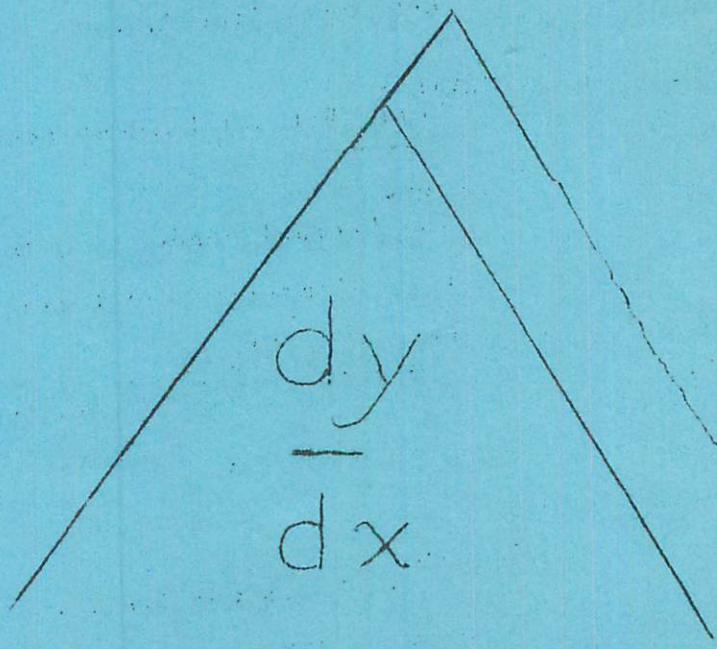
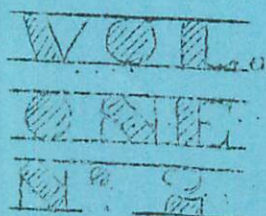
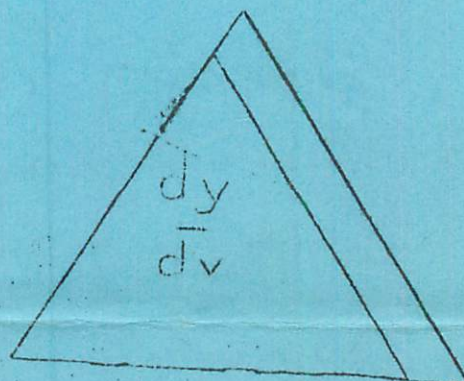
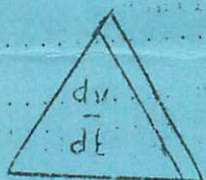


The

Variant

Philadelphia
in
1947



Variant is the official magazine of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, issued bi-monthly. Rates are ten cents a single copy, six issues for fifty cents, one dollar for twelve. Editorial office at 192 S. 18th St. Phila 3, Pa. All articles and communications for or concerning this publication should be sent to the editor at the above address.

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Thanks to Helen Cloukey for half the work, G.O. Smith for the art, Ossie Train for help with the mimeoing, Bill Myer for transporting to us Milt Rothmans mimeo machine, Milt for the loan of said machine. and all who contributed copy.

The problem of greatest interest to scientists, scholars, and citizens in the world today is undoubtedly that of the authenticity of the specimen claimed by the well-known scholar and explorer, Benson Dooling, PSES, to be the dorsal molar of that little known, prehistoric creature, the Duo-finned Narcissiclinch. This imposing fossil - which is now to be found in the halls of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society, to which it was graciously donated by Mr. Dooling - has provoked a world-wide controversy. In view of this unprecedented popularity, we have taken it upon ourselves to print what data we have upon the subject.

The following letter, written by Mr. Dooling to the very highly esteemed Mr. Benedict - whose integrity is beyond question - may serve to illuminate the problem, containing as it does, material not generally known. I quote:

Dear Larry:

I have your letter which insists, in the name of science, that the unique specimen of dorsal molar be turned over to the P. S. F. S. You are quite right.

Delicacy suggests, however, that it be delivered, not as a gift - which gesture would entail a considerable expenditure on the club's part, in annual taxes; but as a permanent loan.

You ask how I acquired the thing. You shall know all that can be told at the moment, my trusted friend. A few data must remain secret; in the interests of several people in high places.

You will recall having read, in Dr. Meloncup's excellent book - we disagree on the mordgunal svid; but he is a decent chap, whatever - *The Contracting Elipse, or Caught by the Knuts in Avize*, how we munched through The Saratoga Bar and how my number one gun boy, Existentialist Sam, was struck in a vulnerable spot by a poisoned dart; how after amputation, no longer able to engage in his favourite sport, pig sticking, the faithful lad withered and died. Science knows this. Science also knows that, just before he died, he called me to his side, and handed me a spot of Remy Martin V.S.O.P. He said, "I hope you liked your drink!" Poor bastard! He had always overrated Kipling!

What has not been told is that he handed me a map showing the location of the invaluable dorsal molar which I am forwarding to you by this post. (There is another map showing the location of the Remy Martin V.S.O.P. It is a personal matter.)

Difficulties surmounted during the horrific expedition which, fortunately, retrieved the specimen, will be elucidated in my shortly to be published travel journal *Snake Eyes*, which is expected to be banned in Boston.

Please to present the dorsal molar to President Train, with the circular explaining it, and if you see fit, this letter. Present it to him for the club.

I shall be present at the next meeting; but for me to give away this priceless thing, would mean for me to weep: and tears are not a manly thing, certainly not to be expected of an explorer.

Thank you, my trusted friend,
Bens:

To this is appended a note which I quote in part:

Dear Larry:

On second thought, I dare not entrust the dorsal molar of the Duo-finned Narcissiclinch to the mails. Perhaps, in fact, it is unmailable.

Will you, then, take this letter to the meeting, and I will take the exhibit and its explanatory circular?.....

Regards:
Bens:

As a result, then, the following world famous speech was made at the next meeting of the club.

A MONOGRAPH ON THE MANIE STATION OF A SPECIFIC TYE OF PRIMEVAL PASSION

or

HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE!

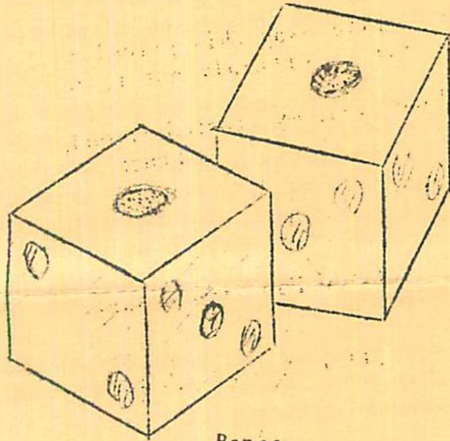
by

Benson Dooling

Illustrated by George O. Smith

First I must ask indulgence for presuming to address you on a scientific subject; because my ignorance of the jargon of science limits me to the idiom of its vernacular.

Several fellow clulmen, knowing that a certain mildewed fossil was kicking about my digs, suggested this clubroom as a fitter place for it. I demurred, for fear of involving personages in high places; but now the police have closed these places, and the secret of this particular fossil has transpired, in a sence limited by canons of decency, through that interesting opus, by Dr. Meloncup, *The Contracting Elipse*, or *Caught by the Knuts in Avize*.



Bones

found on South 18th St., but
having no bearing on the subject.

We must start somewhere. Let us start in the middle.

Man's primitive ancestor was Probably Arboreal, known to his intimates as Prob. A thing called a Tarsier, a second cousin of this chap, dropped a bit of brain, mistaking it for an aphrodisiac, into Mr. Arboreal's grog one day; and, after drinking it, the fellow showed the first signs of civilization, he started throwing cocoanuts at pedestrians instead of dropping less savoury stuff on them, as had been his vulgar habit. He has nothing to do with us, representing just a ship passed in the night. The locale of our interest is earlier, rather.

Nature had created many oddities before she paused, her whimsical objective perhaps attained, with the ultimate absurdity *homo sapiens*. Some of these experimental curiosities she preserved for a while; others she left dangling where she had hung them; still others, with a slight revulsive shudder, she tossed into the discard, and drew three more cards.

