

"Freedom and equality for all!"

A young technician burst into the room. "The workers! The workers have left their posts and are now at the very entrance!"

The Coordinator covered his confusion by shouting orders. "Call the guard! Call out the militia! Close and bolt every door!"

The Eugenicist was relatively calm. "Need I remind you that on your recommendations the Board ordered me not to produce any more soldiers, on the grounds that the Change had isolated us from all possible attack! We have just the essential number of state guards for police work, and, as you can see, they are already endeavoring to suppress the revolt." 11

Collecting himself somewhat, the Coordinator paced the floor. "The imposter is the cause of this! If we had only fed him to the Converters when we had the chance. You will undoubtedly be converted for this—for your failure to report his psychological deviation."

If the Eugenicist could have snorted, he would have done so. "On the contrary, you will be converted, because it was you who insisted on his release. Our labor shortage does not excuse your action."

The attention of the occupants of the room was suddenly drawn to the main door of the laboratory. It was bulging with repeated pressure and blows from without. Like the stroke of doom, the door shattered to rubble, and in rushed two torn and bleeding workers. The face of one was horribly mutilated. He had obviously escaped the main conflict by clinging blindly to his companion. The other worker was barely able to hobble forward on five legs, dragging the sixth with spastic jerks, but with eyes burning hatefully, he made straight for the scientists. Although the workers were not especially equipped for fighting, they certainly were much more so than the scientists whose mandibles were atrophied to mere vestiges... crazed with fear, the once masterful scientists collapsed to the floor and, reverting to primal instinct, mewled piteously, --weakly protesting being torn limb from limb.

* * *

Professor Simon looked up from his oldest formicarium and turned to his assistant who was still watching it with a troubled frown.

"Well, this is a new one on me! What do you make of it?"

The younger man glanced up, "I know very well you're trying to get me to stick my neck out, but all right, that's what the Psychology Department is paying me for...offhand, I should say that the full significance of this experiment has escaped us. It is evident that the entire ant colony is dead. Being isolated, this could not be due to the attack of a rival colony; lack of food is out of the question because they were

12 given the usual rations plus vitamins; there is no indication of disease...in fact, it looks as though they suddenly turned on themselves and killed each other. It may have had something to do with ant X-2 which you hatched and raised in a test tube. As you know we carefully preconditioned him with material from the old colony before placing him in the formicarium and he seemed to mingle all right with the rest. If it had not been for the code symbol you painted on his back we would not have been able to keep track of him as far as any outward difference was concerned. It is true, however, that there was an unusual amount of activity in the colony after he was released in it, but that seemed to subside after you removed him. It is also true that, contrary to your theory, he didn't seem to cooperate according to instinct patterns...perhaps early environment does affect the complex genetic matrix...it may be that this aberration affected the colony more deeply than we suspected. It is too bad we took him out when we did, maybe we should check that angle by putting him in this other one..."

C'EST FINI

OH, YEAH?

1st Utopian: "Boy, I can hardly wait 'till my vacation rolls around.."

2nd Utopian: "Where are you going this time?"

1st Utopian: "A swell place up in Pennsylvania that Jake told me about -- two whole weeks in a coal mine, working ten hours a shift and it only costs \$30.00 a day, including meals. There's no amusements, no recreation, no music...nothing but plain hard work every day, even Sundays! And get this! you can get up at 4:30 in the morning and work all day without interruption if you want...Boy, that's the life for me!

2nd Utopian: "You lucky stiff -- you always get the breaks! Here I'll be stuck all summer lolling around the beach with nothing to do but breakfast in bed and picnics and dances and movies while you're enjoying yourself in a coal mine,....some people have all the luck!

Submitted by a 3rd Utopian,
Austin Crane.

Announcing.....

THE INSIDER AND OTHERS
By Haichpee Hateship

Yes, it's available again-the collected tales of the late great Haichpee Hateship, a book that has become a classic in the field! A hermit in life, who lived in a seven-by-nine apartment under the staircase in a Rhode Island slaughterhouse, the late, great Haichpee Hateship (or HH as he is fondly called) was singularly fond of raw oysters dipped in chocolate sauce, and spiced with aromatic gunpowder. He was unable to stand a temperature under one hundred degrees Centigrade, an influence which can be clearly seen in all of his stories - as can the late, great HH's well known hatred of water, which same led one admirer to make the inimitable comment: "Thew!"

Haichpee Hateship, the late and the great, has taken his place since his untimely death at ninety-nine, going over Niagara Falls in a inner tube, as the Greatest American Master of Weird Fiction. You cannot afford to miss the opportunity to read such tales as:

That odd fishing yarn, THE HORROR ON RED'S HOOK

That amazing baseball classic, THE BATS IN THE HALL

That philosophical gem, HOT AIR

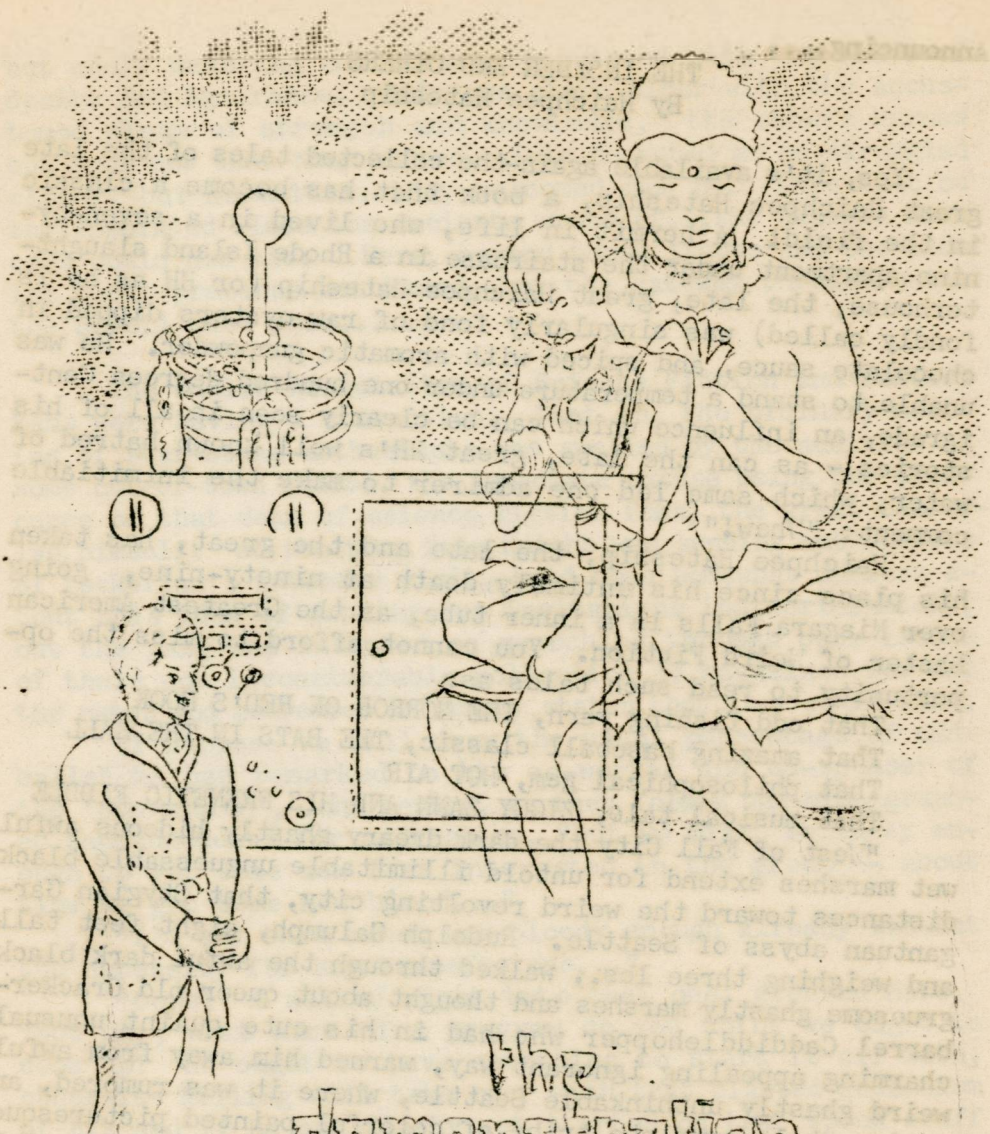
That musical tale, ZIGGY ZANN AND HIS FRENETIC FIDDLE

"West of Fall City the dark dreary ghastly hideous awful wet marshes extend for untold illimitable unguessable black distances toward the weird revolting city, that Stygian gargantuan abyss of Seattle. Rudolph Galumph, eight feet tall and weighing three lbs., walked through the awful dark black gruesome ghastly marshes and thought about queer old Cracker-barrel Caddiddlehopper who had in his cute quaint unusual charming appealing ignorant way, warned him away from awful weird ghastly unthinkable Seattle, where it was rumored, an entire whole complete tribe of colorful painted picturesque vout Nameless Ones had disappeared into the terrible awful heaving sea of mud without a single solitary lonesome trace."

- From THE STATEMENT OF RUDOLPH GALUMPH

Selected and with an introduction by September Bearwith.
You will like this book because Haichpee Hateship is late and great. Jacket by Book.

-adv.



The demonstration

by G. M. Carr



rami Rajandra, in the swirling mists of blackness that billowed about him, moved aimlessly forward - without direc-

tion and without hope in the endless blackness. He had wandered thus for ages, or it may be but a moment - time was gone, direction gone, only the billowing blackness and the steady pushing wind that battered him ceaselessly. How long he had staggered thus, sometimes nearly falling, limbs weary from strain, ever pushing on to some unknown goal, he did not know. He remembered only a dull anxiety for that which he cherished in his hands, whose familiar outline reassured him of its precious safety. He must find a safe hiding place for the Scroll of Ramakrishna, the barbarians were even now battering at the monastery gates. All other treasures had long since departed, only this most precious of them all was left. Soon this, too, would be seized by profane hands - unless he, Srami Rajandra, could find the appointed hiding place. Locked in the secret chamber in the belly of the Buddha, his physical body sat in the attitude of meditation, as, in a desperate attempt to preserve the Scroll, he had projected his astral self to find the hiding place spoken of by the Ancients. Through the dark he fought his way... This was farther than he had ever come before and now there could be no returning. This weakness and confusion was caused by the despairing demands of his physical self, now about to lose that last flicker of life. How long it had remained in suspended animation he had no way of judging, but he knew he could not return to his body until he had found the hiding place for the Scroll -- and even then, no doubt, his fellow priests were slain and there would be none to give him resuscitation. He must go on. Somewhere beyond the blackness lay the five pointed circle tipped with burning incense where the Scroll might be deposited with safety. He must hurry -- for there must still be physical animation enough to make the ectoplasmic exchange with the Substitute that lay within that place and the physical Counterpart of the Astral Scroll he carried. Once that was accomplished, he would let the wind have its way with him --- whirl him away, snap the silver cord that held him ever more tenuously to that silent physical self in the secret chamber within the Buddha's robe.

Finally a faint flicker broke the absolute ebon around him. He struggled on with hope. Another flicker, and another... at last! the five flames... the five spirals of unfamiliar incense! Off flickering lights, unlike any he had ever met before. No strong and disciplined spirits these -

but oddly wavering and strangely colored with the tints of desire and ignorance. Only one shown clear with the accustomed gleam of strength and knowledge, the others burned but knew not that they burned. This he noted as he struggled closer, but no matter, they welcomed him on. This must be the Appointed Place the Ancients wrote of...the Akasaic Records could not lie. Here, beyond those lights and the bodies their presence betokened, lay the gateway through which the Scroll must pass.....

The Paklin Association of Science Fiction and Fantasy Fans were having a convention. That is, the ordinary meeting of star-stung enthusiasts was swelled by the addition of some out-of-town guests, the immediate excuse being the presence of that dean of science fiction fans, the great Lackerlan himself. At the time Nate Knight was sending out notices of Lackerlan's intended visit, he'd been somewhat dubious about this idea of sending out invitations indiscriminately, but the gang had insisted on searching through back issues of their not inconsiderable collection of magazines for all the names and addresses in nearby states that they could find.

"I suppose we will draw the usual percentage of odd-balls" he had remarked to his co-worker and co-sponser of the 'convention', John Kersey, as they folded the mimeographed announcements for addressing, "but we might be lucky enough to get some new fans interested in the group -- about time we got some new blood..."

"I'd say this bunch was bloody enough already without the necessity for any transfusions..."

