AD ASTRA

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AD ASTRA. 3156 Cambridge Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, is a bimonthly publication. Ten cents per copy and twenty-five cents for a three issue subscription. For advertising rates see back cover. Advertisements exchanged on an equal basis with other fan magazines. AD ASTRA is an amateur publication and is in no way connected professionally. Literary contributions welcomed.................
Those old pioneers in the publishing and writing of science fiction had laid the groundwork, without which no further development could have taken place.

Within the past year or eighteen months there has been further and marked development. Humor at last stands on its own feet in science fiction. Human interest is being stressed. Characterization has come into its own. The definition of science fiction has broadened to include off-trail stories that would have garnered rejection slips a few years back.

Now we come to Hawk Carse, the giant of the old days. He could stride through a story today just as thunderously as he did then ... for Hawk was a character, a hero who stood apart from the wooden people who walked woodenly through the yarns of yester-year. He was different -- he was Hawk Carse and Hawk Carse alone. He couldn't be anybody else.

But if Hawk Carse came back to life again it would have to be in a different sort of story than the one in which he paraded at the turn of the decade. Hawk Carse stories probably were tops then, they still stand as wonderful examples of one stage of development in science fiction. But they wouldn't be good enough for today ... even as the best story of 1939 probably will not be good enough for the science fiction of 1945. The Hawk, himself, will live. He is immortal.

Hawk Carse is used here merely as a symbol. There were others like him, immortals who will live forever in the heart of science fiction. (continued on next page)
Continuing:

WHERE'S HAWK CARSE!

by Clifford D. Simak

What I have said of him, I believe, applies to all the others. The creator of Hawk, I'm sure, if he reads this, will agree with all I've said.

When Hawk Carse was read and loved most of the characters in science fiction yarns were without distinguishing marks... just men and women of rather pallid cast used to carry forward the action of the story. For in those days the action of the story was enough to turn the trick. Today, no reader is going to get excited over a mere trip to the Moon or a little jaunt back into time. There has to be more than that to a story now. But that was exactly what many of the first stories were... mere journals of pointless adventure, tomes of weighty scientific text-book stuff and paragraphs of description concerning alien peoples and conditions.

In claiming that little attention was paid to characterization and the other niceties of story writing in the old days, I'm not casting a blanket indictment without including myself. A few of my stories were published then and my characters were just mouthpieces to explain scientific apparatus and scientific theory. There were exceptions, of course, but most of us who wrote then were guilty of the things that I have pointed out.

The development from those early days to the present has been gradual. Some outstanding authors have gone ahead to blaze the trail and the rest have followed. By this I do not mean the authors imitated one another. What I mean is that one man opens a new avenue along which science fiction may be developed; others follow and help develop it. Perhaps one author will do this once in a lifetime. Perhaps an exceptional author will do it several times. Most of us will never do it, but we can follow where the others lead. The classic example, of course, is Weinbaum. But many stories have been accused of imitating him, so much so, it has been said by some one that were he alive today, he could not sell a story. This is rank libel. To my knowledge, not more than two or three stories have ever deliberately imitated Weinbaum. Though many stories and many writers have been influenced by him.

Today, the science fiction story stands on its own feet as a legitimate story. It has all the essentials of a story in any other field. It has characterization, human interest, humor, deeper insight into the fundamentals of humanity and the scientific world.

One would naturally believe the more stories that are written, the narrower the field would become as the ideas are used up. Curiously, this is untrue. The very fact that many of the old ideas have been exhausted forces the author to seek either new angles to old ideas, brand new ideas or new approaches to telling of the story; all of which spells better science fiction.

The development still continues. I believe it will continue. With all of ((over))
space and time from which to
draw the stuff of which it's
made, it cannot help but de-
velop further.

The "good old days" have
served their purpose and are
gone ... for which the edi-
tor, the writer and the read-
er may be grateful. We are
moving toward a greater con-
ception of science fiction
and its possibilities. Let
us, therefore, adopt a slogan:

"Let's look to the future!"

A fantastic thing seems
to be happening in the his-
tory of fantasy. In the de-
cade and more since those
pioneers, Weird Tales and Am-
azing Stories, first appeared,
the fantasy and science fic-
tion fan has usually been
forced to content himself
with a handful of mag-
azines. For the last sev-
eral months, however, new titles
have been blooming out incred-
ibly.