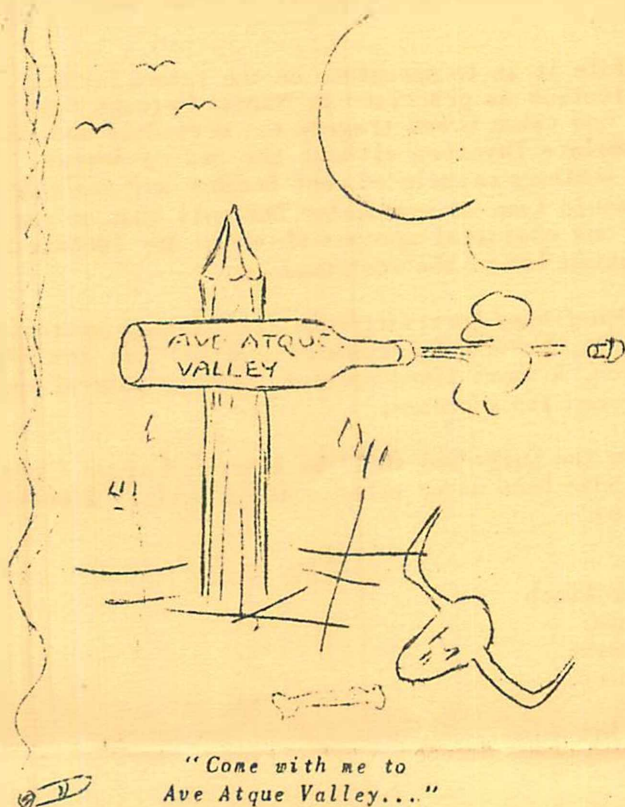
One of these latter rejection slips was the *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch*, known to the vulgar as the *Bi-valved Bindlestiff*, a thing unique in graphed nature because it provided its own hand out.

Please to consider remote antiquity, with the morning postman carrying his precious cargo, having to slither through the primeval slime...our world bubbling like a neglected champagne cocktail into which some zany has dropped a bread pudding garnished with raisins...Come with me to Ave Atque Valley, cooling there amid surrounding sizzling ooze. It was there that the dorsal molar of the *Dou-finned Narcissiclinch* was found, buried under many layers of slate.

When it was discovered, at about the time of the Eoer War, scientists did not recognize it as a mastadonic molar, and thought for a time that it represented a complete skeletal entity. Then, on ascertaining that the thing could have had no alimentary canal, they concluded that it was some sort of signal from another planet which had the childish habit of tossing old bones about the stratosphere. Deciding that planet must be in distressing condition if it desired to contact our world, these scientists thought it wise to forget the whole business, to pretend that nothing had happened. The dorsal molar was hidden in a wine vault in a cellar in Germany. Years later it was discovered there by a civilian who was looking for *Kirchwasser*, poor chap!

Mistaking it for some part of Hitler, he dropped it into a sewer, and ran like thd devil.

It was discovered by plumbers, a few hours later.



It was my intention to offer this fossil to the club with a descriptive card in lieu of elucidation; but fellow clubmen counselled, "Our friends will recognize its beauty without being able to evaluate its importance... It is," they insisted, "like the accolade of the Golden Fleece or that of The Garter, -- either would fall as flat as hell if a guy didn't know in advance what was happening to him." So you must blame them for this discourse.

Perhaps we might unveil the object at this time, and then explain it. May I suggest that any questions which may occur to you as we continue, probably are answered in the intertwined thread of data and labyrinth of speculation which is to follow; that these notes contain all known to me about the *Narcissiclinch* -- all that is to say, which is fit for publication. If there are questions, they might be saved for the question period, when I shall entreat the aid of our scientific brothers for such information as may be beyond my own rather shabby ken.

This is a dorsal molar (complete with a fragment of nerve) of the *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* (*Vodka Zoubrovka Homo Ego Pedicatio*) which is rare even in chipped state. (The present specimen is possibly unique, being

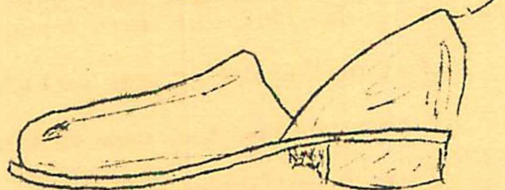
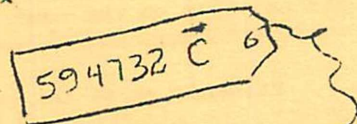
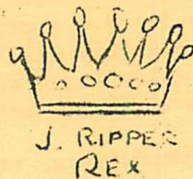
two inches longer than the molar lost by Professor Natsurium during his short stay at 12 Rue Chabanaïs, in Paris, in 1917.

Duo-finned Narcissiclinch, which is not to be confused with the *Cyde Saddle Sneek*, was indigenous to the lava-laden beaches of the Creosote Sea, within the innermost reaches of Ave Atque Valley -- eight pink gins out from Tryde-Merk on Lybel.

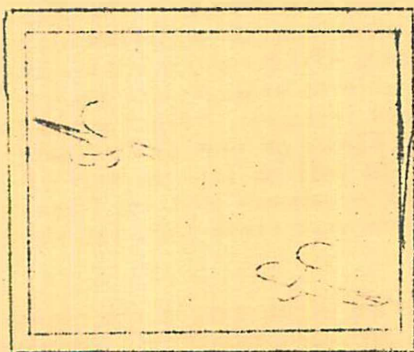
Our only literary record of the species is a clear one: it is carved, as though by a whimsical surgeon, whose anasthesia perhaps outlasted his trepan, on the skull of a Quilt-down man named Hematite. This name Hematite has been translated to mean *There-goes He's-drunk!* It may be consulted at the museum Danzig-Goldwasser, lower stack, specimen 594732C. Be careful to specify C or you may get a carpet slipper once the property of Jack the Ripper.

Duo-finned Narcissiclinch, this skull writing states, would slither up out of the dark waters of The Creosote Sea when the sun was high. Observing its shadow on the beach, *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* would approach this shadow gingerly, murmuring soothing and presumably seductive words; the shadow the while retreating. Such love play, the skull writing declares, would continue until late afternoon, when *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* would leap upon its shadow and hold it clasped firmly.

That night *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* did not slip again into the dark sea which yearned for it; but, its shadow having departed at dusk, our creature slept alone, unmindful of the cold snow which fell nightly in that territory. At dawn *Narci* would wake, lay eggs numbering three,



and eat them quickly and without seasoning. Then, swaggering slightly, it would glide again into the water.



Narcissiclinch approaching its shadow on the beach.

(In this photograph, shadow has fled; Narcissi hasn't arrived yet.)

Idle it is to speculate on the reason for this ovule mastication as practised by Narcissi. Perhaps this fancy fish had taken Greek tragedy too seriously and desired to emulate Thyestes without the aid of Atreus. (This last sentence is included, not because any sensible person would take it seriously; but only that we may have that one classical apropos which in any lecture is an unwritten law of the rostrum.)

Duo-finned Narcissiclinch slid through antiquity as a Swede through smorgasbord and left as few edible remains. A short lived species, perhaps natural enemies prevented its increase.

On the Quilt-down skull is inscribed a poem (Hematite must have been under ether quite a while.) I translate it thus:

"Him Narcissiclinch
him mate no got
by himself him do
by himself him do
hee-ho hee-ho
when him sun him shine
HO!"

The final HO! probably was emphasized by a tap or a beat on a tom-tom: perhaps on feast days was added the tweet of a licorice stick.

The specimen fragment of ted sea-weed included in the exhibit is assumed, but not guaranteed to have been used by *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* as a kind of net, when, if ever, it confronted a coy shadow. No other explanation would seem to admit its presence. Once it was thought - but only for a short time - to be the veil of *The Saitic Isis*. Various things were caught up in this net at remote times, and these have been allowed to remain. One is a champagne cork, of a size which stopped either a fifth bottle or a magnum. It must be of fairly recent origin. Another captive is a tiny beer bottle, empty: it is of a size too small to have interested those who may once have enjoyed the bubbly prisoned by the champagne cork. Could some lullibution tribe once have picniced in Ave Atque Valley, drinking from tiny beer bottles, having their little affairs, telling their trivial dirty stories? Probably we shall never know.