"Oops! I walked right into that one! groaned Nate, "but way, what kind of a program do you think we ought to cook up? We ought to have something to start it off with, otherwise Rilling will take over with that blasted Buddhism of his and if he and Blacky get started on that spook stuff we sure won't have much of a science-fiction meeting."

"God! That Rilling! What kind of a log did he crawl out from under anyway! How he ever got in here in the first place is a mystery to me. Say, do you suppose we could..... no, he'd probably hale us up for assault and battery if we picked him up and threw him out bodily. I wonder if I could manage to figure out some chemical to put in his hair tonic to turn his hair green if it would discourage him from coming?"

"I doubt it."

"Probably not! He'd more likely try to charge us admission for coming to the meetings because we'd be entering the presence of the only green-haired fan in Packlin - or anywhere else in the world, for that matter. How anybody can be that conceited and live, I'll never be able to figure out."

"Oh, I don't know....I know you don't like him and he gets under your skin with that superior air of his, but we have to give the old fellow his due -- he is a darn smart man as well as a darn good illustrator! He couldn't take Academy Firsts and Seconds as consistently as he does without having something...."

"He's got something, all right, but whatever it is - it sure stinks for my money...He's the most conceited, asinine, opinionated, loud-mouthed old bore that ever afflicted his miserable carcass on any helpless public gathering! Always blathering about that stupid religion of his...that is, if you can call it a religion. Say, do you suppose we could... naw, that wouldn't work."

"What wouldn't work?" Nate asked absentmindedly as he reached for the stamps.

"Oh, I was just wondering if we could cook up some gag on a fake seance or something - some sort of a seance to end all seances and put a stop to that stuff. I sure wish we could get rid of that gang of Psychic Psychos....what the so and so they keep hanging around a Science Fiction club for is more than I can figure out. Sure, I know that a lot of serious readers class Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith on a par with Sturgeon and Asimov - God save the mark! but what gets me is how anybody can believe that stuff!"

"I don't think it would be advisable to try any seance business..I'd rather not encourage that sort of thing and it would be just playing right down their alley. If you want to work up a good gag, why not try working up that skit you and Verna were talking about, you know, the one with the 'directional scanner' and 'matter transmitter' and Stuff. I think that old war surplus panelboard is still out in the garage and we could hunt up a few more gadgets probably to doll it up with...."

"Hey, maybe you've got something there!" John eagerly caught him up, "That would be just the ticket..." He chuckled as he mulled over the idea and burred enthusiastically over its various aspects.

Time went by quickly, and the next two weeks were a ferment of activity. Hersey's volatile imagination quickly amplified Nate's suggestion into an elaborate hoax on the more credulous of the group that would serve to sort out the 'men' from the 'mice' among the expected guests. Some of those dopes, he figured, were so sold on this pseudo-scientific phenomena that they'd swallow anything so long as it came wrapped up in scientific double-talk, and he'd cook up a gag that really ought to slay them.

He put up the panel-board so that it covered one entire end of the rumpus room and behind it he connected several of the noisiest sounding motors he could find - each with a differently pitched hum. The lights on the board were rigged with relays to go off and on at irregular intervals, and the really impressive touch was a little round glass peephole at the top, the 'scanner'. He and his wife spent hours practicing how to run off their home movies against the other side with just the right effect, and Verna carefully polished up a honey of a script to go with the films they had.

Knight good-naturedly put up with the fooling, though with a true fan's ardor he was looking forward to the more serious aspects of the coming meeting. There ought to be some interesting ideas brought out during the discussions that were sure to spring up wherever fans gather, and in the general comparing of notes he might possibly find a clue to the missing 1929 Blasted Tales he had been vainly seeking...

The feverish bustle finally came to an end, and a great calm descended briefly, very briefly. The out-of-staters started coming even before they were expected, and by the middle of the afternoon the little house was overflowing. In the kitchen Nate's wife struggled with the chili, while Alice and Helen dashed in and out with armloads of dishes and silverware. Kids swarmed underfoot, wild with shared excitement as their mothers chopped salads, opened jars of olives, and scurried around looking for platters to hold the gastronomic offerings the arriving guests were bringing.

Downstairs, the basement was crowded. With the rumpus room shrouded in secrecy as John hastily checked over his masterpiece, the little den was full to overflowing. Every bench and chair was taken by an awed circle of strangers and still more came drifting in to line the walls in back. Most of the newcomers were goggle-eyed at the presence of Lackerman, who stood uncomfortably in the middle of the little den,

a focal point for every eye. Even the native members of the club were awed -- they'd been reading his stories for years and the idea of beholding him in the flesh and actually holding converse with him affected them somewhat as though they had suddenly been introduced to the author of the Acts of the Apostles.

Lackerman, making the best of a not unusual position, beamed benignly and did his best to set them at ease. He was used to this hero-worshipping constraint and knew that it would be over as soon as the first good argument started, but in the meantime the conversation, such as it was, would be conducted in fits and starts. One brave soul would dare to address a remark to the guest of honor, but as soon as he answered the silence would fall again. Then a new face would appear, look around the silent circle of staring strangers, come forward and be introduced to him, then fall into the same stunned and awestruck stupor as the rest. Nevertheless Lackerman smiled encouragingly and waited for the ice to melt. Even the regular members sat tongue-tied and dazed.

Then Rilling arrived. Rilling, the illustrator, with fanfare of invisible trumpets. From his polished tan riding boots to his serenely black hair, Rilling was every inch an artist. He knew of the malice of the disgruntled among the Science Fiction fans, but ignored it -- even as he ignored the jealousy from which it sprung. He had no need to meet resentment with resentment -- he knew his power and the Power of Those he served. The shock of his personality shattered the icy glaze that had congealed around the room, and the local fen started their usual slow burn over his uninhibited greetings.

"Well, Lackerman, I don't see whatever induced you to come to this out-of-the-way corner of the world. I assure you I don't see why anyone in his right senses would come to a filthy hole like this, voluntarily. The only reason I consent to live in this vile village is that I require peace and quiet, and a backwoods like this is the place to find it. I assure you that this is one of the most Godforsaken communities you could ever find, and the endless drivel of these immature minds will drive you insane. Why, we're so rustic here that the house where I live and work is right in the heart of town, and yet I swear there are owls around it at night...."

"Squirrels, too, no doubt" muttered an astounded spec-

tator, reeling from the impact.

