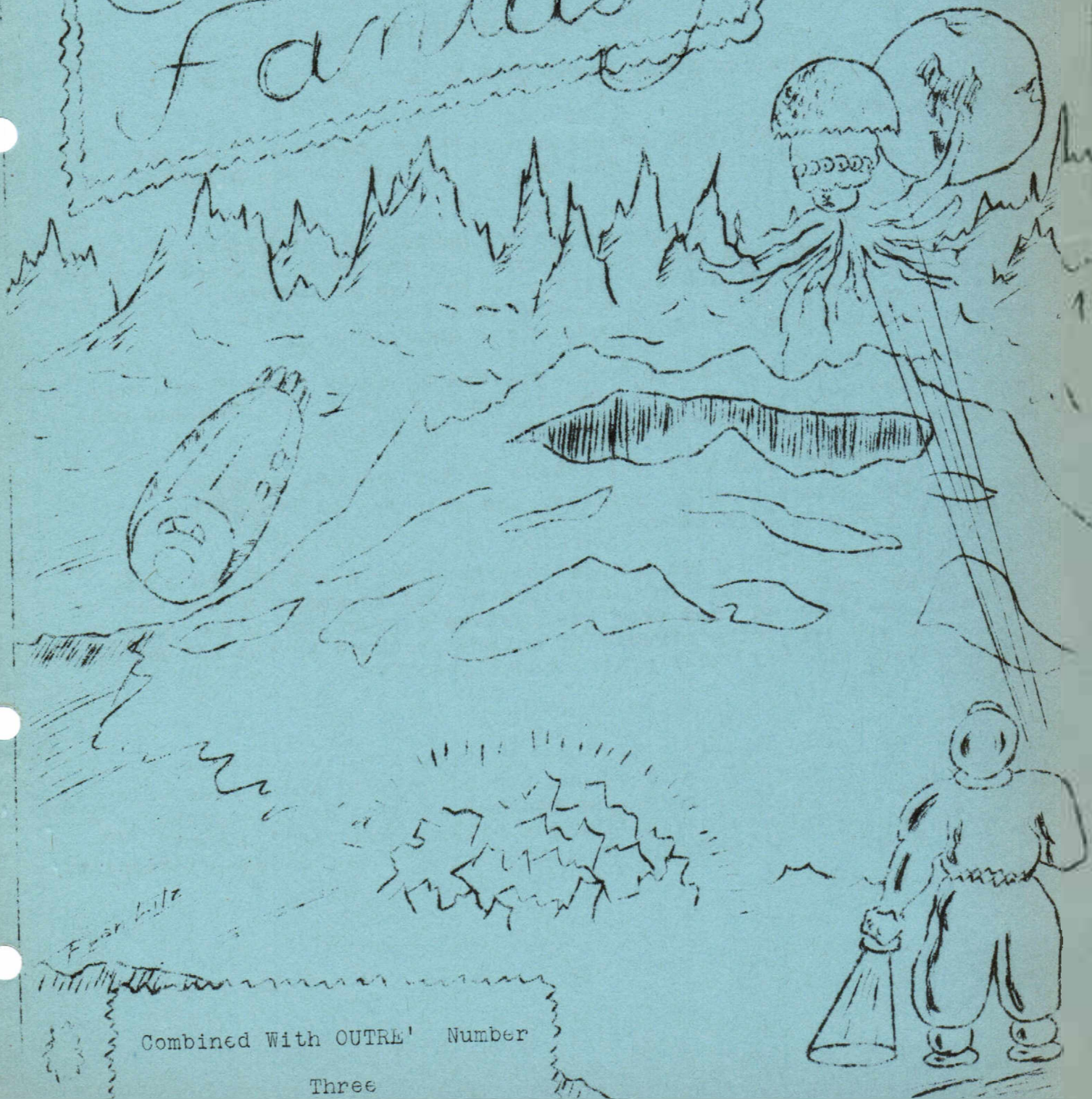


Strange Fantasy

SCIENCE
FICTION
FANDOM



Combined With OUTRE' Number

Three

THE FAR-FLUNG WAYS;

Or Random Notes Taken Down by a Space Wanderer

Tohrlah, Oasis City--

The clattering mechanized 'pillar storms up the last red dune and swings dizzily to a halt at the station on the outskirts of Tohrlah.

