

# STARDUST

the magazine  
unique

Vol. 1

No. 2

May 1940

20c

## JUSTICE IN TIME

BY  
AMELIA  
REYNOLDS LONG

## POISONED SOIL

BY  
WILLY LEY

HORNIG

ACKERMAN

DALE TARR



LIEDERMAN'S GENERATOR by Robert Moore Williams



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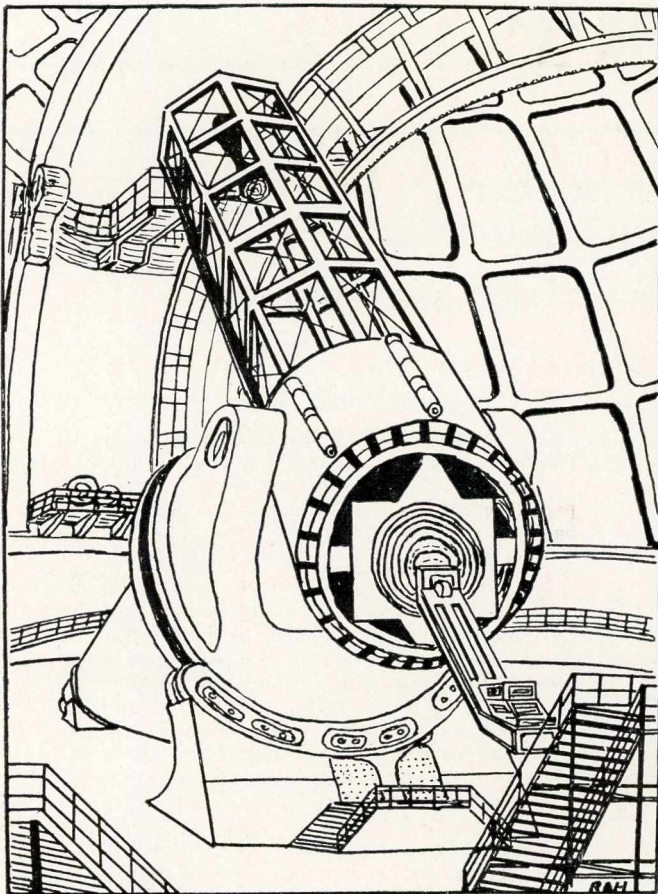
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Cover by Jack Binder - Interiors Quaiver and Mazurek

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STARDUST solicits manuscripts which are slightly different from the Editorial policies of the professional magazines, and which would see publication but for this reason. STARDUST is a member of the QUILL & SCROLL, International Honor Society of Journalism.



*Let's Discuss It*

EYE

*to*

EYE

*With The Editor*

It has long been a question as to what author, and what story, have stood foremost in the minds of science fiction fans and readers throughout the world. To date, this question has not been satisfactorily answered. Would you like to see that problem settled? If so, then STARDUST will prove to be the means of obtaining that solution, for with this issue, the first of a series of contests is inaugurated.

This first contest was suggested by Dan E. Wade of Seattle Washington, in a recent letter to your editor, and as his letter was the first of many others on the same theme, this contest was evolved.

All you have to do is write a letter to STARDUST, and state your favorite science-fiction author, and science fiction story of all time, together with 25 words or less on why you chose that particular author, and that particular story. (The story does not necessarily have to be a work of the author you choose.) To the person who comes closest to selecting the winning author and story, a copy of the Book Special for May, on the SCIENCE FICTION SERVICE page, will be sent free. Here is your chance to see how closely your selection matches those of the rest of fandom. So whet your memory, thumb through your collection of science fiction books and magazines, and find your favorite author and story!

If you have any special contests in mind that you should like to see in STARDUST, why send them right in to ye Editor. I shall try to bring you a new, and different contest each issue. Let's see some action with those mighty pens!

The most popular story in the March issue of

STARDUST, was *QUEST OF THE GODS* by ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS. Running a close second was, *RETIREMENT* by L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP. "Off-trail" stories have proved their merit, and you may rest assured that many more will be presented to you in coming months. Authors have proved enthusiastic over this new policy, and thrilling, different stories are constantly pouring into your editor's office. These "off-trail" stories will be presented in coming issues. Watch for them!

In all the time you have read science-fiction, has there ever been any particular item, article, department, etc. which you have longed to see in the pages of a science-fiction magazine? Think hard. If so, communicate with STARDUST and state the exact particulars of this secret wish. STARDUST wants to bring you things you have always wanted, but which you have not as yet received. So drop us a line, and we will see. . . .

As was promised, a reader's section is inaugurated with this issue. Send in your comments on STARDUST. Vote for your favorite story and article per issue. Too, if you wish, let's start a few discussions. If you have anything to talk about which will prove of interest to other readers, why start discussing! . . . THE EDITOR AND THE FAN is waiting. . . .

Next month will be featured another of ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS very popular stories. This time, *THE CYCLE OF AGE*, a gripping story of the future . . . when mankind has met his destiny! For sheer beauty, drama, power, and emotion, this tale of

*Concluded on page 22*



# LIEDERMAN'S GENERATOR

By

ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

(A SEQUEL TO - "THE MAN WHO LOOKED LIKE STEINMETZ")

In June, 1938, a story appeared in Thrilling Wonder Stories, which was destined to become one of the most popular and often re-read stories of the year—and of years to come.

Thousands acclaimed THE MAN WHO LOOKED LIKE STEINMETZ as a marvelous piece of literary work. And they demanded a sequel . . .

Today, I am proud to present, LIEDERMAN'S GENERATOR, sequel to that well received story of 1938. A sequel, which I believe will be acclaimed as much, or more so, than it's predecessor.

ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS is back. And from the looks of things, he will be back many times in the near future. You the reader have decided that by the way you received QUEST OF THE GODS in the last issue of STARDUST. And Mr. Williams is glad to be back too . . .

Joseph Liederman was a mystery. Where he came from nobody knew. But that he brought with him one of the most powerful discoveries in modern science, could not be denied. And because of this, Joseph Liederman, the man who looked like Steinmetz, was doomed to die . . . The story of this mysterious character ended with his death . . . supposedly. Little was it realized how the power of that little man was to continue—even after his death. And so we take up the threads of the story, a story that for sheer power, drama, and emotion, will be difficult to equal . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

A sequel to The Man Who Looked Like Steinmetz.

Except for screwing on the top, the Time Capsule was ready, and barely ahead of the deadline; for outside, on the vacant lot across the street where already structural steel was beginning to climb into the sky, I could hear a band playing.

Jack Forbes, our public relations expert—press agent, actually—was congratulating himself. He leaned back in his chair, and the enthusiasm which he maintained under forced draft day and night puffed out of him in windy words.

"Boy, is this a stunt! Watson ought to increase my salary for thinking this up. We've made the front pages of every newspaper in town already. Nationwide publicity; pictures, interviews. . ."

You could tell that just thinking about getting pictures into half a dozen news magazines awed him. He had put one over on the editors, got them to take as news something that was really publicity, and should have gone into the advertising columns at so much per inch.

I grunted, and he thought I was expressing admiration, but was too niggardly to give him the praise he thought he deserved, except in the form of a grunt. He glowed all over.

And then the private door of my office opened, and I forgot all about Jack Forbes, and his time capsule, which was to be opened 5000 years from now, so the people of that day could learn how the world worked back in the past, and probably get a big laugh out of it.

I forgot all about Jack Forbes. . .

For through that door, cringing, and looking back over his shoulder—horrid burns on his face but still recognizable—came one of the men who had killed Joseph Liederman and stolen his generator. Do I remember him?—I'll never forget him as long as I live, just as I won't forget Joseph Liederman, the man who looked like Steinmetz.

And behind him, a gun in his right hand and a box under his left arm—a box that very much resembled another box I had spent six months trying to forget—came Horse-face Harry Schultz, head of our engineering department. He was looking as grim as death itself, and twice as determined.

I was half out of my chair, my mouth open, staring. For Schultz—or that rat ahead of him—had found that lost box, or another one like it, had found the generator that I hoped would never be found, the generator that would upset our economic civilization more surely than a thousand tons of nitro-glycerin exploded under Wall Street!

Jack Forbes was on his feet, his eyes as big as buttons. He gulped once, and then exploded.

"Hey, what's this? What are you doing with that gun? Who is this man? What've you got in that box? What happened?" You could see publicity sticking out all over him, you could see he was already thinking up a lead for another story to beguile the editors.

I don't know where I found the harshness I put into my voice, or how I knew what had to be done.

"Get out, Forbes," I snapped. "Go take a walk for yourself."

He looked at me in stunned surprise. The little wretch had expected support from me, and when he hadn't got it, it had hurt him as bad as a punch in the nose from a friend.

"But Mr. Collins. . ."

He always remembered I was assistant to the president, and in consequence I was Mr. Collins to him.

"You heard me!"

"But. . . But. . ." He didn't want to go. "But my time capsule. . ." He pointed to that tube five feet tall and two feet thick sitting on one end in a corner of the office. "They're getting ready to lay the cornerstone of our new building across the street."

Watson is due to make his speech any minute now. The photographers are there. I've got to have my time capsule. . . ."

"Come back in an hour," I walked around the desk, and even Schultz, who never calls me anything but Ben, and usually "Damn you, Ben," looked surprised.

"Go take a walk for yourself, Forbes. If you show up here before forty-five minutes, I'll fire you as sure as hell. . . . Stall off that corner-stone laying, if you have to. But right now you're taking a walk!"

He went out the front door on the run, looking like a rat suddenly, and unexpectedly in need of a hole.

He didn't need a hole half as much as I did.

"Good work, Ben," said Schultz grimly. "This—whatever it needs—doesn't need publicity."

I turned to him. Then I walked around my desk and collapsed into my chair. That swivel was a sort of a hole for me, for in it, in a small way, I was king.

"Get on, you," Schultz prodded the other rat with his gun, prodded him to a chair, where he sat, uneasy and squirming, and obviously in need of a hole too.

Without turning his back to him, Schultz stepped sideways and eased that box to my desk, just like Liederman had set his box there, and just as carefully.

Schultz was trembling, but I thought it was for the same reason I was. I found out otherwise.

He sat that box on my desk. He jerked the lid off, lifted out a bunch of papers that looked like notes, started digging into the construction of that generator, and I knew why he was trembling.

How he had found that box didn't matter to him. The rat squirming in the chair didn't matter. All that mattered was how the generator worked. Schultz was an engineer, just like Liederman was an inventor. They didn't know, or care, about anything except how gadgets worked. The fact that this generator was a wad of dynamite didn't matter. Or perhaps they didn't know, hadn't thought about the economic results, the political upheavals, that would follow the introduction of Liederman's generator. They were experts in their line, but they didn't know much outside of it.

Schultz was panting with eagerness as he dug into that box, and I was panting too, but not with eagerness.