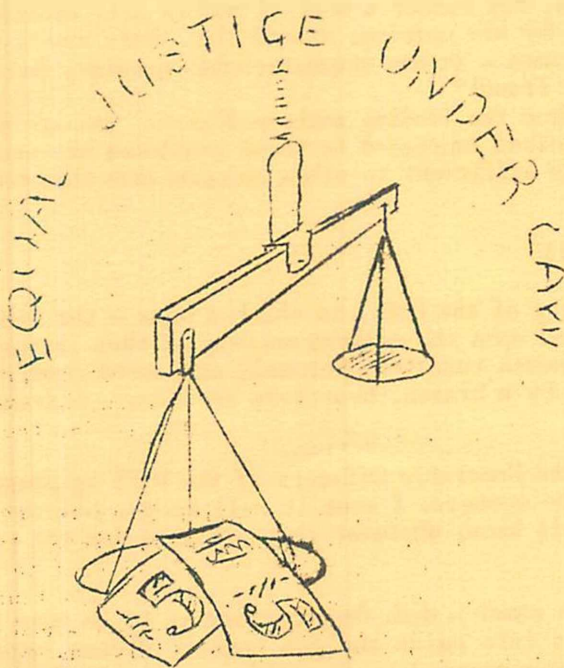
No more can we demonstrate, with present evidence, that early *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* had its two fins on the same side of its fantastic body, which made it lean a trifle to the left, while later models had one fin on each side, because it balanced better that way.

Evidence anent the creature is difficult to come upon. In quest for corroborative data, I answered an advertisement once, which seemed to offer a section of cartilage from one of *Narcissiclinches duo fins*, but which turned out to be an offer to swap a twenty-two calibre cartridge.

Just another one of many setbacks. . .

Rather amusing, too, come to think of it. *Cartilage...cartridge...quite funny, really!*

There is sufficient evidence to warrant a probable opinion that ours is a plausibly reconstructed background of its locale during *Palangocryptic* times. It changed considerably during the *Polished Truncate* and more as the earth cooled and the slumkrunk descended from the smald-deck (or warfslaw, as Dr. Klmpfendirk has it, perhaps reasonably) while the sea swept up deposits of exempt loaded with uks, leaving citloon (sic!) scrumpf, or stutz, which gradually formed hubistoon lodes; which took rather a while - but all this happened long after the *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* lived and loved. (Professor Gilbey considers it to be nature's compensa-



"Two fins...on one side...which made it lean a trifle to the left."

most of those who thought they could write were splitting infinitives out of stone. It seems unlikely, though, as the predatory, amatory habit of their father - if father, in fact he was - must have cramped such ambition.

Now here is something rather curious; the red billed winstrel, a parasite which lived in a cavity in *Narcissiclinchis* tooth. The present specimen seems to have suffered a slight malformation, perhaps caused by an injury suffered during nidation. In return for the shelter offered by the dorsal molar, and for an occasional segment of egg, the red billed winstrel would warn the *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch*, who waited, ever expectant, his fins stretched up on the mud of the shore, of the shining of the midday sun.

I wonder what might be the ontological excuse for this strange creature - this *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch*, which was neither fish nor lobster newlurgh; but assuredly was foul? What purpose did it serve? Where was it going? And why did it seem so anxious to stop? It represented perhaps the most perfect nihilist known to experience; and should remain so until there is perfected a means to dehydrate water. There should be little profit in trying to riddle its secret. Mens hairs have turned gray over less.

In closing, this reminder. Let us not, with our sophisticated minds, think harshly of Narci. If the glass were reversed, we might look as odd to him as he does to us. Let us be certain that to his contemporaries, to the boys in the poolroom, to the crowd in the drug store, he was (probably) a hail fellow all wet, that he was one hundred per cent rotarian, with both fins on the ground.

Thank you for your kind and flattering attention.

tion for the creature's loss; but Dr. Gordon thinks that some similar process might have been expected notwithstanding. In the light of our present tittle of data, we can advance no opinion at this time.

The coprolite which glitters in the lower right hand corner of our exhibit is authentic. It was discovered in the Glaciale Menthe Caverns five pink gins out from Cherry Heering, and is assumed to be the souvenir of a flying burfil which was somewhat in a hurry.

There seems to be little ground for the theory advanced by Dr. Tony Port, that similar dorsal molars had symbolical use in the fertility rites of the enervated *Enk Men* (*homo sans cantharidies*) and kindred tribes. It is possible, of course, that this learned scholar confuses the dorsal molar with some other fossil.

Here is a pausing place for whimsical speculation. Our dorsal molar, we have explained, was found under several layers of slate. These bits of slate were scrawled with odd designs and figures, and with words in a language unknown to us: - could it be that these were the jottings of young *narcissiclinchi*, anxious to advance in a cooling world? Could these have represented homework assigned by a gentle teacher in a little red school house of the rea? How interesting if it were true, at a time when



A bit of surplus left of the canned attention shown Our Speaker.

As Mr. Dooling sat down, the storm of controversy was begun. Mr. Benedict rose indignantly, crying that the specimen was not a fossil at all, but rather a work of modern art, stolen from a museum. The renowned Mr. de Camp, called upon for his opinion, stated that there was no doubt whatever concerning the authenticity of the specimen - it was unquestionably genuine. And somewhere a voice was heard mumbling "Fraud! Fraud! Fraud!"

We have received treatises on this matter from two leading anthropologists, and are printing them here. We wish it understood that the opinions expressed by these gentlemen are entirely their own. Our scientific knowledge is not nearly sufficient to allow an opinion on this very uncertain matter.

A FRAUD!

I was fortunately present at the last meeting of the PSFS, in which a hoax - the like of which had never before been seen - was perpetrated upon the guileless members of that irreproachable organization. It is my firm intention to unmask that treacherously performed deed, committed blasphemously - in the name of Scientia - by a brazen, heartless creature - a fraud and a charlatan - one Benson Dooling.

This megalomaniac was given permission by the Honorable Officers of the PSFS to present a lecture of anthropo-paleontological nature to the members. I want it well known, however that the Officers are in no way to blame, for as we all know, whatever they allow is for the mutual benefit of all the members of this organization.

I'll now tell you what Dooling - arrgh! that name! - did. Representing it to be bona fide, he first presented a document obtained from his late guide and gun bearer. Please remember that! His *dead* guide and gun bearer! This document purported to show the location of the dorsal molar of the famed *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch*.¹ Dooling not only claimed to have found this priceless fossil, but the unmitigated scoundrel said he had it in his possession - and that he was making a presentation of this priceless object to our own dear PSFS. (This was my initial reason for suspicion. It was after March 15th and therefore too late for use as "For Charity" deduction from his income tax.)

This *psuedo* dorsal molar may be adequately described to the layman as follows: About 18.7 centimeters in length with a superconyloid foramen at the posterior, ventral portion near a somewhat truncated synovoid termination. The periosteum was composed of a hard, grayish, calciferous substance resembling that covering the surface of an ordinary commonplace "bs." Dooling stated that the fossil remains were located in the Creosote Sea (used as a spa in Mezazoic time, thus providing more evidence for my restatement of its fraudulent nature, since its periosteum, indeed its whole structure, would have been black, splintery and acid smelling (from creosol-m-CH₃.C₆H₄.OH and phenol or carbolic acid - C₆H₅.OH - an aromatic oxygen derivative in which an hydroxyl group has replaced a hydrogen atom in a side chain.) The specimen should resemble more a section of a telegraph pole than in fact what seems to be the garden variety of the os femuris hominis. This is enough to show those of us well informed - paleontologically and otherwise - that it was nothing but the lower sinister major phalangeal dactyl of an amphibrach anapest - which we know to be the most ubiquitous of all known fossil remains. Dooling thought the PSFS to be composed of ignorant, naive, unsophisticates. How wrong he was! He forgot those two famous Latin quotations from *Cympquat* by Citrus: "olum taurae iachere" and "hoc propter est."³ Or that well-known verse of Cataline used in his defense against Cicero:

"Dicora, dicora, dogium!
Ascendit mus horologium.
Insinuit hora, descendit mus sine mora!
Dicora, dicora, dogium!"

Also, the guide and gun bearer whom Dooling mentioned as having died after having been wounded in a vital part did not die! In fact he was present at the meeting in disguise. In a private interview with yours truly, this former guide made it known to me that Dooling did

1. See Kraft-Ebbing: *Neo-Neanderthal Narcissist or the Unexpurgated Case Histories of the Duo-finned Narcissiclinch*. pp. 902-987; 1004, 1117
2. See La Brea; *The Sea of Boiling Creosote; Nocturnal City of the Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* or *There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight*.

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use his document - but incorrectly as a road map, never getting any farther than Swift's Boneyards at Chicago where his money for inebriants ran out, since he had spent his last dime on a can of lighter fluid to be used as fuel for his Austin. What he did there, I can guess.