There are now upwards of
a dozen publications regular-
lly publishing fantasy and
science fiction. This is a
situation without precedent.
It is only natural for the
interested fan to wonder what
it is all leading to.

Is the fantasy-science
fiction field destined to re-
main on a par with the west-
ern and detective groups, with
a large number of successful
magazines? Or is the current
boom merely the prelude to a
dismal collapse?

Well --- The reader must
be warned, at this point, that
these comments are not to be
taken very seriously. Writing
in a little shack on the Llano
Estacado, a thousand miles
from the nearest editor, I have
no idea of the returns on any-
body's May issue. Probably,
even by the time this appears,
the march of events will be
overtaking my mistakes. But
the prophet being not without
folly, even in his own coun-
try, here are some speculations
on what is to come.

Recently, I was beginning
to fear the results of the
current multiplication in mag-
azines. Obviously, the aver-
age reader is going to buy and
peruse only a certain number
of publications every month.
Quite plausibly, too, after he
has read a certain number of
stories of any one type, he
might tire of them and look
for something new.

It seems, in fact, that
there are cycles in popular
literature. At one time the
westerns will be in the lead,
at another, the detective
books. Once there was a fad
for gangster stories. Then
the G-man rose in popularity,
and the gangster books quietly
vanished.

I was beginning to be a-
afraid that too great a flood
of new magazines would bring
on disaster. I feared that
the magazines would cut into
one another's circulations,
that they would be forced to
reduce rates and number of
pages, and that, in the end,
even the original magazines would have been wrecked. Several things, however, now cause me to take a more optimistic point of view.

One thing is the quality of the stories in the new magazines. I had feared that there wouldn't be enough good material to go around, and that it would be necessary to fill up the books with second-rate material. Evidently, I was mistaken.

"The Black Flame" by Stanley G. Weinbaum, is a case in point. Apparently there had been no place for this story in the older magazines. It was one of the outstanding stories, however, I feel, of last year. Its publication, I believe, shows that Startling Stories fills a place that was previously empty. Thousands of admirers of John Taine must feel that, by bringing them the 70,000 words of his "Tomorrow" for fifteen cents Marvel Science Stories has justified its existence.

The first issues of the old Amazing were filled entirely with reprint material. While the element of cost must have been considered, it probably would have been difficult to get enough good new science fiction stories to fill the magazine. There were then only a handful of trained science fiction writers, among them, Merritt, Burroughs, Leinster, and Cummings. But now, evidently, there are enough competent writers to supply excellent material for a considerable number of magazines.

The one thing that has changed my opinion most definitely is the appearance of Campbell's Unknown. He announced that it was not to be science fiction, nor was it to be another Weird Tales. And the first issue proved his boast.

Eric Frank Russell's "Sinister Barrier", by itself, might have been classified as one of the few perfect science fiction tales. Yet it had a significant difference. "Where Angels Fear" might have been published in Weird Tales. But still one feels the difference. And it is hinted at more strongly in "Trouble With Water".

The announced aim of Unknown is to fill a previously empty niche. I believe it does. And I believe its success in doing that points out the real and helpful future trend in the fantasy field.

So long as each editor will take the trouble, as Campbell did, to discover and fill a vacant niche in the hall of magazines, I don't believe there is any danger to the field as a whole -- in fact, it looks as if the widened interest in the general field ought to help all the magazines. With a hundred million potential readers in America, and a hundred thousand of them enough to insure the success of a pulpwood magazine, it is hard to see any reason for alarm.

Of course, I have no way of knowing the circulation figures of Unknown. But I noticed that the stands were pretty well stacked with the first issue, and that the copies melted away very rapidly.

I think that is a significant sign.

******
THE cellar was jet black and I inched my way down the narrow, unbannistered stairway, cautiously, lest I fall the remaining ten feet to the damp cement floor. I realized, the professor must be waiting impatiently for my return with the new catalyst tube -- the minute three inches of glass and fine wire which was destined to revolutionize modern warfare by causing enemy shells to explode prematurely in the air. Muscles tensed, I sought the next step. As my full weight shifted to the wooden slat it creaked dangerously, cutting the forbidding silence like a knife and alarming my nerves into an incoordinated panic. Suddenly, I lost balance, and emitting a cry, plunged into the stygian darkness, my head cracking the cement with a dull, sickening thud.