"Harry Schultz!" I rasped. "Tell me where you got that thing. Tell me what happened."

He looked up, and his face fell at the thought of having to postpone his investigation. But he looked twice at me. There must have been something on my face too.

"Oh . . . Oh . . . I saw Johnny here," he waved the gun toward the scar-faced man in the chair, and Johnny flinched, "and remembering that Liederman had mentioned that two men—Two!—I wonder what happened to the other one?—that two men had been trying to break into his workshop, so I followed Johnny, and he led me to Liederman's lost laboratory."

The laboratory that all the city police, and all the private detectives Watson hired, hadn't been able to find. Schultz had found it. All he had to do was to find Johnny. It was as simple as that.

"Harry," I said, and I was shocked to hear how harsh my own voice could be. "I'm giving you just ten seconds to tell me where that lab is . . . Hells bells, man . . . All the dicks in town looked for that, and couldn't find it. . . ."

Hidden in some dark cellar—I wondered—with a concealed trap-door for an entrance, some hole in

the ground, dark and noisome and away from the sight of day, some hole that only genius could tolerate? Or in some forgotten attic in some forlorn tenement, where the odor of cooked cabbage had soaked into the walls until it could never be gotten out? Or—where?

"I saw Johnny," said Schultz. "He was getting into the elevator on the first floor. Ben, that was a moment!—I don't know how I controlled myself, how I pretended I didn't know him. . . . I rode up on the elevator with him. He got off at the fifth floor. . . . I went down to my lab and got my gun and waited. . . . Ben, all the time the detectives were looking for Liederman's workshop, and swearing it couldn't be found, it was right here on the fifth floor of our own building, among the offices we rent out!"—

I didn't know I was holding my breath until I exhaled it in a panting sigh. Right here in our own building! The building we were leaving for a grander, bigger edifice across the street. Of course it could happen. Liederman had rented an office, paid the rent a year in advance, and moved in. There are more than a million people in this city, and if you want to hide, do it in a building where hundreds of people come every day. And Liederman had been hiding, thought I didn't know from what. . . .

Right there under my nose, or rather, over my head. There was silence in that office, labored silence. Through the open window from the street I could hear a band playing.

Schultz had told his story, and that was all that mattered to him. He stuck his nose back into the box.

"This is not the same generator that Liederman demonstrated to us," he announced. "It's another one, just like it." He turned to the man he had called Johnny.

"What happened to the other one?"

Johnny squirmed. I wonder what his name really was?—"I know nothing," he panted, and then the substitute that he used for courage flared. "No right you have to hold me. . . . A man asked me to call at that office and this box pick up. . . . At me you point a gun when I come out. . . . A free country this is. . . . You have no right. . . ."

There was, in his voice, the taint of a foreign accent. He knew the words, all of them good American words, and many of them slang, but he didn't get them in their proper positions. And his accent was the same as Liederman's.

Whoever Liederman was, whatever he had been, he and this rat were from the same country. The fear that the sight of that box aroused in me grew deeper as I heard this man talk. For it meant. . . .

It didn't mean anything to Schultz. If Johnny didn't want to talk it was all right with him. He had more important business than to talk with rats.

He forgot all about Johnny, and stuck his nose back into that box, and because the gun was in his way, he handed it to me. "Here, Ben. Put a slug in Johnny if he tries to run. I'm going to find out how this thing operates."

Poor Schultz! When he had got out of the hospital, where a slug from the same gun that had killed Liederman had put him, he had moped around his laboratory winding some of the craziest coils you ever saw, buying peanut tubes by the dozens. And when he didn't get any results, he would swear weakly, and try again. For he had seen that generator, and the coils and the tubes in it, and it had nearly unhinged his technical mind.

Now he had a duplicate of it to dismantle, and

notes to study. Now he was in heaven, for to him heaven meant tools to work with and something to build.

He jerked his head up, and his gray eyes were bright with light.

"Ben, Liederman said the action of this generator was similar to a catalyst. It pierced through to some tremendous source of power . . . Ben, there is a current of something like ten million amperes flowing between the magnetic poles of the earth . . . I wonder. . . ." And then he frowned. "No . . . That isn't right, for the current produced by this generator isn't electricity. It's similar to it, but it isn't the same. I thought maybe Liederman had tapped the current flowing between the poles of the earth. . . ." A little of the light went out of his eyes, but only a little, for even if that wasn't the answer, there was an answer, and he would find it.

He was back in that box again, his long fingers touching the contents lovingly, his eyes roving from rotor to coil windings, to condensor, to input switches, and to output plugs.

He looked up. "I wonder if this thing taps the free energy of sub-space?" I could see he was thinking aloud, and I was trying to think silently. "Or perhaps the energy of space itself. . . ." He shook his head. "I would say that such a thing is impossible—I would say there is no energy of sub-space or of space itself—If I hadn't seen this thing operate! Ben, do you remember how it turned that testing motor in our lab?"

As if I could forget!

He didn't wait for an answer. He wouldn't have listened if I had answered. He was in heaven, was horse-face Harry Schultz. And I, Benjamin Collins, Assistant to the president of an unnamed electric power company, was in hell.

For I was thinking those bitter thoughts again, the same fear I had known when Liederman, in our lab, was wrinkling his nose at the foul odor of burning leather on a brake drum that could not stop a motor attached to his generator.

Thinking that one of his generators in a car would make an electric automobile, and that Oklahoma, and East Texas, where the derricks march in ordered rows for miles and miles, and nobody would need that country for much besides a desert after the oil industry had collapsed with the introduction of Liederman's invention. . . . Thinking of the thirty-seven million dollars we have invested in generating equipment and power lines, equipment that would not be worth its price at the junk yard, thinking of the people who had invested their savings in our stocks and bonds. . . .

Thinking, with the oil and power industries in chaos, what a grand tail-spin our economic civilization would take.

If only we had a sound economic civilization! If only there weren't such things as depressions and recession. . . .

What a mess would follow the introduction of Liederman's generator! Cheap power, men out of work, millions of men out of work. No Help Wanted Today. . . . No Help Wanted at Any Time . . . Go on and starve. Pick gravel with the chickens. Let the ravens feed you. . . .

If only science had control of manufacturing and distribution! Especially distribution, so the economic gains of the machine could be distributed to the many. Then Liederman's generator would be a

godsend, a blessing manifold. . . .

*But . . . it wasn't that way.*

Schultz was panting like a kid in toyland. "Ben, I'm going to turn the juice into the motor that actuates the primary coil. This generator is self-contained, just like the one he demonstrated for us. I'm going to test it. . . ."

And after that—do you know of any nice clean caves? If you do, I'd like to rent one to live in, for after this invention hits the market, I won't be able to pay rent on anything else.

"Wait. . . . Wait. . . ." I was begging him.

He wasn't afraid. "Wait? What for? I watched Liederman, and all you have to do is turn this switch!"

He turned it. I was half out of my chair, expecting anything.

But nothing happened. There was a fumbling buzzing inside the box, the primary coil turned slowly, two or three times, and then quit turning.

Schultz looked like a kid who has lost a sack of prized candy. He dug into the box feverishly. "The batteries are dead."

And he knew what to do about that. "Wait a minute and I'll run down to my lab and get some fresh ones. . . ."

He started to leave, turned back in doubtful hesitation.

"Perhaps it would be better to take the generator down there. . . . No, somebody would be sure to see us. I brought it here in the first place because your office was nearer, and I don't want anybody to get even a glimpse of that box. . . ."

The rat, whom Schultz called Johnny, and I, watched him go.

I looked at the rat and he looked at me, but he looked mostly at the gun in my hand, as if that was the only thing he understood, and certainly the only thing he respected. And, with the memory of that foreign accent of his in my mind, I think a gun was the only thing he *could* understand and respect.

His eyes shifted away from me and the scar on his face burned like a red blotch on white paper.

I walked around the desk. There must have been something in my voice from the way he jumped when I spoke.

"All right you! What happened to that other generator, the one you thugs stole?"

He squirmed and would not meet my eyes. He was a liar, an evader, by instinct and training.

"I know nothing. . . . I know nothing. . . . A lawyer, I want. . . . A free country, this is. You have no right to hold me!" Jerky, whipped and broken, with only shreds of defiance clinging to his voice. Somewhere the spirit had been taken out of him, somewhere he had been whipped for not obeying orders.

But he remembered this was a free country, and he was willing to take advantage of its institutions, the rat!

I swung the pistol up, until it was pointing straight between his eyes. The click of the hammer coming back was loud in that silent room.

"In this country you're wanted for murder, for killing a defenseless man. And that means the electric chair, if proven guilty. . . . But because this is a free country, you'll get a fair trial—from the authorities. From me, you'll get something else. . . . If you don't answer my question, before God, I'll shoot you right between the eyes. . . . I won't have to stand trial for it either, for you're a wanted criminal."



And before God, I meant it. At that moment I would have shot him. And he knew it. He respected that pistol, which was to him the symbol of power and of strength.

He broke into a flood of words. "I didn't shoot him. . . . Fritz shot him. I swear it. . . ."

"What happened to that generator?" Fritz, I supposed, was his companion, but I was not interested in Fritz.

"We got away with the box, but the country we were afraid we could not get it out of. . . . The customs would us have stopped. . . . So we opened it up, the principle of operation to discover. And it exploded. Fritz was killed the explosion in, and I was burned . . . burned. . . ."

So that was why we hadn't been able to find those two men and the generator they had carried! That was why Liederman had carried the box like it was full of T.N.T. Liederman was no fool. If he couldn't control his invention, he intended no one else should. It had exploded, and killed Fritz. It had left a scar on the face of this rat.

I gulped in strange relief. For that other generator was not in existence. But there was something else I wanted to know, something equally important.

"Who were your principals? Who hired you to find Liederman, and obtain his invention?"

That was a question he didn't want to answer under any circumstances. In the shivering fright that palsied him I got a glimpse of a cruel hand strong enough to reach across three thousand miles of ocean, strong enough to put an unholy fear into this rat no matter where he was. I got a glimpse of subterfuge, cunningly concealed but none the less real for all that, hidden sabotage, of spies working in the dark.

This rat knew, if he answered me, if he betrayed his principals, that his number was up, that no matter where he hid, that cruel hand would find him and snuff him out. From pole to pole he might flee, to the islands of the south seas, to the mountains of the west, but nowhere would he find safety.

But I wanted to know. And I wasn't fooling when I cocked that pistol again. He begged with his eyes, and then he saw there was no mercy for him.

Then I learned who Liederman was, and why he had talked with a foreign accent. A refugee!—Just as there is, in this country, another refugee, a man named Einstein. . . .