Tohrlah is a city of domes, hemispherical houses, in a mad jumble, some squat and low, and others towering high, pierced by round doors and windows, with broad stretches between some through which roar the Martian gales, and hardly walking room between others---all, in common fighting the onrush of piling red sand crystals.

It is a frontier town, visited by hardy "goral" who come to enjoy themselves here, and adventuresome tourists on thousand mile journeys to see "Rac Mahrin," the eternal Sand Spout.

To the right is a junction of two canals, along which flower a few desert plants, crimson, and clinging to the shifting sands for a meagre hardihood.

"Rac Mahrin" is a whirling, twisting spout of red dust, swirling eternally upward in a straight spiral to mushroom out and gradually be blown out and over the Martian surface for miles. It is a true and awe-inspiring miracle of nature produced by the hot desert winds meeting the icy water of the canal junction.

.....
A D V E R T I S E M E N T---When you buy scientific and fantasy fiction, don't forget where to go for the largest and most complete stock in the United States. Prices reasonable. What do you want?
Homer E. Weinman, 57 Lyndhurst St., Rochester, N.Y. Science-Fictionist

THE MYSTERY OF THE BROADWALK ASYLUM

by
Jack Erman

What has gone before: Dr Emil Julius maintains Broadwalk Asylum ostensibly for the insane but in actuality as a sinister experimental institute for his own investigations. Dr Chas Ward, hired assistant, comes to suspect that things are not what they seem at the asylum. One day Ward is shown an extraordinary case of metamorphosis, a man reverted to reptile-man because he (the "patient") believes himself to be in a prehistoric environment. Ward mentions Dunno, of "Experiment with Time", at which Julius becomes excited, avers "He was the first to reverse reincarnation thru hypnotism...but not the last!"

A new nurse is engaged by the designing Dr Julius, young Dorothy Lane. He is elated to learn of her unusual intuitive powers for he's been searching endlessly for just such a subject since his last died on the very verge of success. A man or woman sensitive to things-to-come that-currents:- With such a one to unveil future events for him he'll become a planet-defying power!

But first he must send the mind back. He rolls out his Psychic Register, a machine of mirrors & lites & puffing out an overpowering incense. Dorothy, unaware of his perilous purpose, soon is lost--has been mastered mentally & ordered into... ancients. Time turns back 300 years, & her personality recedes to the 17th century...

When Ward discovers Dorothy a patient he's incredulous. For he's met her formerly, knows what a healthy, strong mind she had. He can't credit that it could have snapt involuntarily. When Dr Julius has a brief heart attack, co-incident with which Dorothy momentarily recognizes Ward, only to revert to 1600 directly the Dr recovers young Ward realizes Julius exerts hypnotic control over her--& probably his other "patients" as well!

Ward makes an ally of Julius' mute servant--whose speech the gray genius robbed by hypnotism--by promising the pathetic figure he shall speak again. Thru a ceiling spy-hole, shown him by the wordless one, Ward one nite watches from a room above, looks down into the Dr's lab, witnesses one of his experiments. He sees the Psychic Register in operation, a man's mind invoked ahead to the date of his death in a previous incarnation. Julius expects the mind to slip from this incarnation's and into the beginning of the next but something goes wrong & the victim dies.

The next day Julius states he must visit town, informs Ward explicitly that he doesn't wish him in the house during his absence, that he shall confine himself to the adjoining asylum where ordinary cases are kept. After the Dr has left, however, Ward manages to dispose of the housekeeper for the afternoon so he may investigate undisturbed. He locates Dorothy Lane & attempts to pull her mind forward to the present. Just as he has her re-living within a few minutes of the time she was hypnotized by the Psychic Register, Julius re-appears!

Ward frantically urges Dorothy's memory forward as the infuriated Dr descends upon them. But Julius bores a telepathic command into her brain that Ward does not have the power to counteract.