Strangely, I felt no pain; though bright lights quivered before my eyes -- electronic flames that waxed hotly through the very core of my brain, fantastic auroras that blinded me -- even as warm blood seeped from the concussion. Then, once more it was dark, the wallowing abyss of unconsciousness.

It might have been an eternity later that I picked myself up from the floor. I was startled by the lack of pain -- there was nothing to indicate my fall, nor the slightest throbbing or sensitiveness. In fact, I felt queerly exhilarated, and in wonderment advanced to the tool bench. Somehow, I could discern it quite clearly, though I knew the basement was never bright enough for that, even in the daytime.

I reached for the desired catalyst tube, and as my hand closed about it I received a terrible jolt. As if the tube were of substance, MY FINGERS SLIPPED, UNCHALLENGED, COMPLETELY THROUGH ITS LENGTH!

In astonishment I stepped back. The glass tube seemed material enough; I was not! My whole body appeared to lack three dimensions, though its outline was incredibly accented by a ghastly emanation. Horrified, I brought my hands up. I could not feel my own body!

"Professor Stone!" I shrieked, but the tumultuous noiselessness of fear mocked my frantic cry. I staggered against the shop bench only to sink far into its frame; the outline of my arm penetrating solid wood. In abject terror I fled the cellar, each step seeming to melt into the stairs. I stumbled through the oaken door, bursting into the blindingly illuminated living room.

"Unsteadily, I looked down up on my body -- seeing NOTHING!"

My mind was a chaos -- I thought my sanity had departed. Terrified, I cried out for my servant -- for the professor; vainly believing they would hear me. But I made no sound. Deep concern visible on his face, my servant entered.

"James, speak to me," I de-
"Beyond the Gates" (continued)

manded, flinging myself directly into his path, "for the love of God, speak to me!"

Unheedingly, he strode through the very spot on which I stood. He had walked through me. I could hear the thud of his footsteps as he made his way into the dark cellar -- in search of me!

I waded through the walls to my laboratory where Prof. Stone still waited. Then utter rage surged within me. The professor had not been spending his time fruitlessly. Cunningly, he had traced the exact plans to my invention -- the one I had asked him to look at. The two-faced devil -- and I absolutely helpless to prevent him. I stood at his side. His motives were clearer than ever. That invention could be turned into a weapon, a relentless implement of war, far more destructive than any in use. He would sell it to the highest bidder, the damn thief. If only --

With the sound of James' return he concealed the plans and innocently rose to his feet. The leer of triumph diffused as the servant came into view, his face ashen with anxiety.

"Quick, come with me," he beckoned soberly, leading the professor across the house to the cellar door. I could see the surreptitious bulge in his vest pocket, a horrible potential menace to humanity. Only he knew of its destructive qualities; if I could remove him -- But I was powerless.

James came to a halt at the head of the stairs leading down into the gloomy basement, drawing the treacherous professor alongside. The servant's lips moved silently, whispering words I could not hear. All I could see was my chance -- my opportunity for revenge. Ah, at last! Stone poised quizically on the top stair, peering into the basement gloom.

With every fiber in my soul, I willed; I launched myself blindly at his body.

The blood surged through my veins hotly -- shrieking soundlessly I pushed at his turned back. Emptiness against matter, will against will, I battled feverishly. For a moment failure seemed to face me, horribly, then -- by all heaven -- he slipped, seemingly of his own accord. He fell those ten feet as I had -- fell crushingly to the cold, hard pavement. A scream of horror escaped from his throat before his head cracked fatally against the cement. Then, silence.

Revenge -- I had done it, killed him! Killed him by sheer will.

James stood, shocked to rigidity. He stared awfully into the emptiness, gazing at something -- something.

I leaped to the head of the stairs, invisible and unnoticed by his side. My soul shrieked in anguish at what I saw, my brain reeled almost to madness. It explained it all -- Lord have mercy. For at the foot of the wooden stairs, lying silent in expiration were TWO bodies -- one of them mine!