Liederman, even when he had lived in his homeland, had been working on his generator, and had gotten results. Not perfection, but enough results to indicate that he was on the trail of something mighty big. Then he had to flee, and the dictator had learned, too late, that he had driven away one who might have made his boundless dream of conquest come true, who might have made him dictator over the world instead of over one country. And he had set his spies on the trail of Joseph Liederman. That was why the man who looked like Steinmetz had fled, that was why he had hidden himself even here in this country, where is at least something of freedom, where a man may say what he pleases, and think as he prefers.

There was silence in my office as that rat stopped whining. And into that silence, from the street below where they were getting ready to lay a cornerstone of our new building, there came again the music of a band, a band playing in perfect time a rousing military march. . . .

There were no bugles blowing, there was no sound

of marching feet, for the band played only at the laying of a cornerstone, but in the military march that it played I got a glimpse of the whole hideous picture that was threatened.

Do you remember August of 1939? Do you remember Europe during that month?—The hopes and the prayers and the fears of hundreds of millions of people during that month. . . .

Then you remember the pictures you saw—bombproof shelters being hastily dug in London and plans being made for the evacuation of the city. In the event of hostilities you flee to the country, if you can. . . . If you can't flee, you stay in London and practice with your gas mask and hope you can get to a bombproof shelter in time. . . . They were making gas masks for babies, they even had masks for dogs!

Bombing planes over London. . . .

You remember the newspaper stories you read of the troops flowing into the Maginot Line. . . . And other troops manning the Siegfried Line. . . . You remember the pictures of peasants fleeing from the little towns in northern France. . . . You remember about Paris. . . .

Bombers over Paris. . . .

You remember the fright and hysteria, the millions fearing, the millions praying. . . .

Do you remember that weak peace they made in Munich, the peace that was no peace but which was only an interlude in which to prepare for war?

I remember these things, I remember them too damned well. . . .

If our economic civilization is unsound, what of our political civilization? What of the human race, that cannot, at present, find a way to solve its problems without resorting to war or threats of war?

I saw the rest of the picture.

If Liederman's generator would throw our economics into a tail spin, what would it do to our political structure? To governments, of, by, and for. . . . If it made possible an electric automobile, it also made possible a bombing plane with an unlimited cruising range, and from that what would come?

Bombers over the world. . . .

That was what Liederman's generator meant. Something that should be the biggest blessing ever bestowed on the human race would be its biggest curse. Not because of the invention itself, but because men are human, because science . . . is not!

There wasn't any way to stop it. That box sitting on my desk. . . . What if I threw it out the window? Schultz would put the parts together again. . . . It couldn't be hidden now. And if we tried to patent it, there would still be bombing planes over the world.

Bombers roaring over New York, over Chicago. . . . American planes rising to meet them, the roar of anti-air craft guns, spitting at something five miles up, at a midge five miles away, and bombs coming down at something as big as Chicago, or New York, bombs that couldn't miss. . . . Gas in the streets, gas masks for babies. No; no masks even for babies. We don't have the gas masks; we don't need them as long as bombers fly by internal combustion motors, not with three thousand miles of ocean to cross.

Bombers over America, over the world. . . .

Outside my window the band was playing a military march. . . .

I was sick to my stomach and sick in my heart. I was the sickest any man ever was.

I am a little man. And I wasn't watching history



go by. I was helping make it. And that is something no little man should do. Little men should have security, a rat hole in which to hide their little souls. . . . Or maybe their hearts. . . .

There wasn't any hope.

In that silent office, I could hear two men breathing hard. The rat whom Schultz called Johnny. And me. . .

The silence exploded in a rap on the front door. It was in my mind that it was Schultz returning with his batteries. I took a long breath and forced myself to walk across and open that door. I would reason with Schultz. I would try to show him what would happen.

And a hell of a lot of good that would do. He wouldn't understand, and he would want to know how that generator worked.

I opened the door. It wasn't Schultz. It was Jack Forbes, backed by four husky men.

"Gee, Mr. Collins, I'm sorry to disturb you, but I've got to have my time capsule. I put it off as long as I could, but we're all waiting to bury it forty feet deep under the foundation. The photographers are all there, and Watson is ready to make his speech. . . . I brought along four men to help carry it. . . ."

Jack Forbes, public relations expert—press agent, to you and me. At a time like this he was thinking of photographers, and pictures in the papers, and publicity. If I needed an extra touch to make me sicker, this was it.

I guess I stood there and gaped at him. Probably I had my mouth open. He gave me the funniest look, as if he wondered if I had gone crazy.

But I was thinking. . . .

"You can have your capsule in just three minutes," I barked at him, slamming the door in his face.

And the rat whom Schultz called Johnny sat there and gaped at me in turn. I felt a little sorry for him. He didn't have any more hope than I did.

I waved my pistol toward the side door.

"Get out!" I said.

He gulped once, his face working, the scar burning like a red blotch on white paper.

He went through that door like a hard-pressed rat finding a totally unexpected and un hoped for hole in which to hide.

My head hurt. It split wide open with an ache big enough to engulf the world. It was the biggest headache any man ever had. If the pains suffered by all the people in the world had been condensed into my head, they would have made an ache just like that.

And something was running down into my eyes. Somebody had me in his arms, but he wasn't handling me gently.

I opened my eyes. My hand went up to my head, and when my fingers came away, they were sticky.

Horse-face Harry Schultz had me in his arms. I never saw such an unhappy man. He looked like a kid that has had all the candy in the world, a sack of candy as big as a barn, and then lost it. He was swearing like no man ever swore before.

"Damn you, Ben Collins. . . damn you to hell and gone and back again. . . I left you here with a gun. . . . And you let that rat slug you and get away with Liederman's generator. . . . Damn you, Ben Collins! Do you know what you've done. . . . I hope you roast in hell a hundred million years. Which way did he go?"

I didn't listen to him. I was listening to something else.

Down there on the street the cornerstone was being laid, with all the proper and impressive ceremonies. And a band was playing. The soft hushed notes came in through the open window. Not a military march. Another song, a different song, the sweetest song I ever heard.

I picked up the words, mumbling them, perhaps, but I tried to sing them. . . .

"—Thy woods and templed hills. . . ."

Schultz looked at me like he thought the blow I had received on the head had driven me crazy. Perhaps I was crazy.

He dropped me on the floor and went rushing off to call the police, to start another man hunt, a hunt that is still going on, but apathetically now, for the police have given up hope. For they never found the rat whom Schultz called Johnny, and they never found Liederman's generator.

Schultz, now that months have passed, is back in his lab, and he is winding crazy coils again, but getting no results. . . .

Me?—I keep remembering that song the band was playing when I recovered consciousness after that chair had connected with my head. It's no hard thing to ram your head into a chair. . . .

"—Of thee I sing. . . ."

I keep remembering that song, and wondering if they will be singing it five thousand years from now—wondering if anybody will have an opportunity to sing it then. . . .

Wondering if, five thousand years from now—or how many thousand years it will be before they open Jack Forbes' time capsule buried forty feet under the foundation of our new building—wondering if science will be running the country then, instead of the politicians. . . . if science will be running the world, instead of the dictators, and the generals. . . .

Occasionally I wonder if they'll be surprised when they open that time capsule and find what's in it. . . .

# NEXT MONTH THE CYCLE OF AGE

By ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS

# POISONED SOIL

(THE STORY OF THE SO-CALLED ALKALI DISEASE)

by

WILLY LEY

The name of Willy Ley is prominent in the field of science fiction. For Mr. Ley is one of the world's foremost authorities on rocket, and space flight. It is truly a great pleasure to be able to present Mr. Ley to the readers of STARDUST in a most unusual article.

A few years back in the great plains region, a mysterious disease suddenly became manifest. A disease which attacked, not men—but animals. This disease, which was called by Western farmers, "Alkali Disease" spread quickly in certain localities. What was it? Where did it come from? How could it be cured? . . . I leave these questions to Mr. Ley who is quite capable of answering them. And his answers form a very interesting, and informative article. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1857 the commander of Fort Randall of the United States Army mentioned in his reports a severe pathological disturbance among the cavalry horses of his post. The horses gave every possible reason for complaint, they grew weak, began to look dull, did not grow satisfactorily and did not reproduce. Moreover they lost the hairs of tail and mane and their hoofs developed into monstrosities that made them quite unable to walk, not to speak about military service.

The best of care and plenty of rest did not help, neither could a cure be found. Commander Madison was not in a very enviable position. His post was situated in the Northern parts of the great plains and there was still much to be complained about in those times. The White Man called himself master of the country but his claim was not fully true; the Indians had an opinion of their own about this mastery. They were peaceful today and warlike tomorrow, just as they believed it more advantageous to them. And the white people who came in covered wagons were not to be trusted too much either. Most of them were honest settlers, willing to work hard in the new country, but many were criminals of all description that had taken quick and silent leaves in their respective native countries. Soldiers and police forces(—they were practically the same—) had to be constantly on watch, more so than anywhere else in the world.

Horses, good healthy horses were essential for their watch,—airplanes were still to be invented,—but the horses grew ill soon after they were transferred to Fort Randall. When brought to other points of the country, they recovered after a while. And they fell ill again as soon as they came back. It was very strange, the more so since no soldier ever showed symptoms of the same or a similar disease.

Soon afterwards farmers began to complain, their livestock was attacked by the same strange disease.

Not only horses, but also cattle and swine, even chickens. There were many farms that could not produce livestock. The animals showed unsatisfactory growth and no reproduction, chickens did not lay eggs and if they did, little monsters were hatched from them. If the eggs hatched at all.

The farmers did some crude experimentation of their own to find the cause of Alkali disease, as they called it. (It was a misnomer as has been discovered later.) The farmers also discovered that diseased animals, if transferred to other farms, grew healthy again, without much special treatment and they even found out that animals were not attacked by the disease if fed with grain and hay from other farms. This, of course, was too expensive to find much practical application.

The disease which was obviously to be sought in the soil did not attack men and it also did not interfere with the production of grain, no matter what type. Everything from corn (maize) to wheat grew perfectly and chemical analyses such as were made in later years could not detect a difference.

The theory was that the soil contained a poison of some type which was not harmful to the plants themselves but which was absorbed by them and attacked later the animals feeding on these plants. That it did not attack men was easily explained, no man lives exclusively of the products of his own fields and thus no man swallowed a sufficient amount of the poison (whatever it might be) to show the symptoms of Alkali disease.

The search for the poison was delayed for a long time by a very interesting error. In 1904 Dr. A. T. Peters reported "Alkali Disease" from a location in northern Nebraska. Looking for the cause of the disease he discovered a fungus disease of corn, caused by a species of *Fusarium* which was simultaneously described by J. L. Sheldon under the name *Fusarium moliniiforme*. It was obvious that the fungus growth was accused to cause not only the disease of the corn but that of cattle and other livestock too. To obtain proof Peters fed cultures of fungus growth on crackers of corn meal and on corn meal to swine. The swine soon showed all the symptoms of Alkali Disease. But this had nothing to do with the corn mold which is much more widely distributed than the disease. Peters' corn was obtained from "Alkali farms" so that the diseasing of livestock could be explained entirely aside from the presence of the fungus. That Peters was actually wrong was proven later by feeding yolks of diseased chicken eggs to rats which died from Alkali disease. In the case of chickens the birds are not attacked directly by the disease, but by their eggs. It is very improbable that the fungus spores should find their way to the ovariums and to the yolks of the eggs and it is absolutely



impossible that any mold, even if present in the eggs, could survive ten minutes of boiling. But the rats died just the same; proof that the poison is not destroyed at least by ordinary cooking.