Also, the translation of the Skull-Written poetry quoted by Dooling as referring to the Duo-finned Narcissiclinch and written by some sub-sub-sub-man, perhaps a descendant of the Duo-finned Narcissiclinch, was positively not the style used by the Skull-Writers. Instead of the spondaic trimeter in the form of two Terza Rima stanzas with a dactylic monometric refrain following each triplet as recited by Benson Dooling, it was a pyrrhic monometer with reoccurring rhyme in the form of a Byronic or Don Juan Stanza of 8 verses. (Rhyme scheme: abba abba.)

Further more, the Duo-finned Narcissiclinch did not lay three eggs and immediately eat them without salt and pepper. The creature was viviparous, not oviparous, and after giving birth to three-and-a-half little ones (one creature was always a dithoraco-dicephalic monothallus with two heads and two torsos fused at the waist into one lower body, due to incomplete fission of the blastophere during the metathetic stage), he dipped them in a native sherry, *Hiccuppa* (customarily used in fertility rites), formed from the fermentation of Eohippus milk by *Clostridium petri Williamsii* (an anaerobic micro-organism long extinct) and sauted them in the noonday sun for two and a half hours, afterwards eating them with appetite, one at each of the three meals of the day.⁶

The Parisian address mentioned by Dooling in his lecture is not closed as he states. I can attest to that with corroboration from certain members of the club, veterans who fought the Battle of Pigale. I was there at that address doing research for my forthcoming book *Reasons for High Incidence of Bachelors in Paris* - a volume of great social significance - and I can say there was plenty of action going on in there at the time.

I think by now you may have come around to my original conclusion that the whole mentioned affair was a fraud! I would appreciate all club members present at that sham and those informed upon the reading of this article, to send in a demand for the immediate and permanent expulsion of Benson Dooling from the sacred confines at 56th and Pine. I won't rest till this is accomplished.

A. E. von Hunger, B.S.A., WGTU, Ph.D.

(Unfortunately, Dr. von Hunger - one of our newest members - was found slain the day after writing this article. His cranium was crushed by a blunt instrument. The purported dorsal molar of the Duo-finned Narcissiclinch was found nearby - bloodstained.

I took the liberty of having the Doctor's article published posthumously in the Variant so that Justice may be done.)

ud Waldö

The second treatise, by the well-known Alexander M. Philhps is in a somewhat jilder vein.

A MISTAKE!

At a recent assembly of the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society - the congress of the 39th of March, of this year, as a matter of fact - a paper was read which elicited considerable comment. I might go so far as to describe this comment as vociferous, were it not that vociferation,

3. Do not the bull throw. Trans. by Leary's Interlinear. The other one I forgot, and don't give a damn about anyway.

4. See Oscar Wilde's *Scansion of Scandalous Skull Scriptures or So, Round, So Firm, So Fully Cracked*. in two 12mos. Also, Skelton's *Timurlane and his Pyramidal Library or How to get A-head in this World*.

5. See Havelock Steckel and Ivan Montegazza's *Cause of Konstrosities: Dropping of the Abdomen or The Way of All Flesh*. 1 folio

6. See *Primatal Prostitution and Anthropoidal Alcoholism* in two quartos by Renault, and *Down in Tuffy's Cavern* by Bawdylair.

6. See also. Greps' *Gourmet's Gazeteer; Antediluvian Appetizers or Archaic Apertics* (printed on cloth covered boards with fancy plates.)

as all are aware, is utterly unknown in the deliberations of our Society. However, to our lasting shame, the member who presented the paper, and whose integrity and judgement are beyond question, was challenged. It is even rumored that the term *fraud* was employed, although this I cannot believe.

The subject of this paper (to which I have not at the moment, access, for which reason I must ask the reader to bear with certain indecisions herein which will later appear) was the reputed discovery some years ago of the *dorsal molar* of a species of something described as the *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch*.

Presented along with the paper were certain exhibits, including the so-called *dorsal molar*. I had little opportunity, unfortunately, to examine this evidence. However the term *dorsal molar* raises certain peculiar considerations. A *dorsal molar* presupposes a *ventral molar*, and the conception of a creature bearing a molar on its spine, and another in the vicinity of the umbilicus, is rather staggering. How, then, would this animal masticate? Would it be hinged in the manner of a vast jaw, somewhere in the vicinity of the coccyx? This seems incredible.

I offer an alternative explanation. I suggest that the discoverer of this relic, or fossil, was *mistaken*! There is not here intended the least shadow of implication of duplicity, but of simple error, and famous and historic comparatives will occur instantly to the most innocent reader. Let me very briefly remind the reader of *Eomithopus dawsonii*, and any number of similar unsolved problems will spring instantly to mind. It is in this great group of supremely important and enigmatic survivals of the planet's past that I place these remains.

The authority responsible for the identification of this object as the dorsal molar of *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* was, unless I am mistaken (which I may very well be,) Herr Professor (Henric?) von Umlaut, of Rue des Azul Hermanos. The identification was made in 1912. This is important, since at that time information on these more obscure paleontological finds was very slight. Too, I believe Professor von Umlaut to be the author of (to translate) *Solar and Fresh Water Effects on Littoral Variable Stirps Considered in Relation To A New Approach to Mendelian Genetics*. The Professor, unfortunately, was consumed by a very intricate theory of his own, and I feel sure that his judgement as an anatomist was affected.

Now, I have described this fascinating exhibit (including the coprolite) to an extremely well-informed friend of mine - D. K. Smith, associate member of the Haverstown Archeological Society - who entertains a very deep interest in obscure zoological and paleontological phenomena. The entire conversation took place over the telephone, and results were not satisfactory. However, I understood Mr. Smith to be extremely disappointed that the remains had not been photographed *in situ* - an omission also much regretted in the case of the Piltdown finds, it will be remembered. From my very scanty description of the fossil bone Mr. Smith received very little intelligence of the object, and refused to venture anything further than a very tentative opinion, or "guess" as Mr. Smith termed it. He agreed with me on the improbability of the object being a fossil molar of any description, and suggested it much more resembled an articulation of the lumbar region - possibly that of an animal he termed *torndaddle*, a species with which I am not at all familiar; probably it is extremely rare. I was unable to ascertain over the telephone the specific name of this creature, of which *torndaddle*, is very likely the native appellation. On a subsequent visit to Mr. Smith's residence, or to a meeting of the Haverstown Archeological Society, I hope to discuss this find at more length, and will be glad to report any further conclusions which may be reached.

I was very much interested in the "Ho! im do!" inscription, although I cannot believe it to be in fact associated with the fossil find. It presents itself to me as belonging to a much more recent period - much.

And the reputed reproductive processes of the *Duo-finned Narcissiclinch* (supposing this find to be in fact remains of that interesting species) I found extremely unusual - unique, in fact, in all biological functions.

Finally, I should like to express the hope that the fossil may eventually be successfully identified. *Aiwa inta Valley* - if that is correct (and it will be very odd if it is, for *Aiwa Inta* is the Arabic for "Yes, you'll - certainly deserves further and much more detailed exploration.

This is the second in that series of articles on psychiatry and kindred subjects, by Helen Cloukey.

NEUROSIS AND PSYCHOSIS

by

Helen Cloukey

NEUROSES: A group of behavior disorders representing suboptimal adaptations to biodynamic stress and conflict. Neurosis are characterized symptomatically by 1. anxiety 2. various pervasive defenses such as phobias, obsessions, or compulsions, or by 3. psychosomatic dysfunctions.

PSYCHOSES: A group of grave disorders of behavior, most of which satisfy the legal criteria of insanity in that the person is unable to care for himself, and/or constitutes a danger to others. The psychiatric criteria; 1. loss of contact with, or marked distortion of socially accepted interpretations of reality. 2. severe and persistent disorders of affect (emotion) 3. marked *regressions* with retreat from or perversion of social relationships. 4. personality disintegration 5. acute derangement of "intellectual" capacities or their deterioration.

These two definitions are from Jules H. Masserman's recent book, *Principles of Dynamic Psychiatry*, and they make clear the difference between two categories of behavior disorder. Examination of the definition of psychosis will provoke some thought, however. We suffer psychosis in our midst to an amazing extent, and think little of it. Even in its more colorful manifestations of hallucination, it is common, as recent PSFS discussions of the "lunatic fringe, and derology will illustrate. Many, many people have a clearly developed psychosis which society will tolerate until it threatens injury to its bearer or to others. "Harmless," yes but most of us bear the scars of some encounter with a person technically insane, though socially tolerable. As Alvarez puts it, a person must be indeed aberrant in his behavior to gain more than the reputation of "queer," "a suspicious old duck," or an "unsociable devil."