"Think nothing of it. We have to listen to that for hours, every meeting" explained one of the regulars, "he can keep that up indefinitely. We try to shut him up but it just can't be done. He's uninslatable. That's Ron Rilling, the One and Only, and I've got to admit he is a good illustrator, even though he gives the impression of thinking he's God Himself."

The ice once shattered, the pent up enthusiasms burst forth with mounting vigor. The hubbub and confusion of sound welled out of the den, through the frame walls of the little cottage and was audible clear out to the street. The little white house in its neat green lawn seemed fairly to bulge with the vigor of activity suddenly let loose in it as all the fen started talking at once.

"Now that we're finally all here" Knight had to rap vigorously on the door jamb for attention, "we can begin our convention without delay. Some of you have probably wondered why we're all crowded into the den instead of going into the rumpus room. Well, we're going in there now. You folks may think you were invited here to meet Mr. Lackerman, our guest of honor, and that is true. But it was only part of the reason. You are going to be the first to see something that will never be forgotten. Right this way, please, take a seat anywhere you can. Better bring in your own chairs.. careful, there, its rather dark...."

The group straggled out from one room to another, Rilling still loudly declaiming. He hadn't once stopped for breath since he had come in, and gave no evidence of ever intending to do so.

Knight broke into the monologue again, and continued his introduction:

"Maybe you folks didn't know it, but you're going to get a pre-view of the most world shaking demonstration since the development of controlled nuclear fission. We are in the unparalleled position of having as a member of our club Professor John Kersey, who has been secretly engaged on a project that even the Government hasn't dreamed of yet. He has consented to tell us what it is, inasmuch as the advanced thinkers of this group are probably the only persons on the entire coast with vision enough to understand the profound significance of what we are about to witness. Needless to say you will all be sworn to strictest secrecy!"

He paused and looked with utmost solemnity at the goggle-eyed group that murmured its unqualified compliance..... nobody knew what to think. Even Rilling stopped in mid-word with his mouth still open, to stare in astonishment at the straightfaced speaker.

"Okay, John" Knight turned with a flourish, "It's all yours. I'll vouch for the gang, they won't talk until you give them the go-ahead...."

From the sidelines Kersey moved forward with purposeful dignity. Inwardly he gloated, 'Boy, I never thought he had it in him.....he really is putting it over! Those dopes are really lapping it up. This is gonna be good, I mean, This is really gonna be GOOD!' He wished briefly that the smock he wore were a little cleaner, more professional looking, but the room was fairly dark and the stunned audience was too shocked to be critical, as yet. Now to bowl them over before they got their breath back.

"What we shall prove tonight," he began in dramatic tones, "is that at last it is possible to transmit matter by the use of an energy beam. As you all know, matter consists of molecules composed of still smaller particles known as atoms, and these atoms vibrate continually from the action of the electrons and neutrons that compose them. You see here" he gestured to the panel board and the cabinet beside it, "a miniture of the most world shaking method of transportation, yet devised. By means of a powerful vibrational impulse, matter can be broken down to its component molecules, transmitted along a beam of energy corresponding to the vibration rate of its atomic structure, and re-assembled. So far, I have not been able to transmit much, it takes too much power. Twice I've accidentally shorted out the entire city - an involuntary blackout - that's why it is so important not to mention this to anybody. If word reaches certain persons that I am the one who has been blowing out their huge master transformers, well....." he paused significantly. As he was speaking, his hands had played swiftly among the dials and levers. Motors began humming, lights flashed impressively.. behind the panel Verna crouched in readiness.

Baffled by the steady flow of technical double-talk, only half familiar with electrical apparatus, those few in the audience who had ever had access to a genuine electrical laboratory recognized in stunned acceptance that there really was something authentic about the appearance of the panel.

Others, unwilling to deny any possibility now that those impossibilities of yesterday, television and atomic power, were accomplished facts; stared in open-minded expectation.

Underfoot, the rough chalk circle on the cement floor of the game room was smudged by the broom and scuffed by the rows of chairs, indeed, it was almost entirely rubbed away. The children could make another circle the next time it rained and they wanted to play marbles in the basement. No one even noticed that there had been a circle on the floor. No, nobody even noticed that its faint outline wavered around five of the chairs, evenly spaced, nor that in those five chairs sat five intent spectators, who stirred merely to accept a cigarette and a light from the passed-around smokes; and no one would have guessed that the five who sat in those chairs, Rilling in front, were the only five in the whole group who really expected that the demonstration would be successful. The rest were bewildered, these five were undoubting in their expectancy.

Five motionless figures among all those huddled in the darkened room, five freshly lighted cigarettes streaming up their five spiraling threads of smoke, five questing minds, five souls within a magic circle vibrating in harmony -- and one of them a Master -- the stage was set for a Cosmic joke.

At the panel, Kersey repressed a grin with difficulty, the suppressed laughter lending emotion to his voice as he pattered on with the prepared spiel.

"In order to demonstrate that this machine has actually transported matter across a distance, I have set the direction scanner to pick up a rare and priceless scroll from India. There is only one in the world like it, so that there can be no mistake. You have seen that the cabinet was empty at the start of the experiment -- when I open the cabinet again I hope to find proof not only that the transmittal of matter via energy beam is possible - for that I have already proved in my own laboratory, as I told you - but also that the principle of selective scanning is practical..."

'Boy!' he thought, 'this is sure better than I ever expected! I sure will have the laugh on those guys. Wait until I open that box and they see what Verna slipped in from the other side! Baby! Won't old Rilling be sore! I guess I'll settle his hash, for sure -- look at the way he's lapping it up, and those pals of his hanging around him as usual... He won't be such a Know-It-All from now on, and it serves him right for being such a dope! Him and that spook-

stuff of his! He's practically trailing clouds of ectoplasm all the time from the way he acts! He'd believe anything, just so it had some vibrations in it!....'

Kersey finally made an end to his manoeuvres, dimmed the panel lights, silenced the motors, and made an elaborate play of opening the flimsy cabinet. He directed the beam of a flashlight toward the floor of the cabinet with a confident flourish and watched the faces of his audience to catch the full cream of the jest...

When awed gasps of astonishment instead of sheepish laughter greeted the revelation, he looked down to see what had gone wrong. As his gaze fell on the floor of the closet he felt as though he had been kicked in the stomach with the business end of a vacuum cleaner. There lay a parchment, sere and yellowed with age, loosely wound around elaborately carved ivory rods...Unique...Priceless...