Two years ago the problem was attacked again by Dr. Kurt W. Franke, chemist of the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station, in a long series of experiments which eventually led to a solution of the mysteries of Alkali Disease.

Rats were chosen for the experiments because it is known that they eat almost anything, and that they are not very easily killed. They were fed with porridge of corn from the affected areas and none of them survived more than a hundred days of this diet. That the rats did not die from any other causes was proven by two other swarms of rats that lived under exactly the same conditions but were fed with corn meal from other areas. One cage was fed as much as the rats wanted to eat while the third cage received only the quantities as consumed of the poisoned corn by the inhabitants of the first cage. Both control swarms did not show the least sign of illness.

Thus the disease was studied very carefully step by step and was already very well known with all its symptoms to the experimenters. But the nature of the poison was still unknown until renewed, very careful chemical analyses gave a clue. Following this clue other experiments were made and in 1935 it could be reported officially that the cause of Alkali Disease was no longer a mystery. It was found that it was element No. 34, discovered in 1817 by the Swedish chemist Baron Jöns Jacob Berzelius and christened, Selenium.

Selenium, famous on account of its varying conductivity for electricity under varying intensity of illumination is not usually found in the soil of farming country. Usually it is found associated with sulfur or with copper ores, i.e., in areas where farming is unlikely. But in the northern parts of the prairies Selenium occurs in some places in the soil, though in minute quantities.

It is not harmful to the plants growing on this soil but since the plants cannot make any use of it in their chemistry they store it in leaves and seeds. While Selenium constitutes only about two millionths of the soil in the "alkalized" areas the plants contain nine millionths. Wheat seems to have the highest "storing capacity" because in wheat plants Selenium was found in as large a percentage as 45 millionths, stored on a soil that did not contain more than one millionth.

As yet no cure for selenium disease, as the malady has been termed, has been found. But there is no immediate need for a cure, especially since those domestic animals that were kept for work can be replaced easily by machinery nowadays. The corn produced on these farms cannot be regarded as unfit for human consumption because it is inevitably mixed with large quantities of corn from other areas in the mill and later in the bakeries. Even if eaten "pure" it would constitute only such a small fraction of human diet that it could not cause any harm.

There is no known case of selenium disease reported from any place outside the United States as yet. But since selenium is also found in Europe it is possible that these American researches may prove beneficial also for European agriculture.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

# "WE AIN'T GOT RHYTHM"

by

DALE TARR

No, sir, fellow science fiction fans. We ain't got rhythm! And when I say *science fiction* I mean *science fiction*; not weird, not fantasy!

I mean just that.

Editors of today, supposedly ardent science fiction fans, tell you that they will take verse, yessiree, and "I'd like it to be a little on the weird side." Harry Warner has said that, and Harry Warner has turned out weird poetry. Bill Hamling, editor of STAR-DUST, says the same. As far as I've been able to ascertain from fan mag contents, all the eds ask for weird or fantastic verse.

*Science fiction* poetry is almost non-existent!

Is it because the readers don't want it? ? ? ?

Are the editors predominantly *weird* at heart?

Perhaps science fiction fans don't write science fiction poetry?

Whatever the reason for this sad lack of rhythm in the field of our heart's desire it must be recognized for what it is and be ousted to allow the emergence of a new, vital, force in science fiction.

I have yet to see a first class science fiction poem!

Isn't there anyone who *feels* the spiritual beauty of a Martian sunflower, eager to receive the caress of sunbeams which come too far distant to give material, healthy radiance?

Can't some genius incorporate the multicolored flow of gases from a space ship's jets into a rhythmic eddy of swirling versification?

Doesn't the thought of eyesearing intergalactic depths stir up emotions which lend themselves to paper?

For God's sake, science fiction fans, how much longer will this field be neglected? Let's do some real science fiction poetry!

Perhaps I should venture a word here upon the structure of this poetry to come.

Poetry always has and always will be vitally emotional. Not in an insipid sense but in the sense that it of necessity is more dramatic, more laden with action, springing from and appealing to emotion.

Poetry is rhythm.

Future poetry, especially science fiction, will not be written completely in one pattern. For instance it would be rather tiring to read two or three hundred verses of nothing but iambic pentameter, the heroic couplet used so much by Alexander Pope.

Another thing. Too rigid scanning of verse will not be important. Scanning is a critic's weapon. Poetry came first.

Rhythm is the thing! Verse will be constructed to make the wording flow rhythmically. Patch line prose will be eliminated. Editing sentence structure

Concluded on page 22

Miss Amelia Reynolds Long is no newcomer to the science fiction field. Her stories have long thrilled fantasy readers. In this present tale, Miss Long does more than merely thrill the reader, for she has added an extra touch—Justice is sometimes terrible.

This is the story of a man who committed a great wrong. He believed that time would heal all wounds—but little did he foresee what fate time had in store for him. He used his closest friend as a tool to gain his end. But the law of chance intervened and the truth about his terrible past was revealed. . . . But this was only the beginning. . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

Weir made a final adjustment on the instrument board before him, and stood up. "Everything is ready now," he announced in his quiet, monotonous voice. "We can sit back and wait for Baugh."

Young Aldric, his laboratory assistant, turned from the window where he had been watching the storm outside twist trees and bushes into the bizarre semblance of living creatures. "What exactly are you and he planning to do tonight, sir?" he inquired.

"He is interested in my time translator," Weir answered. "He wants to give it a trial."

"Oh," said Aldric a little uncertainly. His glance wandered from the instrument board to the complicated machinery beside it, and from that to the six foot square cabinet beyond. Only Weir understood the workings of that strange mass of machinery, and knew what went on within the black interior of the cabinet.

"Baugh is a good friend of yours, isn't he?" Aldric asked. "You have known each other a long time."

"A very long time," Weir nodded. He crossed the room to where the picture of a young girl hung upon the wall. As he walked, his left leg dragged stiffly behind him. Aldric knew that he had gotten that lame leg in rescuing Baugh from an on-coming train when Baugh's foot had been caught in the rail. It was in the eyes of their acquaintances a symbol of the friendship which existed between the two men.

Weir stood before the picture. "Do you see this picture, Aldric?" he asked. "The young lady who posed for it was Baugh's cousin. She and I were to have been married; but she was drowned. A canoe in which she and Baugh were sitting tipped over. He didn't know she was unable to swim. It was an accident, of course." His voice faltered, but his pale, impassive face expressed no emotion. "She was Baugh's cousin," he went on after a pause; "and at one time he, too, wished to marry her. I would do a great deal for Baugh."

An imperative knock sounded at the door. Aldric went over and opened it. Baugh strode into the room.

"Rotten night," he grunted, stamping the water from his shoes. "Well, Weir, do you still claim that you can toss your fellow men into the past and future at will?"

Weir gave him a detached, preoccupied smile. "Since all time is coexistent," he said, "there is no such thing as past, present, or future. They are merely terms which we use for the sake of convenience, and are entirely relative to our individual positions in the time dimension."

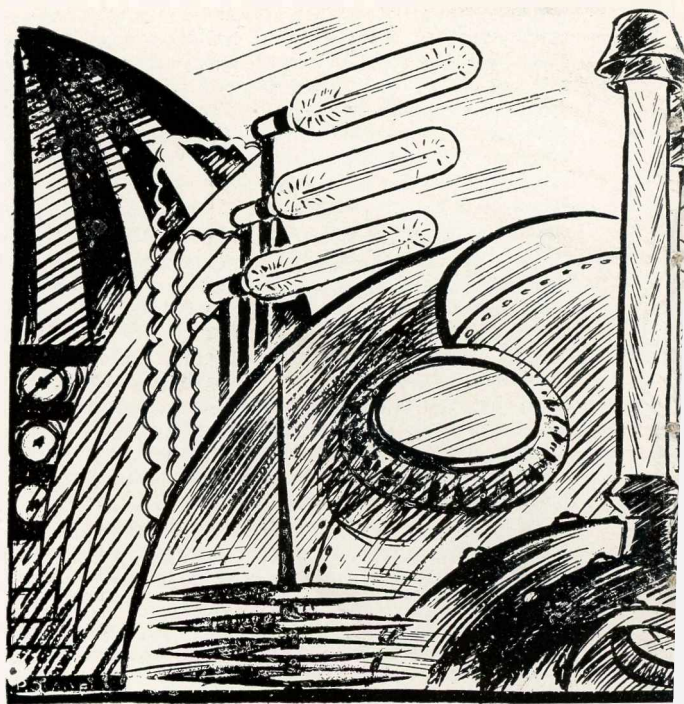
Baugh looked blank. "I'm neither philosopher nor mathematician enough to get that," he said. "Would you mind explaining?"

"Certainly not," Weir replied courteously. "As you know, or must at least have heard, time is the real fourth dimension. It can be likened to a river on

# JUSTICE

... THE VOICE OF TRUTH

AMELIA REYNOLDS LONG



*A flash of light and a  
echoed through the chamber*

which we are afloat. All of its parts are coexistent; but we are aware only of the part in which we find ourselves, and which we call the present. That part through which we have already come we term the past; and that towards which we are moving, the future. What my machine does is push an individual ahead of the current into the future, or turn him against it into the past."

"How?" Baugh demanded bluntly.

"Through vibration. All matter, when reduced to its lowest terms, is found to be energy, which is simply another term for vibration. Now these vibrations, in their relation to the time dimension, may be likened to the circles that disturb the surface of a pool where a stone has been thrown into the water. At first they are very pronounced, and their movements are rapid. But as they approach the edge of the pool, their outlines become less distinct, and they move more slowly. So it is with vibrations. As they move into the past, they become slower. Thus, by altering the vibratory speed of a subject, through the condensers of my time translator, I am able to translate the subject into either the past or the future, according to whether I make the vibrations slower or faster."



# IN TIME

ME IS NEVER SILENT

NOLDS LONG



ounding clap of thunder  
ber.

"But is it safe?" Baught asked. "Doesn't the subject show any bad effects when you bring him back?"

"I have often sent white mice and guinea-pigs into both past and present," Weir replied. "When they returned, they were entirely uninjured."

"But you have never sent a man?"

"Into the past, yes. I could never induce a subject to consent to go into the future."

"Is there danger?"