Certainly, each of us have known at least one person who is convinced that every gesture or word directed to him has some secretly spiteful intention. These are the persons who fight with waitresses, yell "discrimination" all of the time, and lose their friends by believing that they are out to harm them for some supposed gain. Then, each of us have struggled to communicate with the ones who do not have two connected thoughts. They do not pay attention. They cannot give a pertinent answer to a question. One must speak twice to gain their attention, then repeat one's message twice. They apparently ignore everything, signs, street-lights, other people. Their behavior is vague and irresponsible, and their friends get into the habit of writing down their notes for them, having learned that it is useless to expect them to remember engagements, addresses, letters to be written, or other data.

Of much the same breed, but far worse, are those who do not care, about anything, about anyone. These frequently, as Alvarez puts it, "crave a love that they will not or cannot earn or keep." Their only reaction is indifference, and their behavior frequently reflects a degree of selfishness and callousness that is extreme. They cannot be influenced, and, if honest, may make responsible and valuable citizens.

Many of us have not known people who "heard voices" or "saw things" but apparently Richard Shaver has known some.

If we add to these, the infinite hosts of people who have "one crazy idea", that the president is responsible for all the trouble in the country, or that all Jews are pyromaniacs, or that all negroes are syphilitic, or all partakers of alcohol are children of the devil, we gather quite a crew together.

So what? Why spend so much time hanging a label on people, especially such a damning one as "psychotic"? As I hear the howls of laughter that arise from discerning souls who will think that my sentiments are those of the old Quaker lady- "All the world is queer but me and thee, and

sometimes I am worried over thee, my dear." - I hasten to state that there is an important reason. One reacts differently to an insane person. This can be stated in three ways.

1. One does not argue with him. If his mind has solidified around some wretched irrationality, one does not elevate the blood pressure and engage in verbal and actual fisticuffs to melt it loose.

2. One does not leave oneself unguarded with him. One avoids the subjects on which he is irrational, or one expects his vagueries, or indifference, or absurd elation and extreme depressions. One does not expect more of him than he can deliver, emotionally, socially, or intellectually.

3. One respects him within his limitations. In the matters wherein he is competent, at the times when he is charming, over the subjects about which he is intelligent, one enjoys and gains from the association without losing sight of his limitations.

WORLDWITHOUT RAIMENT
(The nudist Stf Book)

by

Louise Fardenelle

Review by I. Seymour

(Just in case some fan is unable to recognize Mr. Seymour's rather individualistic style we append the note that: Mr. Seymour is the pseudonym of a notorious character who has created Vomaidens. Ed.)

Is *World Without Raiment* the world's worst stf book? Robert Heinlein recommended it to me as such, so of course I had to see how it compared with such notable no-goods as *The Island of The Great Mother*, *Test Tube Baby*, *The Metamorphosis*, *Perelandra*, etc. The verdict: not completely bad, but pretty sad.

Particles from a gaseous constellation or wild star (that's what the book says) are drawn into our stratosphere, with these results: Just about everything on earth disintegrates but people... The entire planet gets a climate like the Chamber of Commerce says Southern California has... and edibles are mutated to several times normal size. While the wonder rays of the wild star, incidentally, are causing everything from nylons to pylons to crumble into dust, newspapers are strangely unaffected to the end, so that the public can still get all the latest dope in the horrible headlines.

In the course of the story we are treated to some atrocious dialogue and some "dreadful" typographical errors.

At least the blurb was honest. It plainly stated (italics mine) 'You will watch with abated breath the disintegration of our beautiful city.' Later, after promising to lead us to Utopia, the authoress states 'And with it all may come, even to you, dear reader, a sweet unforgettable dream from which you can never entirely awaken.' To sleep - perchance to dream - aye! there's the rub. Pass the hot black coffee, bub!

As a consequence of universal nudism the world is freed of A) lust; B) greed; C) fear; and E) sin. And, at the end of the book, the lion and the lamb lie down together - literally - being two animals escaped from a zoo. After that it would not have surprized me to have read that Ackerman and Searles embraced, or Wolheim offered Weaver Wright the shirt off his back.

There is perhaps one saving grace: The authoress, as might have been feared, did not attempt to illustrate the book (published 1943 by Valiant Press, NYC; 260 pgs.)

The naked truth about *World Without Raiment* is that it's something to grin and bare... mais vraitment!

Le, this speak for itself.

EEK!

by Milton A. Rothman

"Betwixt the ineffable and the insupportable."

Nature, swathed in gloomy mystery, peeks out at us from behind a cloud.

"Poo!" it says.

Charles Fort, shell-like ears quivering with excitement, says, "Ah, what does this mean?" He scampers about collecting newspaper accounts of strange events, waves them in the faces of Newton, Maxwell, and Einstein, shouting, "See, you dull clods, your universe is all wrong. It does not explain the inexplicable."

Frogs fall from the sky, men disappear, ships vanish, lights move about in the heavens. The stars are but holes pricked in the shell surrounding us, and the earth is flat. The ocean is inhabited by beings from other planets, and we are being kept.

"And those who do not believe this," shrieks Fort and his followers, are being narrow minded and blind, closing their eyes to the realities of nature, afraid of admitting the truth of anything which is likely to upset their neat and muscle-bound system of nature.

Newton, that dull clod, creator of calculus and the science of mechanics, smiles to himself as he regards the apple dropping from the tree.

It falls!

The rain falls from the sky, the bomb falls from the airplane, the meteor falls from space, and always they fall down, never up. The planets circle the sun, and the suns circle each other bound to each other by irresistible and unchanging forces despite the vast and unimaginable distances that separate.

Newton smiles, contemplating the fall of the apple, but the smile is a grim one, for although he can measure the speed of the fall, and although he can predict the motions of the planets around the sun, he has not the vaguest notion of what mechanism reaches through empty space, causing the apple to fall and the stars to revolve. And three hundred years later, Poincare, knowing full well that his science is based upon the most utter mystery of all, mutters, "Science cannot explain. It can only describe."

No need to search for newspaper accounts of mysteries. Just look around. No need to hunt for falling frogs. Falling apples are a sufficient mystery.

Falling apples and growing apples. Trees blooming in the spring, browning in the fall. Flowers exploding with colors, the bees and the birds, females of the species bearing young, The young growing old and bearing more young.

And yet - a grown body contains more cells than there are molecules in the chromosomes of the egg. Still within that egg are contained the blue prints for every detail of the matured body, for the shape and positions of the bones, blood vessels, nerves, glands, organs, because from a human egg does not grow a tiger, and children do resemble their parents.

Completely inexplicable, and not an oddity, a rarity, a fragile piece of evidence to be seen by only a few. It is for all to see.

So science is dull and stodgy and will not recognize new and daring concepts? Certainly if science will not accept the truths and the strangeness of nature, it will not accept the preposterous claptrap of men being able to talk to each other over distances of thousands of miles -- and as for sending pictures over those distances, let us discuss the matter no further.

Yet it is Maxwell, a scientist of great note, who predicts the existence of electromagnetic waves, and Hertz, another man of conventional science who verifies the prediction.

And even more preposterous, is it not, to say that matter, which everybody knows is made of particles, is really made of waves, just like light? What madness! More fanciful than Atlantis at the bottom of the sea. Yet they did not laugh at Louis de Broglie in Paris when he proposed that this may be so, and they belived Davisson and Germer in New Jersey when they showed experimentally that electrons did act like they were made of waves.

Science accepts no new and odd ideas? No?

What could be odder than the bending of light waves around the sun, as Einstein said it would? Or more peculiar than matter of negative energy content; such as Dirac postulates?

What is more incomprehensible than a gyroscope, a mere spinning wheel, which moves in one direction when you push it in another?

Need we search the musty files of history for trivia in the realm of mystery, when here beneath our very noses lie the most deep and unexplainable phenomena of the universe? Need we listen to this upstart Charles Fort, who, wallowing in the depths of ignorance, attempts to tell scientists what they do not know, when the scientists realize full well upon what vacuous foundations stand all of existence?

For listen to the lecture of George Gamow, an expert on the origin of the universe. He will describe to you the events which took place during the first tenth of a second of the prodigious explosion which created the universe, but he will answer no questions concerning what took place before the initial instant of this explosion, and for good reason.