The play quickly comes to its expected but none-the-less exciting conclusion. Ward accuses Julius of murder & the maniacal mal-practice of science. Julius is standing by the panel which locks in the lizard-man, a former associate who opposed him. The vengeance-seeking servant pushes the button; the board slides aside; Julius is seized from behind by the saurian-scientist--& killed.

At the death of the Dr, everyone is released from his influence; the mute regains his voice, Dorothy her identity of today, the other patients return to the present, & the curtain closes on the curious case of the Broadwalk Asylum.

CRIMSON CRYSTALS
(A Prose Pastel)

The wind eddied the red sand crystals into crimson whorls and curves of unknown determinations. Red it was, and crimson too - the very wind funneled redly into the far skies above while stalagmites hurled themselves from the ochre dust to meet the lowering skies.

Blood-red crystals pyramided and cascaded into outré alien things - melted, dissolved to become again one with the wastes. Then madly off to a far-distant rendezvous they went on scarlet pinions, hurtling, tumbling until their song shattered the windy tumult.

My weary eyes lifted and watched the barren sands rush off to a stop at the horizon-distant canali.

J-Karl Ehlert

THE LAST NIGHT

by
Clark Ashton Smith

I dreamed a dream: I stood upon a height,
A mountain's utmost eminence of snow,
Whence I beheld the plain outflung below
To a far sea-horizon, dim and white.
Beneath the sun's expiring light,
The dead world lay, phantasmally aglow;
Its last fear-weighted voice, a wind, came low;
The distant sea lay hushed, as with affright.

I watched, and lo! the pale and flickering sun,
In agony and fierce despair, flamed high,
And shadow-slain, went out upon the gloom.
Then Night, that grim, gigantic struggle won,
Impended for a breath on wings of doom,
And through the air fell like a falling sky.

(From "The Star-Treader and Other Poems" by CASmith)

WAS IT CONSCIENCE?

by
Angelo J. Ciulla

Your cottage, Doctor Jeremiah T. Willis, this modest structure furnishing the solitude you so desired, seems the very vortex of the raging inferno without. See, the sky cracks open and forked lightning jabs earthward. And those sturdy pines and mighty oaks so plentiful about your home, they creak and groan, bent precariously by an enraged wind battering all obstacles within its path. Quite a storm you have, doctor. Unlike anything you've seen before. But then, storms never disturbed you before. This is different. It's your storm. You must admit you're a bit frightened."

And doctor, meditate awhile. In your mind's eye, can't you see the operating room, the nurses flitting about, Doctor Jermyrn so absurdly solemn, and Johnson on the operating table. It seemed so unbelievable that this helpless man on the table could bring such havoc in your promising career. And because he held your note for \$20,000 you killed Johnson.

It was a difficult operation. But you, doctor, you whose steadiness of hand earned respect and recognition in your profession, cut too deep. What a turbulence that caused! But Johnson died. You killed him. You recall the look of horror in the eyes of the nurses, and that of puzzlement in Dr. Jermyrn's? Or was it cognizance? Have you no compunctions, doctor? You killed a man tonight.

And now you sit at home, while the weather protests without. You're frightened a bit. You cower at each flash of lightning, and at the crash that follows you give an involuntary start. And those branches about the windows, creaking and swishing about, they make the weirdest patterns and the eeriest sounds. Hah, you shiver. That dank coldness enveloping you can be a draft. But the doors and windows are well sealed, and it's warm inside.

Your eyes are wild. Do you see something that isn't there? Johnson is dead. You killed him. You're getting panicky, doctor. You're losing complete control of yourself. Look at your hands, no longer capable and steady. And your face, as pallid as Johnson's. Listen to the rain slapping against the windows. Johnson. Johnson. Johnson. Don't cover your ears, doctor, you'll hear it anyway. So, you cower, and your mouth's frothy. You're going mad, mad with fear. You killed Johnson. You killed him, though the Lord hath said, "Thou shalt not kill." Yet you did.