"Actually, there is less danger that way than the other," Weir answered. "If anything were to happen to the machine after a subject had been sent into the future, he would simply remain there until, in the natural course of events, the point of futurity at which he was had become the present; in other words, until the rest of us had caught up with him. Then he would simply resume his usual place in the scheme of things."

Baugh laughed self-consciously. "The truth is," he confessed, "I've been wondering whether you could give me a temporary boost of about a month or so into the future. This hand"—he drew his left hand from his pocket, and Weir saw that it was bandaged—"has been giving me a devil of a lot of pain since I smashed it the other day. I can't sleep or

eat for it." His voice became a complaining whine. "I heard you talking about your machine at the scientists' club last night; and I thought that if you could push me ahead to the point where the hand would be healed, and keep me there till the rest of the world caught up with me—" He paused expectantly.

"There is no reason why it couldn't be done," Weir said, "if you are willing to assume the risk."

Baugh looked up sharply. "Risk?" he repeated, instantly apprehensive. "But you just said there wouldn't be any."

"There will be only the ordinary amount of risk that every scientist undergoes in submitting himself as subject for a new experiment," Weir explained.

Baugh considered. "Suppose I want to come back before the time is up," he suggested. "How could I let you know?"

"There is an especially constructed radio apparatus inside the cabinet," Weir replied. "You can keep in touch with me through that."

Still Baugh hesitated; but a particularly excruciating twinge in his injured hand decided him. "All right," he said with sudden determination, "I'll risk it."

He started toward the cabinet. Then his eyes encountered the picture of the young girl, and he paused. "I didn't know you still thought about her!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

Weir was busying himself over the instrument board. "Oh, yes," he replied without looking up. "I still think about her—a great deal."

"I swear I didn't know she couldn't swim!" Baugh declared with unnecessary force.

"So you told me at the time," Weir said. His voice was emotionlessly impersonal; even disinterested.

Baugh said no more, but continued toward the cabinet. As he was about to enter it, Weir's voice stopped him.

"Wait a minute," the scientist said. He took from a case at his side a remote control apparatus like that carried by a radio announcer when it is necessary for him to keep moving from one spot to another. "Fasten this on," he directed. "You must take it with you into the future, or you won't be able to keep in touch with the set in the cabinet."

With Aldric's assistance, Baugh fastened the mechanism to his back, and attached the microphone to the lapel of his coat. Then he stepped into the cabinet.

Weir went over and closed the door behind him. His crippled leg dragged after him with a harsh, scraping sound as he moved.

He adjusted the radio dials. "Are you ready?" he called into the microphone on his side of the door.

"All set," came the reply through the loud speaker.

Weir returned to the instrument board. His long, sensitive fingers hovered for an instant above it, then closed upon a lever in its exact center.

As the lever was slipped forward, a blinding flash of lightning dimmed the electric lights, while its accompanying clap of thunder shook the building to its foundations. As the rumbling echoes rolled away into silence, the lights in the room flickered, and were extinguished.

Young Aldric, shaken and breathless from the unexpected shock, stared blindly into the sudden darkness. "What's happened?" he gasped. "Have we been struck?"

"It's all right," came Weir's calm, reassuring voice out of the gloom. "The storm has merely put the

lights out of commission. But my machinery is run by an independent dynamo, and is well insulated. The condenser-tubes will light up in a minute; and I'll be able to work by them."

Even as he spoke, a dull, red glow became visible inside the giant tubes. This changed rapidly to a vivid scarlet, and finally to a tawny orange. Its lurid light, falling across the still face of the scientist and reflecting in little tongues of fire from the polished machinery, gave to the room a weird aspect, like the den of some medieval necromancer.

Weir worked on in silence. The mechanism hummed, and the tubes burned more brightly, forcing the long, black shadows to retreat toward the corners. Occasionally a flash of livid lightning would fill the chamber with its spectral glare, and the fiery hearts of the condenser-tubes would glow like fiery eyes in its unearthly radiance.

At last Weir rose from the instrument board, and crossed to the cabinet. "Are you there, Baugh?" he called into the microphone.

There was no answer. He repeated his question. This time he got a reply:

"Where are you, Weir?" Baugh's voice demanded tremulously. "I can hear you, but I can't see you."

"That is quite natural," Weir answered. "I am here in the laboratory."

"What laboratory?" Baugh's voice demanded. "What are you talking about? There's no laboratory here at the lake."

"What are you doing?" Weir asked, ignoring the other's questions.

"I'm going to take this canoe out, if I can ever get the blasted thing untied," came the answer. "I don't know what's the matter with me today; I feel perfectly well, yet everybody around me seems kind of unreal, as if they were ghosts or something, and I was the only person who was actually here in the flesh." There followed a slight pause; then, "I don't know where you are, Weir, but I wish you'd get out of here. Can't I take Mellicent out in a canoe without your interference?"

Weir's eyes narrowed, and turning, he limped hastily to the instrument board. After a rapid but careful examination of the various levers, he shook his head in perplexity.

Aldric watched anxiously. "Is anything wrong?" he ventured at last.

"That lightning flash that put out the lights seems to have affected the machine," Weir answered; "so that instead of projecting Baugh into the future, it has sent him into the past. But it's nothing to be alarmed about. I can remedy it easily by—" He broke off and wheeled about as Baugh's voice issued from the loud speaker above the cabinet:

"There is no use in your screaming, Mellicent," it was saying with maddening deliberation, "for we are too far out for anyone to hear you. I have made up my mind: If I can't have you, Roderick Weir shan't, either. In a moment I am going to upset the canoe. Everyone knows that I am a weak swimmer; and they will think little of it when I don't try to dive for you. I will tell them I didn't know you couldn't swim. . . ."

Weir's habitually calm countenance had become almost livid in its twisted anguish. Deserting the instrument board, he staggered toward the cabinet, his crippled leg dragging heavily behind him, as if it would deliberately delay his progress.

"Baugh!" he screamed hysterically. "You can't—You—Mellicent! Mellicent!"

In a flash, young Aldric understood. "Don't, sir; don't!" he pleaded, hurrying to his chief's side. "Remember, she isn't there, really. It's only Mr. Baugh who's been sent back. She isn't suffering."

The words seemed to quiet the half-crazed scientist, who, after a minute, allowed himself to be led to a chair and pushed gently into it. But the next instant he looked up with wide, horror-filled eyes, and caught his young assistant fiercely by the arm.

"Aldric!" he gasped in tense, strained tones, "he's killed her! He's deliberately murdered her!"

Aldric could think of no adequate reply; for the hideous truth of what Weir said was only too apparent. And on top of it came Baugh's voice again from the loud speaker:

"God! how cold that water was!" it muttered, faint with physical exhaustion. "I never dreamed it would be so awful."

Weir shuddered, and covered his face with his trembling hands. For several minutes he sat motionless, while young Aldric stood impotently by. In the steady, red glare of the condenser-tubes, nothing stirred. It was as if the very shadows had been frozen into immobility. Outside, the storm wailed its dismal obligato of woe.

At last Weir raised his head. His expression was calm now, but it was a new, purposeful kind of calmness.

"I must bring him back," he said, rising. The hysteria was gone from his voice.

He returned to the instrument board, and with delicate precision adjusted several levers. Once, as if checking his work, he took out a notebook and pencil, and made some mathematical calculations, which he compared with the positions of the various levers. Finally he rose and, with infinite weariness, dragged himself to the cabinet.

"Are you there, Baugh?" he called into the microphone.

The answer came immediately.

"Weir, is that you?" Baugh's voice cried excitedly. "For God's sake come here and help me! I've got my foot caught in this damned track, and can't get it loose; and there'll be a train along any minute!"

"He hasn't returned to the present!" Aldric exclaimed. "He's only at the point where you saved his life on the railroad track."

Weir nodded. "I dare not bring him back too rapidly," he said. "Since the storm has affected the machine, I cannot be sure how it is going to work."

Baugh's voice cut in upon him: "Weir, help me!" it shouted. "The train is coming; I can hear it whistle! Hurry! Hurry!" The last words were a terrified squeal.

Young Aldric's face was ghastly, even in the lurid glare of the tubes. "Quick, sir!" he cried. "Change the position of the levers! There's no telling what may happen!"

Weir seemed to hesitate; then he started toward the instrument board. His crippled leg, dragging behind him, retarded his progress.

"Weir, where are you?" shrieked the voice from the loud speaker. "The train is just around the curve. It will be here in less than a minute. Save me!"

"Hurry, sir; hurry!" young Aldric choked. There were great beads of sweat upon his forehead, and he was clinging to the instrument board for support.

"I can't go any faster," Weir gasped. He, too, was trembling with the strain. "My crippled leg, the leg

*Continued on page 18*



# ADVANCE VISION

By FORREST J ACKERMAN

(INTRODUCING - - ROBERT ANSON HEINLEIN)

An interesting idea recently was developed by Otto Binder, U may remember, about a radioperator who got a bolt of ultraviolet-x in his eyes, in consequence of which the synapses were considerably slowed down & his brain didn't register anything he saw till approximately 3 mins. after it had occurred. This story was in *Fantastic Advs.*, Sep 39 no., called "The Man Who Saw Too Late" & dealing with "delayed vision." This article is an interview with a new author, *ROBERT ANSON HEINLEIN*; the derivation of its title U will soon see.

Robert Heinlein's first story was "*Life-Line*," suggesting a means of determining the day a man must die—a startlingly plausible method! Now consider: This was the first draft of the first story he ever wrote, & he sold it to the first pub he sent it to . . . & that mag the long-acknowledged leader in its field! The fellow must be a fair writer. . . .

In the Nov. Ast. was "*Misfit*," originally titled "*Cosmic Construction Corps*." Still, this may not establish Heinlein in your mind. I speak of "advance vision;" "Bob" Heinlein is a lot better known to me than most of U (other than a few Angelenos) because I've had a private preview of the Things to Come from him in future issues: The serial to follow *GRAY LENS MAN* must be passing-fair (working title was "*Vine & Fig Tree*," tale of the future which was renamed "*If This Goes On*" & rates a cover); then there's "*A Business Transaction*," a notion-narrative of hi-calibre & Bob's personal pet (bought by Campbell, Bob just foned me.) A few of his friends have had the privilege of reading the *tabu*-breaking script of a futuristic book he's authored. Lately he has been collaborating on an Atlantean novelet with Elma Wentz, talented little local lady whom I hope to have the pleasure of interviewing one of these bright days when she too starts selling the fantasy field. & at the present time he is thoughtfully plotting a serious fantasia, praps unconsciously of the nature of *NEW ADAM* (at this writing nobody has yet seen the book), of a mutant man; for references on which he has been reading and/or rereading such nufsed works as "*Odd Jno*, *Last & First Men*, *Gladiator*, *World Below*, *The Young Men Are Coming*," sykologs of Freud & Jung & others, scientific nonfiction by Wells . . .