"Hey, Verna," he hissed when he could get his breath, "Where'd you get this? Why didn't you put in the toilet paper like we planned?"

"Get what," whispered Verna, "What do you mean 'get this'? I put in that roll of tissue like you told me..what's wrong?"

"So help me, Verna, I wish I knew!"

A million eons away, Srani Rajandra dissolved in the swirling mists, his mission accomplished, and became one with yesterday and tomorrow. In the looted temple, a bandit's gun butt accidentally struck that particular fold of the Great Buddha's robe that controlled the secret entrance.

"Ho! Brothers, look what I have found! Secret treasure!"

Callous hands tossed aside the starved, yellow-clad body, and probed the chamber for loot.

"Evidently treasure most precious, since the Yellow-Robes hid it in the Buddha and left one there to guard it. What is this strange white paper with the little squares? Is it magic?"

"No, stupid one, it is paper of the foreign devils. It is worthless. Look further, is there not gold or jewels?.." and the Substitute rolled unheeded across the floor, to flutter a long white streamer in the fitful breeze of the deserted temple.

THE END

THE IMMIGRATION THEORY OF PLANETARY ORIGINS

By R. W. Buechley

Numerous physical scientists have felt that their wide acquaintance with atoms, molecules, stars, spectra, ect., ect., fully qualifies them to make pronouncements about politics, religion, and other social phenomena.* This has produced a feeling of inferiority among social scientists. The writer has tried to reduce this feeling of inferiority by an aggression. This article is a counter-attack! Fully unqualified by the prospect of an M.A. in Sociology, the writer has attacked the problem of origins of solar systems, a problem that has caused as many grey hairs to astronomers as the problems of group antagonisms to sociologists.

In almost every branch of science the accepted theories of origins of observed phenomena have gone through a set of well defined stages. The first of these, and the one still in style in backward areas of the world is the "demon stage", where all phenomena are the result of some capricious Entity. The next stage is the collection of these Entities into classificatory groups, the pantheon stage. Then these many deities are collected in one. When men are satisfied to allow their one deity simply to set the stage, not asking that He push the sparrow so that it will fall, but simply require He know about it, science can be said to have come on the stage. The postulation of a set of rules to which every set of phenomena must adhere is the essence of science. It makes little difference whether these rules are postulated by men or are the pronouncements of deity. If the theories that are derived use only the things that men can see, requiring no "little man" to push them around, they are science. If they require a demon in every phenomena, they are not science.

When the first theorist said "This rock is just like that rock, why can't there be just one demon for the two of them?" he started something that has been going on ever since. Numerous phenomena have been classed under one heading, reducing the number of explanatory hypotheses, and making only one big swallow necessary instead of a lot of little ones.

*1. See Modern Arms and Free Men, Vannevar Bush, or any of the works of Sir James Jeans.

25 This economy of thought has much to do with the gains that science has made in the handling of multitudes of data.

Except for LaPlace's nebular hypothesis, eliminated in the middle of the 19th century, every theory that has been advanced to explain the origin of the Solar System has done just that—explain The Solar System—explaining only the one, not as an example of a general process, but as a special case. This is but little removed from using the demon stage of 'explanation. However ego-satisfying it may be to think of 'our' Sun being singled out to have this particular lucky accident, it is not scientific. Lyell's law, that every cause ever operating in the past is still operating, and that every result of past causes is now being produced, seems improbable but it points up the requirement that in fact we need not look far or for causes of a violent, once-and-for-all nature; we should instead look harder at the things that are now going on, trying to see how, if continued for the immensely long times that are available on the cosmic scale, they can cause momentous effects.

According to the current astronomical information, the Sun, in common with the other stars, is traveling through space at quite a clip. This is, in part, caused by its revolution around the center of the Galaxy. The period of this revolution is estimated in billions of years, and the speed of the Sun, in relation to its orbit, is immense.

Also according to current astronomical information, the Sun is not alone in its revolutions. Other Suns, atoms, and particles of every size between, revolve about their common center of mass. Each has its own orbit, and, unless another particle has perturbed this orbit, pursues it until infinity. These orbits are roughly aligned, but only in the roughest sense. Pictures of spiral nebulae show that they are flattened; as much as they are flattened, so are the orbits of the particles in them aligned. These orbits are, as might be expected, usually some form of ellipse. The astronomers who do such things find that the vectors of movement of the various stars for which they can determine proper motions are, usually, somewhere between a 45° and a 90° angle to the line connecting the center of the Galaxy to the star. It requires only a weak assumption to think that the smaller particles are traveling in similar orbits.

Once we put these two pieces of information together, we see that the Sun's orbit must cross the orbits of a very

26 great many smaller particles every second. Given enough time, and given eccentric ellipses, it must cross the orbit of most of the other particles. In a percentage of the cases the other particle will be there at the time. The collision theory of the origin of the Solar System requires that one of these crossings have been with another sun. This is such a remote possibility as to seem very improbable. The rule of 'the bigger the fewer' populates the Galaxy with few suns of the size of Sol compared with the amount of space. The converse rule, 'the littler the more' populates it, on the contrary, with a very large number of particles of comparatively small size.

Due to the operation of the law of gravity, a bit of matter that comes too close to the Sun will be captured (provided, of course, that it is not going 'too fast', in which case it will drill right on through the Sun's gravity field, having its orbit changed a bit, but not to the point of staying around permanently. Even this qualification is not necessary if we understand 'too close' to mean 'too close for the speed at which it is going with relation to the Sun.') Capture has always meant one of two things, slavery or death. Even in the case at hand this rule holds true, viz, a particle that comes 'too close' to the Sun will either simply fall into it and 'die' or be pulled into an orbit around the Sun, which could, by no great dislocation of the imagination, be called slavery. The latter is the condition of interest in this article. We want to know the origins of slaves.