Quake, doctor, suffer; suffer the tortures of the damned. You think the sound of human voices would lend courage and sanity to you. And with trembling fingers beyond muscular control, you fumble with the dials of your radio set. But the angered elements have wrecked all radio reception and you must suffer alone. You murdered Johnson. The wailing of the unfettered wind, the cracking and crashing of majestic trees, and the rythm of rain battering your solitary home; that is all for you.

STRANGE TANTALUS

Your heart grows cold at the zig zag coursing of lightning reaching for you, and you jump at the ear-splitting crash that follows. And now those figures dancing ghoulishly about the room, doctor, are they reflections from the fireplace? Or are they demons dancing, and clawing for you? You are mad, doctor.

You killed a man. You killed a man. You killed a man. The wind howls it at you. Every board in your cottage creaks it. You're a murderer. You're mad. Cast your wild, staring eyes on the fire. Look the flames leap higher, higher, higher. They twist and turn and dance and whirl. There, do you see him. It's Johnson. His face, mirrored in the flames. Strange, that he should seem so cheerful. He is laughing, doctor, laughing at you in macabre glee. You think it's a figment of your tortured brain. But look again. It is Johnson, a dead man. He's in the fireplace, laughing. Does he expect you to join him soon?

And now you're laughing. Doctor Willis, but your laughter is not a pleasant sound. Pull yourself together. There's no need for hysterics. Look, he's gone now. Come, control yourself and read the newspaper that just arrived. Where did it come from? Who knows? Who would deliver one in this weather? The headlines, doctor, look, the words do squirm and leap about! And amid of living flames they seem! Read, doctor, read, "Doctor Jeremiah Willis Found Dead." It's you, doctor, you're dead! The headline says so. There must be some mistake. Johnson is dead. You killed him. But the paper says you are. Run, run and scream your head off. The newspaper says you're dead. Throw that lying paper in the fire.

Doctor Jeremiah T. Willis, you should have been more careful. In your panicky flight you didn't see the stool before the fireplace, did you? And it is no one's fault but your own that you fell, your head striking the pointed andiron. Johnson is dead. You killed him. You are dead, too, doctor. The newspaper now burning merrily in the fireplace says so.

CONTRAST

From "An Ode to Science," by Edgar Allan Poe:

Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star?

Hast thou not torn from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?

From "Watchers of the Sky," by Alfred Noyes:

Fools have said that knowledge drives out wonder
/ from the world;
They'll say it still, though all the dust's ablaze
With miracles at their feet.

---"Tid-Bits Thru the Yrs"

THE ENCHANTED ISLE

by

Larry B. Farsaci

Far out in the deeps of distance, beyond the sea's horizon, lies a haven unknown to mortal man. Crystal-tipped waves encircle it always, waves that have never known ripple from tempest-tossed waters. It is an isle of eternal peace and of ultimates in beauty, a fairy-gem that has by error fallen through vast spaces to earth, from a supra-world of unblemished design. Though earth-bound it is inseparable from alien dimensions. No mortal eye has ever glimpsed its beauties, except in dream: though vessels have sailed past and through it. A timeless land, too beautiful for description, it has lain serene through the ages, a utopia too fair for any earth-language to do justice to, except simile with some celestial gem.

No storm-wind has ever rushed discord into its symphonic enchantments. Out of the void it must have come in ages unknown, perhaps at dawn of birth. For like its crystal-tipped waves to tempest-tossed seas, it is oblivious to any of the energies we call destruction. Like a god it has lain with its transcending beauties, born of light from another sphere, calm and serene, even through the cataclysm that was Atlantis, which rose and fell beside it, feeling as little of the involved energies as observers feel the rush of conflict in a far-off nova. But it is not strange that this orb has been glimpsed by no man, except perhaps in flight of dream, for its placid waters reflect no known star of our heaven.

There the nights are of more resplendent glory, the stars less far-away and of purer color, born of unfamiliar capers of atom..... a strange light invisible except to the fairy-like beings who inhabit the sphere. The light of day there gives birth to things half-composed of matter, of indescribable beauty, inherently of an essence which we of earth would call "nothing" -- the fulfillment of angelic spirit.