So U see what I mean? I am steeped in "Heinlein narratives" before he has begun to make an impression on the reading-public. Unless I be wrong about the impression: True, critic Harry Warner rated "*Life-Line*" 87, highest in its issue; & it took 2d place in the Analytical laboratory. Bob is coming, with a bang! This is because, I believe, any story to which Heinlein signs his name will be found to possess that admirable quality, significance.

This nova with a lot of native novaciousness is a handsome dark-haired chap in his early 30's, mild-

mannered, modest, well-informed, subtly amusing. He started out to be an astronomer but got appointed to the Naval Academy instead. Served 10 yrs navy, was disabled & retired. Put in 5 yrs in politics, as a liberal, "generally on the losing side." Became writer by accident & still trying to figure out what happened. He also says he writes because he can't talk *all* the time, & claims to write from hunger. He would have one believe, additionally, that his ambition in life is to be a successful failure in a big way . . .

Heinlein started reading sf in its 1918 form in old *Electrical Experimenters*, then dug out Wells, Verne & Doyle from the Kansas City Public Library. He saw the announcement of *Amazing in Science & Invention*. As an addict he looks with favor on the increase in fantascience mags & believes the general run of fiction appearing in their pgs today is vastly improved over yesteryear, with human issues & sound sykology stressed.

His favorite fantasyarns are Taine's "*Time Stream*," Smith's "*Galactic Patrol*," any of Wells, Sydney Fowler Wright's "*World Below*" & Olaf Stapledon's "*Odd Jno*" & "*Last & First Men*." Their authors, he contends, are in a class by themselves, in which they are quite independent of a trend in a type of material published in the US at a particular time. "Wells was writing better stuff in the '90s than 49 writers out of 50 today when doing their best." Bob says he's a sucker for interplanetarys & also "goes for" tales of variants in human developments. Of especial appeal to him are stories that have characters like Weinbaum's parcat, Barnes' *murri-murri* & Campbell's Pipeliness. He has a prejudice against the writer who makes so-called scientific explanations which upon examination turn out to be nothing but meaningless trisyllable words. Thinks a thing legitimate in sf if one can make the thesis plausible. He considers sf can be a very important form of creative literature & is inclined to think "a considerable amount of speculative sf would be almost collateral reading for students majoring in science, just to keep them from getting dogmatic & set in their ways."

In imaginative movies he selects "*Man Who Could Work Miracles*" as his probable favorite, has fond memories of "*Cabinet of Dr Caligari*" & an early dinosaurian epic entitled "*The Hermit of Thunder Mt.*" "*THINGS TO COME*, of course, is the dean of them all, thoroughgoing about the whole business & in a class by itself."

Heinlein lives hi on a hillside in Laurel Cañon Calif, in a sort of "sanctuary" or "fortress of Utopia" called Castle Stoneybroke. On hot days he can produce an artificial, refreshing rain-on-the-roof. Things are swell up there. One has a grand time with the Heinleins. Have I neglected to mention Mrs. Heinlein up to now? For shame, 4e! Leslyn is a lady

after my own heart; & she can have it any time.

"My introduction to science fiction coincided to the day" says Leslyn, "with my engagement to Bob. We did our courting reading aloud the instalments of Eric Bell's 'Time Stream'!" O yes, she can discuss L. Sprague de Camp with U, the new Unknown, or some story in an old Wonder. I askt her if she'd describe her hubby for the imagination. She started—"Bob has the eyes of a wounded olive . . ." & that was as far as we ever got. I had a big bite of ginger cake in my mouth & was quaffing coffee . . . (As to what hapnd, U can draw your own contusions.) Several unusual things about these so-unusual eyes of his are

that he has independent control of them (must be seen to be believed & even then U'll think that iced tea he just served U was spiked), & fact that only the color blue appeals to them. "All other colors are practically non-existent to Bob," says Leslyn, "& superfluous."

Bobby's hobbies are many & mixt: sculpture, semantics, carpentry, astronomy, economics, ballistics, anything printed on paper (he has a library of 1000 bks on assorted subjects), & *civiliberty*s . . .

Maybe U have noticed his full initials? R.A.H. Exactly.

\* \* \* \* \*

# THE COSMIC SNARE

by

CHESTER S. GEIER

Every criminal believes that he is smarter than the most cunning police officer. He tries to make others believe so. But in the end—the law always catches up with the law-breaker. His career is usually a short one.

In this story, we find such a character. A brigand of the Spaceways. A man who laughed at the law's reaching arm. He boasted that no human trap could catch him, and—he was right! But where this criminal failed to look for a trap was his greatest danger. For he forgot that there are other than human traps! Greer Blatz laughed at fate—but as he was to find out—he laughed too soon . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

Greer Blatz let out a chuckle of satisfaction. He brought his hands away from the controls of his tiny rocket speedster and gazed out through the viewport at the blackness of space. He looked at the bright, steady stars and chuckled again. That maneuver of his had been a clever one. The Space Patrol ship which had so patiently followed him for the last several hours was completely eluded!

It was not the first time he had thrown a cop off his trail. Greer Blatz was a master at that particular art. He had to be in his business! He was a lone wolf of the spaceways, a man totally uncomprehensible to the pirates who gathered together in large bands. His prey was the unwary pleasure craft rather than the lumbering freighters and luxury liners. His field required that.

Greer Blatz looked with contempt upon those outlaws of the Solar System, popularly called pirates. They sought safety in numbers. They fought and snarled over their hard-gotten loot. They never knew when one of their brethren would murder them for their hoard. He never had to worry about that.

His life was an easy one, comparatively free from

danger. It was simple to swoop down upon the gaudy ship of some playboy and his sweetheart, blast them into submission, take what loot there was, and quickly depart. The gains might be small, but he at least had no one to split them with.

Of course, there was always the chance that a space cop would be near. But Greer Blatz always expected traps, and as a result was always vigilant. It was his boast that he could not be caught unprepared. There was no trap that could catch—and hold—the cunning Greer Blatz!

The confident leer faded a little from Greer's bearded features as he thought of his last job. That damned playboy! He had not been as easy as the others. He had held off for long precious minutes with an annoying barrage of bolts from a barthold gun.

Greer had been as mad as the devil. You didn't expect wealthy kids in brightly-colored space yachts to put up a battle. He had lost his temper, and practically blasted the yacht into infinity. The kid had been killed, of course—that was another particularly irritating feature. Greer avoided killing as much as possible. But that kid needed killing. Imagine him telling that space cop that he had the notorious Greer Blatz at bay, and that he would hold him until the cop came!

That had been a trap of sorts, but too entirely weak and humorously futile. He had laughed when he'd heard the kid's eager words over the radio. But then that damn cop had come—and had given Greer a pretty brisk chase, too! Right now he was probably staring at the stars in a bewildered manner, wondering where in hell Greer Blatz had vanished to!

He looked out into space, the beginning of a chuckle welling up in his throat. But it died as soon as it was inspired, for coming at him with





● **He was thrown back by the terrific blast . . .**

terrific speed was the sleek, silver shape of a Space Patrol ship! His mouth thinned to a line, and little lights came into his eyes. A trap! Greer Blatz—the wily Greer Blatz—had nearly been caught!

In the face of this emergency he was cool, sure and calm. His fingers flashed nimbly over the controls of his speedster. Side rockets spat searing flame into the void. His ship veered away like a living thing running from an enemy. But it was not a frightened dash to safety. Rather it was with the sureness of a Matador sidestepping the rush of an infuriated bull.

An ironical grin pulling his thinned lips to one side, Greer Blatz put his ship into a series of maneuvers which for their speed and intricacy were completely bewildering. Hell, he had not gained his reputation for nothing! That cop was probably dizzy trying to keep him in sight!

He fed fuel to the rear jets, and his ship jumped with the speed of a comet. The stars turned a somersault. Greer squinted through the viewport at the jumping stars. Where was that fool? Then he saw him, a tiny fan of fire in the distance. This time he chuckled without interruption.

There was mockery in his eyes as he saw a bright ball of intense white move from the patrol ship. It was a signal that the cop desired to open communication with him. Well, he'd be eternally damned before he'd talk to a cop!

Gingerly he touched the activator studs to the rear jets, and then pulled down the fuel lever. No use hanging around; he'd head for Titan. There was a place he could dispose of all his accumulated loot.

He looked back for the last time at the patrol ship. This time his mirth was a booming sound that echoed loudly in the confines of the tiny control room. The cop had wearied of sending out signal balls, and in anger and frustration was letting loose with every weapon he had.

Greer turned his attention to the viewport, with a contemptuous grunt. Those cops were like kids—if they didn't get something they wanted they got mad.

He gazed anxiously at that portion of space visible through the viewport. Then he blew out a breath of impatience. A bright, moving dot was heading toward his ship. Had that blasted cop . . . He looked around. No. The cop was still far behind. This one could be nothing else if not the Space Patrol ship which had been chasing him some hours back.

Greer became a little angry. If they thought to trap him they were very mistaken. Nothing could trap him unaware! He touched the activator studs to the side jets. The ship leaped away from the second menace, remaining far ahead of the first one.

Suddenly, startlingly, a feeling of extreme numbness gripped his hard body. Purple lights flamed and shifted before his eyes. A force powerfully magnetic gripped his tiny speedster.

He fought the queer feeling which enveloped him. He fought to tear his ship away from the thing which had laid inexorably-pulling hands upon it—but to no avail. A ragged sob of despair was wrenched from his throat. They had trapped him! And he had not been prepared—he had not expected this. . . He was weakly cursing when his consciousness faded in a sudden burst of unbearable agony as he was thrown back by a terrific explosion. . . .

Officer K7 of the Space Patrol contacted his comrade. "That fool!" he gritted angrily, with a touch of horror, "I tried to signal him, to warn him, but he wouldn't have anything to do with me. Ran like hell, too. I was stationed in this sector for three weeks to warn vessels coming in this direction away from the space warp. He ran right into it—one of the nastiest traps in the System!"

"It was no loss," answered the other, "That was Greer Blatz. I was on his trail all the way from Luna. He waylaid Randolph Von Skelp—murder and robbery."

"Well I'll be damned! And I tried to warn him! . . . We've been after him for a long time—but the cosmos finally caught up with him. It'll be some time before he escapes that trap!"

\* \* \* \* \*

# L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP IS BACK !

## Watch for - - "INVERSE VARIATIONS"

# WE LIKE OUR WORK

by

CHARLES D. HORNIG

(EDITOR OF "SCIENCE FICTION", ETC.)

It is a well-known psychological fact that no person can make a real success of his work unless he enjoys doing it. Those who find their daily labors tedious and boring, had better find something else to occupy themselves, or they will soon go to seed. People choose recreations that give them happiness—they should do the same with their work. It is not always possible, of course, to secure just the thing you would like best—but if you keep looking long enough, and earnestly, you will find it sooner than you think.