When we consider how the Sun travels in its orbit around the center of mass of the Galaxy, and realize how it could cross orbits with other matter doing the same thing, we see that the most likely condition for capture is that the Sun's orbit be more circular than that of smaller bits, so that it is cutting their more oval ellipses. Thus, as a consequent of the laws of Kepler and Newton, they will have less velocity in the direction of the movement of the Sun than the Sun has. (This holds true only if the general distribution of angular momentum was originally fairly even.) They will have more velocity in a direction at right angles to the direction of the Sun. Thus, if they have the 'just right' speed for capture, they will fall into orbits about the Sun which are in the plane of the Galactic orbits. Depending on their original speed with relation to the Sun, these orbits will vary from

27 circular to ellipses so long as to be almost parabolas. Because of the general rotation of the Galaxy they will fall toward the Sun on the forward side of its orbital motion, and thus all be revolving about the Sun in the same direction. (If, by chance, one were to start revolving about the Sun in a retrograde direction, it would eventually collide with one of the majority, their angular momenta would cancel out, and they would both fall into the Sun.) Their elliptical orbits would interact with each other to become more circular, and the Solar System as we have it today would result from the collection of many particles picked up at the same time, and having the same original momentum, thus being collected in one almost circular orbit. Particles picked up at another time would have another momentum, and fall into another circular orbit.

This theory would predict that almost every Sun may be expected to have a retinue of planets, and that the suns traveling in much the same orbit as ours may be expected to have planets of much the same size as those of our sun. The law of Bode, which seems difficult to explain otherwise, is shown to be consequent on a variation of relative speed of Sun and drift, scattering the planets in distance from their sun in accordance with their original speed.

The rate of meteor fall today is not nearly enough high to furnish anything like the amount of matter necessary for a solar system. In certain regions of the sky there are great clouds of matter, visible only because they cut off the light of the stars behind them. It does not seem impossible that the Sun, in its orbital movement, may travel through such clouds. It also seems not unlikely that, on the condensations from a Laplacian nebula, there were once many more such clouds than there are now. Many suns have swept through the Galaxy, stoking their fires with cosmic drift, and cleaning the drift from the sky. It seems no more difficult to believe that there were once more meteors than now, than to believe that 100,000 years ago ice covered Europe and North America to a depth of thousands of feet.

A further consequent of this theory is that the rotation of the planets is a result of the fall of drift, from extra-solar regions to the Sun, being intercepted by the planets on the forward side as they progress in their orbits.

One heretofore unexplained fact is brought into sharp focus by this theory. The number of meteors falling in the months from January to June is less than one-half the number falling in the months from June to January. This is a measure of the direction of travel of the Sun, the greater number falling on the forward side of the orbit. Thus, half the meteors that the Earth intercepts are falling directly to the Sun from interstellar space. This may be compared with the excess of meteors in the hours from midnight to dawn over the number falling from dusk to daylight.

SUMMARY

By applying the principle that 'causes operating today are no different from the causes in past ages' (Lyell's law) the origin of the Solar System is sought in presently operating causes. One of these, meteor fall, can be shown to result in the sort of thing at present observed. By showing that it is quite probable that in times past there were more meteors than today, this cause can be shown to result in a system such as we see. It further explains the rotation of the planets, and why this rotation is generally in the same direction as revolution. It further explains the agreement of the planets' plane of rotation (the ecliptic), with the axes of the Galaxy. It provides an explanation for our Solar System that makes it but one of many such, a general result of a general process, rather than a special act of creation.



The Nameless howl and cry

"Some juice, please, Mr. Lucifer, before we die!"

What, no juice electric?

What use is electricity if our hide is shivering?

Lucifer's reply:

"Oh, there is the Atomic Pile,

I'll take a little of it and try...

Earthlings are cold - let them warm themselves thereby!

Their hides I'll fry, like pots and pans that

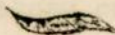
have no need to be dried

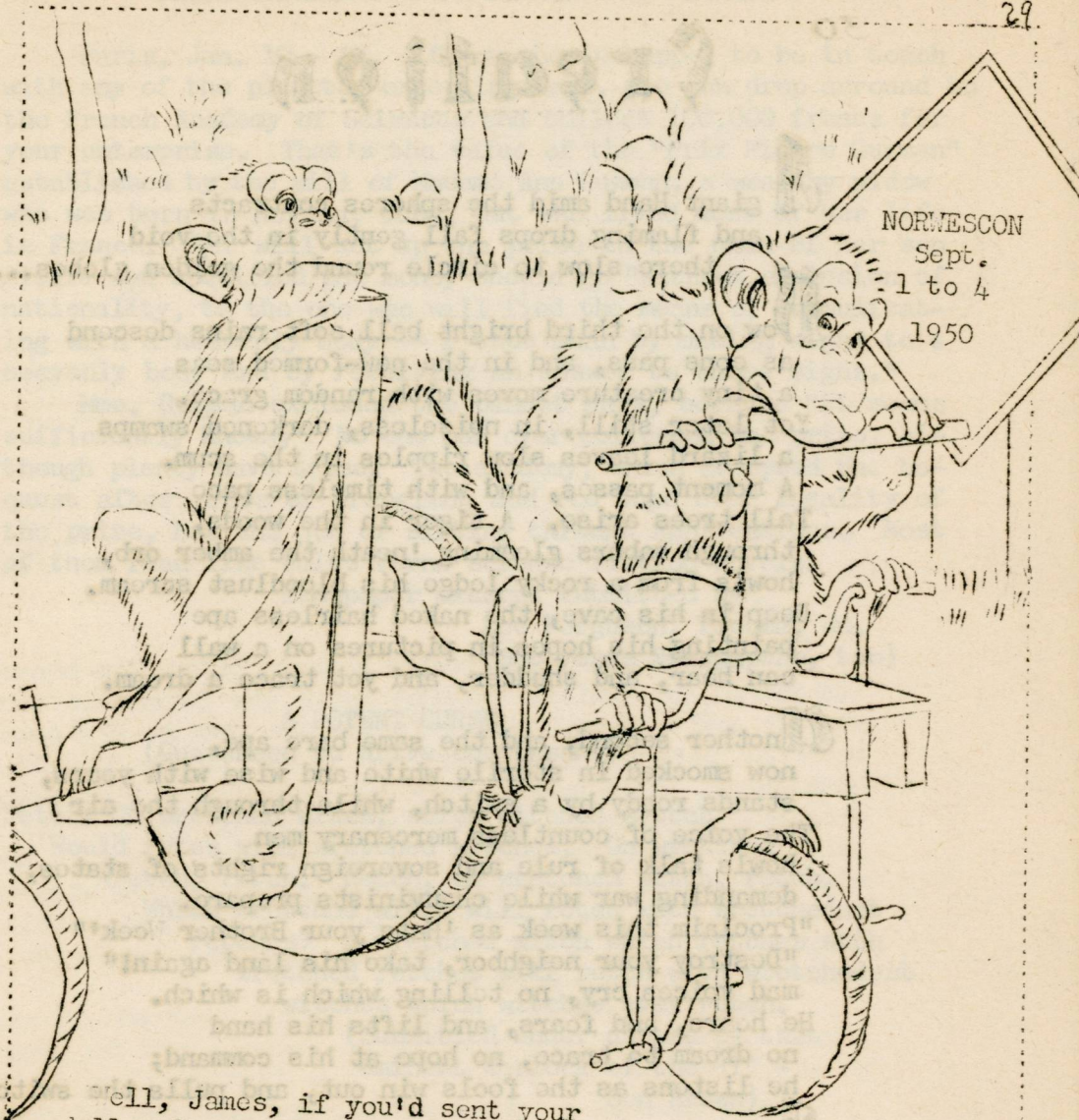
when the heat is applied.