I AM DEAD!

(The End)

AD ASTRA presents its feature fiction story:

"THE LONELY WANDERER"

by W. Lawrence Hamling

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Science fiction is one of the most unusual types of literature in existence. It is a type specified for a select group of fearless people. This can be readily understood upon reflection of its past history.

Science fiction was not found as an accident. Rather, by a group of men who were aware that they were creating a new field of literature.

Edgar Allen Poe wrote fantasy and science fiction not in catering to popular demand, nor in a sense of public achievement, but motivated by some mysterious, inner emotion. There was some subtle force that probed his mind, encouraging him to accomplish what others studiously avoided. Urging him to delve into the mysteries as no one had dared to do before.

Some called it the product of a demented brain. Others actually realized what this man had begun, but they feared to accept it.

Poe was not alone in those early days. He was one of the Immortal four who felt that strange urge -- that urge to write of the universe -- of life -- of death -- of the past, future -- of dark probability. Yes, there were others, such as A. Conan Doyle, Jules Verne, H.G. Wells. These men were not afraid to face ridicule and laughter. They knew they were right; they dared to dream!

Privileged indeed are they who possess the ability to read it! Privileged indeed are they who understand it! Privileged indeed are they who realize its value!

This is a question often asked, and often answered. Fan writers have gone into it in great detail, and much blood has been shed over the subject. When all is summed up, I think that the answer will be found to be: YES!

Not that science fiction cannot exist without these little efforts -- that's silly. It's not a question of which came first -- the fans or the authors. The fans were always there, I suppose, but they weren't fans until there were authors to make them fans. Thus, science fiction existed in magazine form for a number of years before a fan magazine was begun. It got along very well during that length of time, and if all fan mags would suddenly fold up, I don't think that you would find the pro magazines gasping for breath.

But that's not the point. Granted that fan magazines aren't essential; nevertheless, they do have a function, and a very vital one at that. There can be no stronger link in fantasy than that between author-editor-reader as John W. Campbell Jr. has said to me. And I believe that, over a period of time, an author can find the best reaction to his work in fan magazines. Better than what the editor can tell him surely -- 'the editor's job is to make money, and can only pick out the stories that will make his magazine sell. Ofentimes, these are not the best. And while letters in the readers' sections of pro magazines are an aid, perhaps in one issue only, four or five will comment on the one particular story.

(( Continued on page 12 ))
The episode cost us an hour of futile exertion -- until two fellows came along and lent a "hand" (The "hand" costing fifty cents apiece). Eventually, we pulled up in front of Krupa's home, pathetically late. Julian answered at the door, dressed in his overcoat -- ready to leave.

"Thought you'd never get here," he said, smiling, "I expected you over an hour ago. I was just on my way to an appointment set for later in the evening -- but come in -- take off your coats. We'll go into my study."

As a study, it was a surprise, and a marvel of compactness. A large bookcase crammed with books and magazines occupied most of the right side, further supplemented by a fall filing case. Julian's drawing board mounted atop a stand, three chairs and finally a desk. All this in a room 8x5. The walls were decorated by several framed diplomas and some large drawings by Krupa. Oh yes, a window and a door.

Explanations were forthcoming on our tardiness and we repeated our rather hectic adventures, ending with laughter. We talked on an astonishing variety of topics, science fiction and otherwise, before Reinsberg gently steered the conversation to subjects closer at hand. Following his lead, I ventured:

"How about that interview for AD ASTRA you promised down at Palmer's? You know, very little is actually known about yourself."

"What do you mean?" Krupa countered laughingly, "I had my autobiography published in Amazing only a short time ago."

"But", Reinsberg interjected, "that was composed by Palmer.
What we want is something personal -- something that's not generally known."

"Let's start from the beginning," I suggested. "You were born ---" "In Poland, January 7, 1913," Julian supplied.

"Fine, keep it up," Reinsberg applauded.

"Well," Krupa continued, settling back in his swivel chair, "I might be called a "born" artist, as I've been interested in illustrating since I can remember. Got my first start with the birth of my strip, "The Adventures of Richard Arnold". Julian slid open one shelf of his file and unearthed a large stack of drawings, the entire "Richard Arnold" strip. These we scanned eagerly, viewing a series of excellent drawings, rendered understandable by graphic illustrating even though the script was in Polish.