Now, I enjoy my work—that's one thing I have to be thankful for. The size and frequency of pay checks will always be secondary, as long as I can be employed editing magazines—particularly science-fiction magazines.

I like to be able to choose stories for publication—compose articles and departments—write blurbs, captions, fillers—but all that together would mean very little if it weren't for the fans. How dull an editor's life would be without fan letters!—not to mention fan gatherings.

Whether the fans like the magazine or not, what ever they want to argue about—the fan is the blessing of the editor. It puts spice into his work, to have fans constantly haggling and praising his efforts. Better a thousand panning letters than no letters at all.

It may seem odd to you to hear an editor asking for brickbats, but it is only thought criticism that anyone ever really makes an effort to improve his work. If everyone wrote to me saying that SCIENCE FICTION and FUTURE FICTION are the greatest magazines ever published, what would there be to

strive for? Furthermore, I'd know they were kidding me!

Lots of times the fans think that the editors ignore their pleas and their complaints, simply because the suggested improvements are not made immediately. That is far from the truth. The editors depend upon fan letters to keep the spirit of their work alive and fresh. They earnestly consider all suggestions—and don't let any editor ever fool you by saying he receives more letters than he can possibly read. Editors look forward to fan mail eagerly, and they don't miss out on anything.

Many of the important changes in the publishing field, in science-fiction, have been due to pleas from the fans—proving that the fans get what they want when they properly assert themselves, if the change is at all practicable, mechanically and financially.

Occasionally, a fan becomes indignant because his suggestions are not immediately adopted by the editor—having no knowledge of the many difficulties there may be to overcome to put the particular plan into use. The editors really try to satisfy the fans—not only because they want pleased readers, but because many of the suggestions made have much merit—and often reflect the desires of the majority. Editors can't think of everything, you know—and they depend on the fans for fresh, original ideas.

In the life of an editor, the day's fan mail is the spice of his work—the more letters he gets, and the longer and more critical they are, the more he enjoys the balance of the day's labor. So fans, don't neglect the poor editor!—and remember, he won't neglect you!

## JUSTICE IN TIME

*Concluded from page 14*

that was injured on that very occasion, Aldric—"

"Tell me what lever to change," Aldric demanded. "I'll move it for you."

But Weir shook his head. "I don't dare," he panted. "It's too dangerous."

He limped forward a few more steps; and again came the voice from the cabinet:

"Here it comes!" it shrieked. "It's rushing straight at me! God! It's as big as a mountain, and yelling like a fiend! It's right over me! Don't let—"

There was a hideous, gurgling scream that died away into silence. With a final effort, Weir reached the instrument board, and jerked over a lever.

For nearly a minute he and his assistant leaned weakly against the board, incapable of movement.

Then:

"Shall I go and open the cabinet?" Aldric asked. Weir seemed to pull himself together. "No," he said. "You had better let me do that."

Painfully he retraced his steps to the cabinet. As he unfastened the door, Aldric saw a trickle of something dark and glistening ooze out upon the floor.

"Is he—is he—" the young man began, but was unable to go on.

Weir turned to him. His face had resumed its old, mask-like impassiveness. "You had better not look at him, Aldric," he said in his quiet monotonous voice. "I could not, of course, reach him across the time dimension; and—he is not a pretty sight."

\* \* \* \* \*

COMING !! Willy Ley - Jack Williamson - J. Harvey Haggard

Amelia Reynolds Long - Raymond A. Palmer



# THE SCIENCE FICTION SERVICE

PUBLISHER... TO YOU

SPECIAL FOR MAY

## TARRANO THE CONQUEROR

By RAY CUMMINGS

A \$2.00 EPIC OFFERED FOR 95c

The Science Fiction Service is founded in the interests of the reader. In this department, every month, a special book offer will be made to the fantasy reader, an offer that cannot be easily matched elsewhere. Each book offered for sale by the Service, is guaranteed to be brand new, taken from the shelves for the first time.

This month we offer you a book that has gained the title, "classic." TARRANO THE CONQUEROR, by Ray Cummings, (who was Thomas Edison's assistant years back) was published in 1930 by the A. C. McClurg Co. of Chicago and New York. The book consists of 345 pages, with a five color jacket. It sold for \$2.00 at all dealers. The book is now *out of print*! Here is a slight preview of the story:

TARRANO, intoxicated by the conquest of two

worlds, Venus, and Mars, urged on by the power lust—came to Earth to bring it also under his control. In the year 2430 began the most terrific conflict known to man. It was a war to the end.

TARRANO murdered all the Earth rulers, and stole the famous "eternal life machine" and its creator's daughter, whose love he sought. His campaigns were featured by ruthless scientific atrocities, but Earth held out. Soon the tide of battle turned in favor of Earth, and Tarrano sought refuge on Venus in his most powerful stronghold. His reign was at an end however, and the Venusians revolted. Even a man of destiny must meet his Waterloo, and Tarrano met his with unflinching courage. . . . Positively the most unique story ever written of the future! . . .

Here also is an unusual bargain, offered to you by the Service department: Who has not heard of these thrilling novels:

CAVES OF OCEAN—BY RALPH MILNE FARLEY!  
THE JUNGLE REBELLION—BY RAY CUMMINGS!  
JAN OF THE JUNGLE — BY OTIS ADELBERT KLINE!  
THE HUMAN ZERO—BY EARL STANLEY GARDNER!  
THE FIRE PLANET—BY RAY CUMMINGS!  
THE RADIO WAR—BY RALPH MILNE FARLEY!  
PIRATES OF VENUS — BY EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS!  
FLOOD—BY RAY CUMMINGS!  
JAN IN INDIA—BY OTIS ADELBERT KLINE!  
BEYOND THE DARK NEBULA—BY HARL VINCENT!

Well, you may have your choice of any one of these thrilling novels upon the receipt of only \$1.00 for a year's subscription to *STARDUST*. Think of it, you not only receive a year's subscription to science fiction's only printed, semi-professional fan magazine, but you also receive, absolutely free, a famous novel by an equally famous author. (When sending choice, make a duplicate selection, in case demand becomes too great on any particular item. This was true in regards to *RED TWILIGHT*, and *THE IN-*

*SECT INVASION*. Two other novels by the same authors are substituted as our supply is now exhausted of the previous stories.)

Copies of the March book special, *THEY FOUND ATLANTIS*, are still available at the reduced price of 95c. This price is subject to change without notice. Address all communications to the SCIENCE FICTION SERVICE, c/o STARDUST the magazine *UNIQUE*!

# THE EDITOR AND THE FAN

... the reader airs his views

BOB TUCKER . . . .

Dear Ed:

Yes, *STARDUST* exceeded my expectations by far—much to my delight! My only request might be that you make the magazine a wee bit more “fan.” That’s all I can think of. I prefer to sit back and watch it progress with time, to note how you handle it, and to let you develop it all by your lonesome—instituting what features, departments, and changes you think will be liked. If they are not, plenty of readers will tell you so. The book feature is bound to be popular . . . Box 260, Bloomington, Ill.

(Thanks Bob, and I hope to meet your approval too. You are right—the book feature is popular. Very much so. . . . Ed.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JOHN HOLLIS MASON . . . .

Dear Sir:

L. Sprague de Camp’s *RETIREMENT* was masterly—all I can ask for is more!

Bott’s article was very interesting. Robert Moore Williams’ *Quest Of The Gods*, if anything, surpasses its predecessor for sheer poignant beauty of phrasing, and conception. Its predecessor, *Robots Return*, was a marvelous story, but Williams has outdone himself!

Harry Warner Jr.’s poem, *Hope’s End* was really superlative—if this is any example of his verse, it is no wonder he has sold poetry to *Weird Tales*!

The typographical accuracy and artistic placement of the contents of *STARDUST* all contribute to its uniform excellence. The wonderful paper and printing make it superior to the vast majority of the professionals. If subsequent issues follow in the tenor of the first—I should not be surprised to see *STARDUST* on all newsstands in the near future . . . 133 Isabella St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

(Our hopes rise as high as yours Mr. Mason....Ed.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DONN BRAZIER . . . .

Dear Sir:

At last! *STARDUST*, the dream magazine is here! I thought I might be disappointed—but I’m not! The balance you’ve reached is near perfect, with a slight lean towards fiction. I believe I should like a well-written, long article on some scientific phase. Something a little more controversial than *Doubt’s World*. Possibly rocketry. . . . 3031 N. 36th St., Milwaukee, Wis.

(You’ll get your wish next issue when Willy Ley presents a long, illustrated article on space flight. . . . Ed.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

R. D. SWISHER . . . .

Dear Mr. Hamling:

*STARDUST* was very excellent indeed. However, I should like to see more articles than stories. DeCamp was the best in this issue, although not at his

best. But it is Malcolm Jameson whom I should like to discuss:

I disagree wholeheartedly with him, but am willing to be convinced. As I recall, the Lorentz equations show that for zero *relative* velocity, the length becomes constant and finite. If two bodies move with respect to each other, each observes the other to have contracted a certain amount. Observed lengths, according to the theory, vary between zero and a finite rest length, not between zero and infinity, for uniform motion. What effects would be observed under accelerated motion I do not know—perhaps that is Jameson’s loophole. . . . 15 Ledyard Rd., Winchester, Mass.

(If you will note, Mr. Swisher, Malcolm Jameson used Einstein—not Lorentz. . . . However, maybe Mr. Jameson will have something to say. . . . Ed.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FRED HURTER JR. . . .

Dear Mr. Hamling:

*STARDUST* surpasses even my wildest speculations. I had expected a rather crude magazine with rough paper and edges. I certainly did not expect a slick, well-compiled, neat magazine with gloss paper. I believe I would have purchased the magazine on eye appeal alone!

I haven’t a single kick to make—and that’s not often. The entire contents were excellent. But lets have a readers page. Wishing you lots of luck. . . . Red Rock, Ontario, Canada.

(Your readers page is here. . . . Ed.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WILLY LEY . . . .

Dear Mr. Hamling:

Just received *STARDUST*, and it is a beauty. I’m looking forward eagerly to coming issues. . . . 35-33 29th St., Long Island City, N. Y.

(And so are we Mr. Ley—for more of your splendid articles. . . . Ed.)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JOSEPH GILBERT . . . .

Dear Sir:

I don’t know just what to say. You have pulled a dream out of thin air and moored it to the ground. I admit that I was skeptical. That’s an understatement—my opinion was: “Dis guy’s in for an awful letdown.” It couldn’t be done, was my firm conviction. But—you did it!

Man! I haven’t got over it yet. Printed! Bi-monthly! Professional authors! And the crowning touch—photographs! When the magazine arrived it completely floored me. This couldn’t be a fan magazine! Good Lord No!—But I could go on raving for days. No longer need fans dream nostalgic dreams of 1937 and *Fantasy magazine*!