I'll put the heat on those Souls and let them sizzle and
frizzle 'till they blow the whole place down!"

Mary Bylsma,

Sumas, Wash.





NORMESCON
Sept.
1 to 4
1950

Well, James, if you'd sent your
dollar in advance you wouldn't have
to hurry now --

Box 8517, Portland 7, Ore.

Creation

A giant Hand amid the spheres contracts
and flaming drops fall gently in the void
there slow to circle round the golden globes...

Now on the third bright ball soft rains descend
as eons pass, and in the new-formed seas
a tiny creature moves with random grace.
Yet later still, in noiseless, darkened swamps
a lizard leaves slow ripples in the scum.
A moment passes, and with timeless pace
Tall trees arise. A tiger in the woods,
through sabers gleaming 'neath the amber orb,
howls from a rocky ledge his bloodlust scream.
Deep in his cave, the naked hairless ape
painting his hopes in pictures on a wall
can hear, and shudder, and yet trace a dream.

Another second, and the same bare ape,
now smocked in sterile white and wise with years,
stands ready by a switch, while through the air
The voice of countless mercenary men
howls talk of rule and sovereign rights of states,
demanding war while chauvinists prepare.
"Proclaim this week as 'Hate your Brother Week!'"
"Destroy your neighbor, take his land again!"
mad voices cry, no telling which is which.
He hears, and fears, and lifts his hand
no dream to trace, no hope at his command;
he listens as the fools win out, and pulls the switch.

A giant Hand amid the spheres contracts
and flaming drops fall gently in the void,
there slow to circle round the golden globes...

Fred Darvill

Paris, Jan. 10 - AP. If you should happen to be in touch with any of the planets, excepting Mars, you can drop arround to the French Academy of Sciences and collect 100,000 francs for your enterprise. That's the value of the "Prix Pierre Guzman" established by the will of Madame Ann Guzman, a wealthy widow who was born in Havana, Cuba, but who lived most of her life in France. Her will set up the prize in the name of her son Pierre and specified the money should go "without exclusion of nationality, to the one who will find the means of communicating with a heavenly body -- I thus mean by making signs to a heavenly body and by receiving an answer to those signs."

Mme. Guzman excluded the planet Mars, because "it seems sufficiently known." No one has ever collected the prize, although plenty have tried. The academy, which accepted the bequest after years of wrangling and red tape over legality of the prize, has the job of sifting through applications. Most of them read like Jules Verne science fiction novels.

Newspaper excerpt submitted by

Zoe Ferguson, Tacoma, Wn.

(She reads Newspapers, too)

A POTENT CURSE

(Guaraneed to drive one insane)

Retch! Oh wretched witch, which witched wretch

Would retch with wretched witches. Oh wretched

Wretch, retch. Retch, oh wretched witch, retch.

Which wretched witch will retch with wretchedest

retches? A wretched witch which retches with

wretched retches will retch with wretchedest

witches which witches ever retch.

(Submitted under duress by that

eminent Warlock of the "Y" -

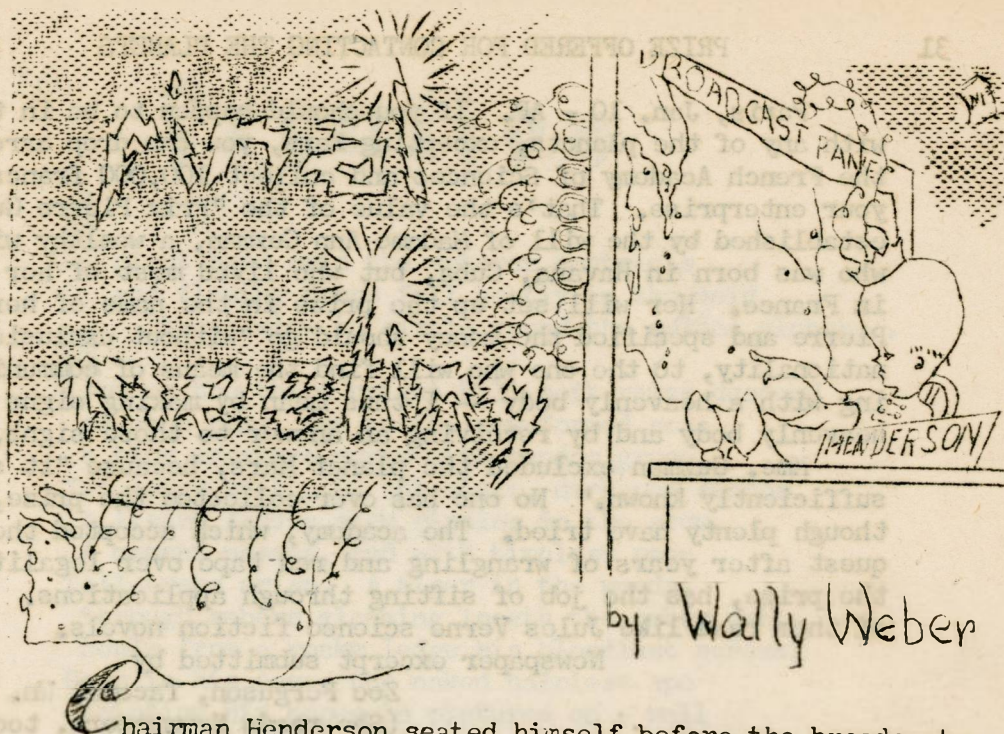
Don Brown)

THOUGHTS ON OBSERVING A SKULL

If I could know the sights those eyes have seen

No doubt my stare would be as hollow-eyed.