Existence itself violates the laws of conservation of matter-energy and the law of entropy, upon which our science is based. Existence itself is incompreliensible and unexplainable.

In fact, I don't believe it.

OUT IN NORTH CAROLINA

It seems that some weeks ago there was a convention out in North Carolina. (The Norcon) Having received a letter reporting the affair from Pat Davis, Charles Lucas has very kindly passed the information along.

The feature speaker was Dr. Bailly, a professor of English from North Carolina, who spoke on his book *Pilgrims Through Space and Time*. I understand he spoke informally and was very interesting.

This was followed by a general discussion, lunch, and that convention tradition, an auction sale.

After the auction a business meeting was held, and three people selected to draw up a constitution. It seems they would like a copy of ours to get some ideas from. Constitutional committee, take heed.

Well, that seems to be about the rough outline. Sounds interesting.

Good luck with that constitution - its not so easy.

The Editor

SUPPORT THINGS!
for example: the Philcon!!

This review stands in place of the May Forgotten Classic. For a time I intended to use it as such, but I decided that the name would give a false impression. While the book may be classic, I doubt if it is forgotten. It is certainly quite rare, however, and therefore unfamiliar - in content if not in name - to many people. Hence this review. Mr. Moskovitz tells me the NEFF is considering reprinting it. Judging by what he has to say, I certainly hope they do.

THE SIGN OF THE BURNING HART
A personalized book review

by

Sam Moskovitz

THE SIGN OF THE BURNING HART: by David H. Keller (A Tale of Arcadia). Printed by C. Earbaroux, Saint-Le, France (in English). January, 1938 in a strictly limited edition of 100 (of which only 85 ever reached this country.... Introduction by Pegis Massac, and frontispiece by Peslanges, 163 pages, stiff paper cover.

Col. Keller had paused a moment in the midst of his talk to the Eastern Science Fiction Association. He had reached the chapter in the summary of his career where he told how Harpers had offered to buy and publish his story *The Sign of the Burning Hart*. All he had to do was tell them what it was about. Reluctantly, Dr. Keller asked for the return of his child. Again and again notes came from Harpers offering to purchase the story if he would explain its significance, but Dr. Keller remained silent. "When the humming bird is alive, and flitting from flower to flower it is a thing of beauty, but when it is coldly dissected there remains nothing at all." So Dr. Keller let fly a golden opportunity. And now he was trying to explain to us the story itself and he groped for words and found none, then fell back upon his own time-worn cliché:

"It sings!"

It startled me, because I had heard him use the phrase before. From someone else it would have been egotism, from him it was an attempt at explanation.

That night I took my copy of *The Sign of the Burning Hart* out of the book case, and destroyed its virginity with a page cutter, and with it dollars of its considerable value.

"Col. Keller has said," I told my brother, "and often, that this novel 'sings'. I'm now going to read it, carefully, straight through, and see for myself."

An hour and a half later I set the book down, and my brother said to me; "Well? How was it?"

I looked at him a minute, tapped on the book with my knuckles, then said: "Dammit! It sings!"

The Sign of the Burning Hart is fantasy by courtesy. It is fantasy because the story is set in the never-never city of Arcadia somewhere on the road between Paris and Madrid, but unlike most fantasies it is not cloaked in a hazy mist that often portrays the state of the authors own mind, but is the paradox of writing beauty, incarnate, buttressed by deep significance in every phrase.

Here is no author playing with words as a child would slide a handful of baubles back and forth to see them glitter, but a man who has encompassed in the span of one short novel a tale of the little city of Arcadia, set somewhere on the road between Paris and Madrid, an allegory that embraces on a small scale, all of human life and endeavor. Yet, despite a brilliant economy of words, each line is sheer poetry, each word a pearl in a well fitting train of thought.

The Sign of the Burning Hart is made up of four interconnected short stories, so harmoniously blended that you would not realize it if you were not told in advance. They were

originally written in 1934, then reworked in 1936 into what I believe to be a literary masterpiece.

It is a tale of Philip Buzzard, an Englishman, who upon the receipt of a small inheritance changed his name to Christopher Wren, and on the counsel of his attorney, reopened a store that had formerly been a grocery store in Arcadia. He could not think of anything to sell, so he put his library of books on his shelves, including a uniform set of bound volumes of his own works entitled, *Wanders in Spain*, *Shadows and Realities*, *The Adorable Fool*, *The Passionate Lover*, etc., etc. Examination revealed these volumes to be composed of blank pages which the young Christopher Wren intended to fill as the years progressed between the time taken up by business and living and the reading of *The Spectator* in the sun outside the door of his shop, which was called *The Sign of the Burning Hart*. Each of these volumes had a fictitious history.

Into the door of *The Sign of the Burning Hart* come all manner of men and women, all types of human problems and all human emotions - love, hate, joy, despair, hope.

But as Dr. Keller said, you cannot dissect this story. You cannot tell the plot, for the motivating factors tell a story of all things basic in mankind.

David S. Keller is himself more fascinating than any author of fantastic fiction who ever lived. His autobiographical sketches may be found in *Fantasy Commentator* and elsewhere, and we strongly recommend that you read them, for, like a study of another fine author, H. P. Lovecraft, they are essential to the full appreciation of the story.

David S. Keller has written himself into every story he has ever written. His life, his personality and own experiences form the framework of his entire work and lend to them an authenticity possessed by no other writer of fantastic fiction, and few other writers of any brand of literature.

For instance, Philip Buzzard is the name of one of Dr. Keller's ancestors, one of the early settlers in his traditional hometown of Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

The titles of the unwritten books on the shelves of *The Sign of the Burning Hart* are actually titles of, or corruptions of titles of Dr. Keller's own novels and short stories, published and unpublished.

Dr. Keller mentions in his novel a book titled *Songs of a Spanish Lover*. This is an actual book of poetry written by Dr. Keller and published in a limited edition of 50 copies, on fine quality paper and bound in stiff paper. The title, *The Cecils of Cecil Borough*, may be corrected to the *Kellers of Hamilton Township*, an actual book, written by Col. Keller and published in a limited edition of 500 copies tracing the genealogy of the Keller clan since the first Keller settled the town of Stroudsburg. A suburb of Stroudsburg is today named Kellersville, and another Buzzardsville, after the two sides of the Keller Clan.

As you read through the novel, you again and again identify the Keller personality. In this novel he is at least two of the important characters, Christopher Wren, whose habits approximate many of Col. Keller's, and who is easily tagged by the obvious book titles, and then there is the Banker of Arcadia whose daughter Christopher Wren marries. The Banker, in telling the tale of his rise refers to his contraction of tuberculosis through privation. A similar episode also forms a chapter in the history of the author's life. In the story the Banker is shot in the arm and goes through life with a permanently impaired limb, as does Col. Keller to this day.

The story which apparently takes place sometime at the end of the eighteenth century (but the period cannot be precisely placed), tells in one section of Christopher Wren befriending in his own home a prostitute dying of a venereal disease, and spending his accumulated fortune trying to get some doctor of the time to treat the woman. In essence this approximates Col. Keller's own battle as a Dr. in mental institutions to get the authorities in particular, and the world in general to recognize that the mentally ill, are, after all, human beings and that some intelligence and heart should also be employed in their treatment.

You have never read a story where an author so completely imprisoned you in his moods.

When the characters are happy, the reader feels a sense of elation, and when events conspire, a feeling of forboding is inescapable, and when darkness falls, the magic of the words engenders an artificial mental depression.

Every character, Christopher Wren, the Lawyer, the Inkeeper's daughter, the banker, the prostitute Leonora, the banker's daughter, Susanne, are clearly, humanly, delineated — they live. They are part and parcel of real life.

Re'gis Messac, of the University of France, who wrote the introduction, wrote of Arcadia — the city in which the story is laid: "What is this city, somewhere between Paris and Madrid, where such strange happenings are going on? I think it is Apollodoros' lost city, where we are allowed to roam with a privileged soul. It is the city multi-form and elusive, where a few privileged souls were allowed to go time and again. . . . Most assuredly a very strange land." Different people may see different things in this story, and like the editors of *Harper's*, Messac did not have been certain what the story was about, but he knew it was beautiful. However, I felt that I knew Arcadia, and had seen her many times. Not only between Paris and Madrid, but between New York and Philadelphia, San Francisco and Los Angeles, Dallas and Houston or Denver and Phenix. Arcadia is the city typical. A cross section of every civilized town and hamlet in the world, and a cross section of the people that dwell therein. The name could be Anytown.