I like your story policy. *Off-trail* stories are decidedly lacking today. Here is how I rate them:



Williams—very good. DeCamp—very amusing. Jameson—not bad. Geier—when a fan tries writing a fan story, he invariably becomes embarrassingly foolish. Bott—superlative! He knows his astronomy! . . . All in all—W'hoopee! Star'd back '37—here comes 1940! . . . 3805 1/2 Park St. Columbia, South Carolina.

(You are right about Henry Bott. He does know his astronomy. Unfortunately, Mr. Bott's father passed away recently, and as a result, his article on Saturn had to be postponed until the third issue. Watch for it. An actual photograph of Saturn will be accompanied by it. . . . Ed.)

\* \* \* \* \*

HARRY WARNER JR. . . .

Dear Bill:

Congratulations! *STARDUST* is the real thing, I'm telling you! My expectations had been something around the formula of the old *Marvel Tales* in make-up, printing, etc., although I knew you were to be this size. But I never expected such a clean-cut format, perfect typography, and so on.

As for the material, I thought the best thing by a mile was *Retirement*. As for *The Martian Enigma*, I believe it's about the best piece of its type, since the old *Gernsback era*. Jameson was excellent and amusing. Bott's article was much better than I'd hoped for. I don't care too much for this type of article unless written by Smith or Campbell, but Bott did a workman like job on it. Farley and Hornig were both good. Ralph, particularly. Of course I knew that the accelerations in, for example, *The Skylark of Space* were impossible—but Farley proved it.

Eye to Eye was good, and of course, essential. *Quest of the Gods* I've not read as yet. I don't quite remember its predecessor, *Robots Return*, so I'll have to refresh my memory first. All in all, congratulations again! . . . 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland.

(Thanks a lot Harry. . . . In regards to the *Skylark*, if I recall, Smith devoted many a page to establish his accelerations as logical. What say, "Doc?" . . . Ed.)

\* \* \* \* \*

DALE TARR . . . .

Dear Ed:

Here's my commentary upon receiving and digesting the first issue of *STARDUST*.

I was moved by the attractive envelope and by the similar comet-tail on the magazine itself. The three words beneath were also nicely done. The cover was excellent. More along the same lines please. Keep printing off the cover proper. The contents page is well-balanced with good type. The regular size used for the stories is a trifle small. Mazur's illustration was fair. The paper, and size of the magazine is heavenly. Now to the features:

Ratings: Williams (1); Geier (2); Hornig (3); (the best thing by Hornig I've seen yet); DeCamp (4); Bott (5); (because of the table); Jameson and Farley got by on their names only. Jameson's short threw itself with an evident and untenable paradox, while Farley didn't say anything new, nor at all convincingly.

As for Warner's outre outlining—some parts demonstrate awkward phrasology, others disharmony; and there does not seem to be a tangible connection between title and poem proper. Further, his description does not jibe forcefully enough with the thought. (Did I hear someone say, "What thought?")

Summation: Issue as a whole, very pleasing. Have articles and stories and poetry. Oh yes, those two

blanks at the rear of the book. Intended for autographs? Fill 'em with reader's comments, letters, and facsimile signatures. . . . 816 Elm St., Cincinnati, Ohio.

(Your comments on *Hope's End* are very interesting, in view of your article on poetry in this issue. What have you other readers to say on this score? . . . As to those blanks at the rear—you will note that they are absent. Too, you have given *STARDUST* an idea. Starting next issue, and continued thereafter, a new department will be inaugurated. To be titled: *MEET THE FAN*. . . . In this featured department, each issue, a prominent fantasy fan will be reviewed, complete with picture and biography. So start sending in those glossy prints boys . . . (and girls). Harry Warner Jr., prominent fan editor, is scheduled for our first *MEET THE FAN*. . . . Who'll be next? . . . Ed.)

\* \* \* \* \*

RAY SIENKIEWICZ . . . .

Dear Ed:

I received *STARDUST* the other day. The cover: *Gaseous Nebula in the Constellation of Orion* was the best I've ever seen on any magazine, professional, or fan. It was superb!

*Quest of the Gods* takes second place, next to the cover, and *Retirement*, *Double World*, *Einstein in Reverse*, *Watch Your G's*, and *Eye to Eye*—all tie for third place! When it came to classifying them I was stumped. *Hope's End* grabs fourth place, with *The Martian Enigma* a close fifth. In last place I put *Sex In Science Fiction*. The subject could not be handled adequately in a short article. . . . 312 East Elm St., Scranton, Pa.

\* \* \* \* \*

OLON F. WIGGINS . . . .

Dear Mr. Hamling:

I have this day received my copy of *STARDUST*. What took it so long in reaching me? Oh, well. . . .

The magazine's redeeming features were the article by Bott, the general format, and the cover. Aside from these features, the magazine was *RANK!* Maybe I'm heard to please, but the issue just didn't click with me. My wants are set, but *STARDUST* just isn't what I want. Anyway, I think its worth the enclosed \$1.00 sub. Until next issue. . . . 3214 Champa St., Denver, Col.

(Your copy of *STARDUST* was mailed the same day as the rest. The reason you received it late, is because you moved, and failed to notify me in time. May'e you are hard to please. Mr. Wiggins, but we'll see w'at can be done. Incidentally, just what are your needs? They must be rather unusual. Too, the mere fact that you sent in a year's subscription proves that your bark is worse than your bite! . . . Ed.)

\* \* \* \* \*

ROBERT MOORE WILLIAMS . . . .

Dear Mr. Hamling:

I received my copy of *STARDUST* today. Thanks, pal. I promptly discovered that you've got something. When I opened the envelope and saw your magazine, the first glance almost knocked me over. In appearance it is so far ahead of anything else on the market, that there is no comparison. I was especially pleased to note that you had avoided superlatives.

Your cover is as neat and clean a job as I have ever seen, and your interior makeup is excellently handled. I thought that Harry Warner's poem would have been better if set in lower case. But that's a mighty small thing. I certainly wish you all the

success in the world, and hope to see *STARDUST* being sold nationally in the near future. I believe there is a place for a magazine like *STARDUST*. . . . 6020 Drexel, Chicago, Ill.

(Thanks for the encouragement Mr. Williams, and I might add that I believe the same as you do. . . . Maybe some day. . . . Ed.)

\* \* \* \* \*

MALCOLM JAMESON . . . .

Dear Mr. Hamling:

Please accept my congratulations on your most excellent magazine. I was delighted with it—it is all that has been said about it, and more. No doubt you have made fan history with *STARDUST*. Certainly you have set a standard that will not be easily surpassed. Everyone I show the magazine to, thinks the same. Accept my best wishes for continued success. . . . 519 West 147th St., New York, N. Y.

(Thank you Mr. Jameson, and we'll be seeing you again in *STARDUST* in the near future. . . . Ed.)

\* \* \* \* \*

GLEN TAYLOR . . . .

Dear Mr. Hamling:

I am especially pleased to note that you have

avoided flashiness, so common in most other publications. The cover is excellent. The inner illustrations are well done also.

Malcolm Jameson get my vote for first place. Robert Moore Williams places second. *Retirement* was a well-written story, but out of place in a science fiction magazine. Hornig and Farley were both good. I would like to see a readers page, and a few articles on rocketry, etc. The highly calendered stock you use is ideal for photo reproduction, but it is hard on the eyes, and it does not take the type impression so clearly in some spots. . . . 503 South Jackson, Kansas City, Missouri.

(Press pressure caused the impression lightness in spots. It's not serious however. The paper is hard on the eyes only in the presence of a glarish light which causes a high reflection. An ordinary reading lamp provides the ideal light. *RETIREMENT* is not out of place in a science fiction magazine. The policy of *STARDUST* is to present "off-trail" stories. *RETIREMENT* is a very well received "off-trail" story. This policy has proven to be very popular with our readers. . . . Ed.)

\* \* \* \* \*

## EYE TO EYE

Concluded from page 4

another age will be hard to equal. Back again too, is L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP with another of his incomparable satires. *INVERSE VARIATIONS* is the story of a Scotchman who appreciated the delicacy of *scotch*! And this Scotchman had a very interesting background—which usually came to light when his companions were comfortable beneath the table. . . .

To lead the parade of "off-trail" non-fiction, is the ever popular WILLY LEY, back with *THREE ERAS*. A comprehensive discussion of the problems, hazards, and probability of space-flight, as only Willey Ley, accepted authority on such subjects, can discuss them. This long, informative article on space-flight will be printed complete in the next issue of *STARDUST*.

In September of this year, over the Labor Day holidays, here in Chicago will be celebrated the 1940 WORLDS SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION. At this Universal Convention will be gathered all the professional Editors, authors, and fans. Will you be here too? We hope so. For plans are moving fast and smoothly towards that goal. A large Chicago Loop Hotel has been obtained for the Convention activities. Elaborate programs are being planned, all for *your* enjoyment! *We want you to be here*

*with us!* You simply cannot afford to miss this stupendous Convention. Have you always wanted to meet the men who write this fiction called *fantasy*? Have you always wanted to meet the Editors of *all* the professional science-fiction magazines? Have you always wanted to meet your brethren of the Discussions columns? Have you always wanted to have a really rip-snorting, good old, slap-my-back-shake-my-hand science-fiction holiday? Well, you'll have all this and more when you come to the 1940 CONVENTION here in CHICAGO! This Convention is sponsored by the Illini Fantasy Fictioneers and the Chicago Science Fiction League. The IFF has its offices at 3156 Cambridge Ave., Chicago, and the CSFL can be reached at *STARDUST'S* general offices. Write to us and tell us if you plan to attend. We would like to reserve your name beforehand. Any and all questions will be gladly answered. but remember—*we want you here in September!*

Well, until next month, when again I'll have the pleasure of discussing things with, this is your obedient editor, closing shop, reminding you to—stand by me shoulder to shoulder, and I'll see you in this column every month—EYE TO EYE!

\* \* \* \* \*

## WE AIN'T GOT RHYTHM

Concluded from page 11

in a manner calculated to make the reader read rhythmically will become policy. Whitman failed in that respect a great deal.

Sometimes a last line purposely made to off-scan with its rhyming line delivers an extra punch. A syllable added or subtracted from a line may mean the difference between a dead effort and a live one. Consider the first stanza of Shelley's "To A Skylark" for a case in point where the last line is very long, giving a soaring effect. There are many other instances of this, and similar effects in the works of

famous poets.

I do not condemn all rigid scanning rather condoning most of it. But remember; its the thought, and how it is put down.

In summation: vital rhythmic poetry, whether rhymed or not must come and will come to science fiction. It will have the punching power of Sandburg's CHICAGO; the quizzical appeal of Kreymsbourg's LOVE; the even flow of Shelley's "The Cloud" or what you please,—just so long as it is the real thing—combined with—RHYTHM!



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