The Medieval Medic



Chairman Henderson seated himself before the broadcasting panel. He waited quietly until the automatic controls went on and a green light informed him that he was connected with the personal receivers of every fan in the State of Washington, which meant every one of Washington's seven-hundred-million population over six years of age in this year, 3249 A.D. Somewhere behind the broadcasting panel, a neutronium gavel that was tuned to Chairman Henderson's mind tapped three times on the preserved skull of William Austin, the original founder of the club, and Chairman Henderson spoke into the telcaudio pickup.

"The thirty-three thousand, eight hundred and ninety-fourth meeting of the Washington fans is now in progress. We shall review the minutes of the last meeting."

He depressed a switch and the machine sent out a report of the previous meeting that impressed itself on the minds of the fans in less than a second. A dial on the panel registered the fact that no objections or changes were necessary (which wasn't surprising since the minutes were recorded by the machine in a practically fool-proof manner.)

"The minutes have met with no objections and shall be recorded in more permanent form for the Library records. The meeting is now open to uncompleted business from last meeting."

A plate labeled 'Name Committee' lit up and Chairman Henderson pushed the button next to it. Henderson decided he would be glad when the meeting was over so he could turn the strenuous task of the Chairman over to another member.

In response to the Chairman's button pushing, the face of the head man on the Name Committee appeared on the screen.

"The Name Committee reports that a twenty-story, seven acre wing must be added to the club library to house the microfilmed microfilms of the name suggestions that are being shipped in from Andromeda. The Committee feels confident that a name for the club can be selected from that group of suggestions." The screen blanked.

With a glance at the dials registering fan opinion, Chairman Henderson said,

"The vote on this matter will have to be made orally. The vote indicator for mental replies is still damaged beyond use from last week's vote on what we should do with Richard S. Shaver's remains that were found clogging up the Seattle sewage disposing plant."

A glance at another dial and Henderson announced,

"The new wing has been approved unanimously, apparently it is the club opinion that we must decide on a name soon no matter what the cost. Is there any more unfinished business from the last meeting?"

The dials on the panel remained unmoving.

"The meeting is now open for new business."

A plate lit up with the name "J. K. Ell" on it. Henderson pushed the button and Mr. Ell appeared on the screen.

"I was assigned to the weather control project for the Pacific Northwest, but I've run into a little difficulty, for the small obstructions like the Rocky and Cascade Mountains have been leveled out of the way, but the Jack Speer Memorial is in the way. Unless radically new discoveries are made in the science of weather control, Washington will not be able to have weather control and the Jack Speer Memorial at the same time.

"Are there any suggestions?" Henderson asked. A number of plates lit up but Chairman Henderson pushed the button by the one marked 'Science Advisory Council'. Mr. Ell's face became condensed into the lowest half of the screen and a

34 bearded face appeared on the upper half. The bearded face spoke.

"The SAC suggests that since the Jack Speer Memorial houses only an ancient fanzine entitled 'A', its present large size is unwarranted. We suggest that the memorial be condensed to a size more in keeping with its contents so that it will offer no obstruction to weather control."

Chairman Henderson cleared his throat.

"The Chair remembers that six years ago your Council gained approval to condense a library full of old fanzines to the size of a small bead with the intention of having it mounted in a ring, but the increased density of the condensed building caused it to sink through the surface of the Earth and we never did recover it."

"That insignificant detail has been remedied by a gravity screen that reduces the weight of whatever is condensed by 99.993%," explained the bearded face. "Of course, we no longer retain the foolish notion that such a structure as the Jack Speer Memorial could be set in a ring, but its use as a paperweight may have some possibilities -- except," he thoughtfully added, "for the fact that nobody uses paper any more."

Mr. Ell once again drew attention his way.

"I would like to offer the suggestion that we make use of the professor's gravity screen and whatever extra propulsion we might need to move the memorial completely off the Earth and make it a second satellite to the Earth."

The cheers of the fans caused the audio vote-counter to register nearly unanimous approval.

"Mr. Ell's suggestion has been made official by majority fan approval," Chairman Henderson declared. He switched the two faces off the screen. "Any more new business," he asked, hoping there wouldn't be.

A plate labeled 'Historian' came to life and Henderson resignedly pushed the button beside it. A nearsighted individual showed up on the screen.

"I have just uncovered some information that must be brought to the attention of the club," the nearsighted individual squeaked around protruding front teeth. "I am afraid it means the finish of our little group!"

The emotion-calculator registered shocked disbelief.

"Ask the fans if they know what a science-fiction magazine is?"

The dial registered only one positive acknowledgement. The emotion dial showed far into the 'Noncomprehension' area.

"You meant to say 'science-fiction fanzine' did 'you' not?" the Chairman wanted to know.

"No, I said and meant magazine."

"Then there is only one fan who registered knowledge of what a science-fiction magazine was."

"And that fan was me!" the Historian shouted. "And according to the records in the club library, the purpose of this club is to afford a gathering for science-fiction fans. How can we be a gathering of science-fiction fans when there is no longer any such thing as science-fiction?"

"But there is such a thing," protested Henderson, "Science-fiction is us."

"Not according to historical record. Science-fiction fans were originally defined as persons who read and enjoyed science-fiction. Gentlemen, the last science-fiction story to be printed was a story by a person named Bradbury, and that was a reprint of a reprint of a reprint. No original science-fiction has been printed for six-hundred years!!!!!! No science-fiction has been written for seven-hundred years! Gentlemen, our club has been obsolete for several centuries.

Fans all over Washington wanted to protest, but each of them knew deep inside that the Historian was right. The inertia of the club had carried it on until its reason for existence had been forgotten. They all knew now that the club no longer had a reason for existing.

The squeaky voice began again.

"I have studied the history of science-fiction and I am fairly sure what caused it to end. It was our club, ladies and gentlemen, and others like it. The clubs became larger and more complex, requiring more and more of the time of its members. At length, so much time was put in on club activities that no time was available for reading science-fiction. Due to the peculiar economic set-up at the time, the publishers of science-fiction either died of starvation or went into other fields. We killed science-fiction, and ended the reason for our club's continued existence."

Silence covered the State of Washington as the facts penetrated the heads of the fans.

"I propose," the squeaky voice said, "that the meeting be adjourned -- Forever!"

THE END

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