There has never been another story written just like *The Sign of the Furning Hart*. In later years you may compare other tales to the "Hart", but as of today it stands a unique achievement in a cubby hole of literary creation entirely its own. You cannot brand this work as a piece of "realism" because some of the things in it never were, or never will be, and are but a composite of the things of the world; because as it is written it reads like poetry. You cannot call this work a fantasy because there is too much of real life, and real people and everyone's dreams. In the final analysis, I believe it will have to be called *literature*, because, like all literature, it is about people, and people are the only things you can compare it with.

Meditation upon the remarkable plethora of successful authors in our midst

When the annals of this town are written
There will be some things to tell
For Philadelphia science fiction
To date has done astounding well

Tis hard to see, this fame unmeasured
Surrounding men so fond of wine
(Sherry's famous stuff — undoubted
But writing must take up some time!)

However, still the fact confronts us
That five of psfs have made the grade.
The rest of us are staple slackers
Or else too fond of lemonade

Anna Akus

THE MISLAIN CATA

by

ALEXANDER M. PHILLIPS

Published by THE PRIME PRESS

is now for sale!

THE ETERNAL WANDERER

by

Oswald Train

Well, by the time you read this, *The Vislaid Charm* - Lex Phillips' first book and the initial publication of the new Prime Press - will be ready, or nearly so. Every little delay just now has the boys on edge, and who can blame them? Must be just like becoming a father for the first time.... The second publication, an ancient Utopian novel from way back yonder in the early 1880's, is already in the hands of the printer. This is a very rare book; it is not even listed in most of the big libraries. It should be out in a couple of months in a special and limited edition of about a thousand copies... George O. Smith is right at the job of putting the finishing touches to his revision of the *Venus Equilateral* series, which will also be soon going to press.

Prime Press is proud to announce that they will publish *The Torch* by Jack Bechdolt. This great story, one of the famous Munsey classics, was published in *Argosy* back in 1920. According to the author, this story is more timely now than it was when it was first published. Mr. Bechdolt is especially pleased at the forthcoming publication of this story in book form, as it was the first novel length story that he wrote for *Argosy*, and he always liked it. Incidentally, it was slated for reprinting in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, but before its turn had come, the old Munsey company was sold out to Popular Publications, and the idea of reprinting it was abandoned due to the change in policy.

A couple of weeks back, the PSFS threw a party, but it turned out that a good many of the regular members who had originally planned to attend it were not able to be there after all. Therefore the attendance was much lower than it should otherwise have been. A good time was had by those present, 'tis said, and another party is already being talked about for the near future when we hope to have a much larger attendance. The more the merrier!

One of the nicest little gatherings in many a day was held at the home of PSFS member Alfred C. Prime, in Paoli. Alfred proved to be the perfect host, and a wonderful time was had by all present. Plenty to eat, and plenty to drink, and plenty of fun. Too bad Larry's pictures of the affair didn't turn out well. On second thought, though, maybe it is fortunate. They'd have made good blackmail material. *Ossi wrote this before Jean Bogart's and Jim Williams' parties were held. Both were heartily enjoyed.*)

Did you ever have the job of ripping apart huge stacks of *Argosy* with many duplicates among them? Well, Harry Buck and your reporter did, and there were pretty close to a thousand of them all together. It is always amazing to see the difference in the size of the stacks of fantasy, and the piles of discarded material. *Argosy* always was a darned good magazine, and the stories were tops, no matter whether they were westerns, or mysteries, or science fiction or anything else. But the trouble is that the magazines always take up so much room that they just have to be excerpted and that's all there is to it. My conscience bothers me when that job has to be done, for *Argosy* was always a favorite magazine of mine.

One of the greatest writers of fantasy was H. Rider Haggard. It is gratifying that collectors and readers are paying attention to his books once more. Several years ago a visit to almost any book store would reveal row after row of Haggard books on the shelves, gathering dust. There were fine original editions among them, as well as good, solid reprint copies, and all were low priced. But few were tempted. Perhaps Haggard was considered outdated, perhaps his style was out of favor. But somehow he caught on again. Oldtimers who had read his books years ago when they were boys began buying them to reread. Younger fans and collectors discovered that his books were good, and wanted more. After a time few of his books were to be found, and now they usually command a good price when one does come across them. Yet, despite the great popularity of Haggard, practically all of his books have been out of print for years. Why doesn't some publisher bring out his more obscure fantasy titles? True, one new company was supposed to reprint all of Haggard, but where are they? What happened to the company? Haggard by the way lived a very active life, and was one of the most widely travelled of all modern authors. His books on South Africa were so popular since, because of his many years of association there he knew the country better than practically any other author has.

Bud Waldo has been suffering recently from grippe, sore throat, and so on. The other night a few of the boys paid him a visit and cheered him up a little. He looks pale and thin - but his weight has gone down to 229. (Ed. 's note: Since this has been written, we are glad to say, Bud has recovered - from the grippe, we mean.)

Have you read Pat Frank's *Mr Adam* yet? If you didn't, you have missed a lot of good laughs. It is just about the only atomic bomb story that doesn't fill you full of gloom. Oh yes, it is a good story.

Goerge O. Smith is a very busy man these days. As you know, Goerge is a radio engineer at Philco. Well, that takes care of his time during the day. At night he is burying his nose to the grindstone, turning out revisions of the *Venus Equilateral* stories and the new *Mad Holiday* to finish up the series. Then he has turned out a number of short stories to keep the kettle boiling and besides all this has completed about 25 thousand words of a new full length novel. Nevertheless, he still finds time to visit the boys for a full session about once or twice a week. Goerge, by the way, hasn't washed his right hand for several weeks now. That's because with it he shook the hand of the great Babe Ruth in New York.

Those of you who are not familiar with Dorothy Sayers' three *Omnibus of Crime* books should not overlook them, for their contents are at least half fantasy. You will find many of your favorite authors represented in their pages - Blackwood, Tunsany, Doyle, and many more - Yes, even A. Merritt's *People of the Pit* appears in one of them. So don't let the title fool you next time, but open them up and look through them yourself.

 "THE TIME HAS COME, THE WARLUS SAID. . . ."

While the Heisenberg uncertainty principle appears offhand to be one of those abstruse physical concepts which has no particular value and applies only to very small objects, it can be shown to have a definite effect on a large scale as well. The principle, in brief, states that the velocity and position of a body cannot both be measured perfectly accurately at the same instant. For bodies of ordinary size the accuracy allowable is sufficient for all purposes, and does not affect the results of any of our measuring instruments. However, when we speak of small particles such as an electron, then we discover that it is not possible to give the electron a definite position or velocity.

However, let us imagine that we have a ball bearing which is perfectly round and held perfectly rigid. Imagine that we drop another perfect ball bearing on top of the first one so accurately that it will bounce directly vertically. Theoretically then, in the absence of disturbing forces, the second ball should continue to bounce indefinitely, at least until its energy is absorbed by friction. But will it?

Actually, the uncertainty principle gives the position of the bouncing ball just sufficient indefiniteness that after several bounces enough deviation will have been built up to cause the ball to bounce off to the side. It has been calculated that the probability of the ball bouncing more than seven times in one chance out of some number which is tremendous.

Can we add up an infinite number of finite objects and end up with a sum which is finite? Offhand you would say no:

Or would you?

1+1+1+1 and so on for as long as you will adds up to a number which keeps getting larger and larger the more terms you add on. Furthermore, no matter how large a number you name, you can always make the sum of this series larger than that number simply by adding sufficient terms.

The result is precisely the same even if you add up smaller numbers. You could write:
 $1/100 + 1/100 + 1/100 + 1/100 + 1/100$ and if you added up enough of them you could make the sum larger than any number you could name. So that seems to answer our question in the affirmative.

Or does it?

Mathematicians are funny about things like that. They keep asking questions, and it's quite difficult to prove something to them.

A mathematician would say something like this: "Well, so far you have just been adding up equal numbers. How about trying to add up numbers which keep getting smaller and smaller?"

All right, let us try this series:

1 1/2 1/3 1/4 1/5 1/6.....

To add this up is a trifle tedious, but if you try it you will find that we still end up with a number that becomes larger than any number you might name, as long as you add on enough of these diminishing numbers.

That seems to clinch the argument, doesn't it? Here we are adding up numbers which get smaller and smaller, and you see that after we add up a million of these numbers we will only be adding a millionth at a time. Yet, if we keep on adding enough of them the sum will grow and grow.

Which seems obvious from the idea of infinity. After all, an infinite number of anything adds up to an infinite number, no matter how thin you slice it.

Or does it?

Maybe, just maybe, we haven't been making the numbers get smaller fast enough. What would happen if we tried it this way?

1 1 1/2! 1/3! 1/4! 1/5!

Where 5! (pronounced five factorial) means $5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1$,

Now this series diminishes at a quite rapid rate, because 2! is 2, 3! is 6, 4! is 24, 5! is 120, and so on

And so, if you add up a number of these fractions, you will discover to your astonishment that the sum will never get larger than 2.71828, no matter if you keep adding terms from now until doomsday.

An infinite number of objects doesn't necessarily add up to infinity, it seems.

MILTON A. FORDMAN

*****8*****

TO READERS OF VARIANT IN GENERAL, AND TO THE NFFF IN PARTICULAR:

In the last issue of *Variant* (Vol. 1, No. 1) in Robert A. Adle's column, *Fantaglimgerings* on page 14, the NFFF is referred to as the *%%%. This is not swearing on the part of either the editor or Adle, but is a typographical error caused by depressing the wrong key and by poor proof reading.

We have no dislike for the NFFF, and wish them luck in all their ventures.

The Editor

*****c*****

\$\$\$\$\$SUPPORT THE BIG POND FUND\$\$\$\$\$

FANTASY LINGERINGS

B-

Robert A. Madle

Hard cover books seem to have replaced the magazines among many of the more mature groups of fans. In recent months quite a few new book companies have been organized, and most of them are doing exceptionally well in their efforts to permanently preserve the best of fantasy and science fiction. Of course, the original one was Arkham House, formed back in 1939 by August W. Derleth and Donald Wandrie. Although the road was rather rocky for the first few years, Arkham eventually developed into a major publishing concern.

Tom Hadley was the next to indulge in this rather risky business, but apparently has done rather well with his three offerings THE SKYLARK OF SPACE, THE TIME STREAM, and, the recently issued story of Van Vogt's, THE WEAPON MAKERS. Lloyd A. Eshbach, veteran fan and author, teamed up with Hadley for a while, but later formed his own organization, Fantasy Press. Eshbach's sole offering to date, SPACEHOUNDS OF IPC, was a commendable job. Eshbach states that his next book, THE LEGION OF SPACE will have something that has not been done before in s-f books. Another successfully operating group is our own Philly organization, Prime Press. Their initial publication, THE MISLAID CHARM, by Alexander M. Phillips, is undoubtedly in your hands by this time. They seem to be sparing no expense in their efforts to provide fandom with well printed and bound books. Trevor Hall is another one new; They published pages and pages of advertising, but their first book, PUZZLE BOX, does not compare favorably with those issued by other concerns, mainly because of its extremely small size. They will probably do better with their second publication, JOURNEY IN THE DARK which is advertised as a novel. Then, of course, there is the New Collector's Group, which has published one of Al Merritt's incompleated worked, finished by Ernest Bok. They have another Merritt coming up in the near future, also a completed sequel to THE MOON POOL not to mention an unpublished novel by Olaf Stapledon.

Don Grant's Pegasus Publications is coming up with a batch Novels by Thomas P. Kelly mostly reprinted from Weird Tales. They there is an unconfirmed rumor of a West Coast group bringing out Garrett P. Serviss's CONQUEST OF MARS. There are rumors of other ones going around, so don't be surprized at anything.

I recently heard from Neil R. Jones, well-known for his famous Professor Farneson series in the old Amazing Stories. He now has his own organization known as Interplanetary Games, and is about to place something of real interest to science fiction fans on the market. You will hear more about this in the near future as Mr.

Jones is going to write an article for publication in the VARIANT About his activities. He has four Professor Jameson stories remaining unpublished. Twelve were printed in Amazing, four in Astonishing, and the remaining four complete this series.

Donald B. Day recently organized The Portland Science Fantasy Society; they have held two meetings to date, both of which have been rather successful, having an average of ten present, all of whom are mature readers and collectors. They intend to purchase a full page ad in the Philcon program..... David H. Keller, M.D., will visit the FSFS early in June and will be the principal speaker. Let's have a good turnout to welcome Dr. Keller -- fans from nearby localities are urged to attend. George O. Smith will also speak at a future meeting on "Pedantry in Writing".

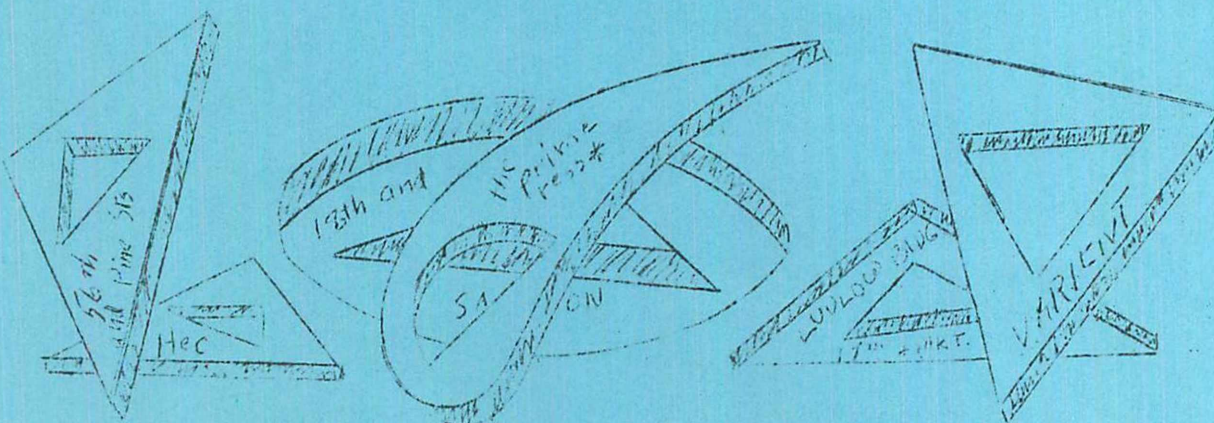
The first out-of-state fan has arrived for the Philcon! Yes, we admit it is rather early, but John F. Christman, of Chicago, pulled in the other day, and stated his intentions of staying until after the Philcon.

New fan publications: Don Grant's Space Trails, a neatly printed journal consisting of one story reprinted from Planet Stories, "Trison Planet" by Bob Tucker. Dream Quest is announced by Don Wilson, of Banning, California.


Notice: Due to a sad mistake, notices are going around that The Big Pond Fund has been given up as a bad job. This is not true. Chances on the big prize are still being taken, and it is firmly expected that Ted Carnell will be here for the Philcon. However, in the event that insufficient funds are collected, or that Carnell is unable to attend, the money will be turned over to the next Convention Committee to be used for the same purpose next year.

Well, be seeing you next issue.

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BEHIND THE SCENES



Well, another issue is going to press, Allah be praised! We had hoped that this time the big, cumbersome, machine taking up space in the Prime Press Office (which we use for Variant) might be in working order, and the magazine consequently multalithed, instead of Mimeographed. However, having watched it throw chunks of paper about the room, I doubt if it is. They tell me that it will take nothing, but 20 pound, long grain, white sulfite paper. If any of you know where this can be obtained both the press and I will be grateful.

There is a metter that I have been wanting to clarify for some time. Will the fans please address my mail to be, and not confuse me with my father, whose middle name is also Allison? You Editor is a Miss, not Mr. Not that it will make a great deal of difference but it seems to be something of a universal mistake.

Perhaps we ought to repeat a few words about Variant's policy. First of all, the Magazine is bi-monthly. That is the say, it comes out as nearly every two months as is possible: We have other things to do also. So then, the next issue is due about the end of July. Don't ask for it before then. As to what we print, well, things that vary from the norm. In the matter of copy, a loud vote of thanks is due to those fans both in and out of the club who have been supporting us so nobly. We have come quite a way from the first issues when we had to go down on beuded knees and beg for copy. Now---we only have to beg, and sometimes we even receive it without having to ask for it! Please keep it up.

With this issue we are getting us a staff. Helen Cloukey is becoming assistant editor--without which this magazine would not see print for a week and a half, and the next one probably not at all. Also, George O. Smith is Art Editor, although he doesn't know yet that he is permanent.

In closing, may we remind you to support the Philcon, Big Pond Fund, and Variant?

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