Krupa spoke: "It was an instantaneous success and I had a lot of fun doing it --- even though there were times when I got in ruts that tested my enthusiasm to the breaking point. No, I never ruined a single drawing in its composition, and there was always something happening."

"Just how did you finally get into illustrating Amazing?"

"On a bet," Krupa replied, "I was arguing with a fellow down in the layout room of the newspaper. During the heat of the battle, he wagered that I couldn't get a job on a professional magazine, That burned me up, and when he put ten dollars down I accepted the challenge. I had heard of Amazing, and went there first. Saw Rollin', the art director, who immediately took me in. I won the ten dollars and since then --- But you know the rest."

"Well, say Julian, science fiction isn't your only interest? What are your hobbies?" I asked, breaking the silence.

"Oh, I've always wanted to organize an orchestra of science fiction fans. But seriously, I am greatly interested in good music -- I play several instruments myself. Then, of course, photography --- amateur movies; some day I'm going to shoot a real s-f movie ---- when I get time. I'm a licensed operator and own a regular rig -- sound equipment and all."

"But getting back to science fiction," Reinsberg said, "do you intend to follow up your present work or have you other plans?"

"Confidentially, I have several ideas in mind under the category of cartoon work, that if I ever get around to, would be almost as enjoyable as s-f art. I discontinued my original cartoon when I started working for Amazing. I also have a few good plots in case I ever get around to writing. I imagine I could take some of the ideas from "Richard Arnold" and evolve a darn good tale, also. You know, I wrote my strip too."

"A darn swell job too," I commented.

"Plenty of action, if that's what you mean." Krupa laughed.

"Wish I could read Polish," Mark lamented, observing a particularly exciting episode.

"I'm getting to the end of the page," I remarked finally, "so how about a nice juicy item to close this interview up -- you know, a bit of news?"

Julian pondered, then his face brightened. "Oh, yes, "The Adventures of Richard Arnold" are to reappear. Just sold the entire strip to a South American Syndicate --- to be reprinted."
"AD ASTRA"

a poem by
Mark Reinsberg

1
The moon, a golden crescent
In the ebon sky;
The stars, each silv'ry pinpoints
Infinitely high;
And there, to the west, lies Venus;
There, to the south, is Mars --
Ah, you must choose between us --
Among the eternal stars.

2
Up from the misty ages,
E're since Cretaceous slime,
Man has watched -- and wondered;
And will, to the end of time,
Eight new worlds to conquer,
When the ways of this orb are known;
Step by step -- forever,
Till space becomes his own.

3
Rest for the individual --
Too soon, we call it death;
But none for man, the mighty,
Until his parting breath.
(And man, a flick'ring second
On the seas of time --)
Though to us an eon;
Tis naught to Him sublime).

Continuing:
"Have Fan Magazines A Use?"

The composite ratings such as ASTOUNDING and AMAZING give help, but they don't give reasons. By reading the fan magazines diligently, any author can discover just why fans do or don't like his work as a whole; and also what they think science fiction stories should be. Perhaps these are only opinions of a few inner-circle fans, but as a unit, they are a pretty good composite picture of the average science fiction fan. Therefore, I appeal to every professional author who reads this article -- read and support the fan magazines. It will pay you in the long run.

ADVERTISEMETN

The fifth issue of SPACEWAYS, now out, is the best yet. 24, large mimeoed pages, with even right hand margins, you will find here everything you could ask for. Articles, stories, poetry, and departments abound. All for a dime!

Harry Warner, 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Md.

________________________________________________________________________
Please mention AD ASTRA when answering advertisements.
________________________________________________________________________
"AD ASTRA" ("to the stars")****
JOSEPH GILBERT of Columbia, S.C. writes:-

I have been reading fan mags only a short time, but no sooner does one put out one issue, than it folds its mimeograph like the Arabs and silently steals away. Perhaps I am just sensitive to extra-sensory perception, but somehow I have the feeling that AD ASTRA is not going to make things lively by blowing up in my face and leaving my hands empty, and a dazed look on my face. I hope that cheers you up a little.

Seriously, AD ASTRA seems me by the lineup of features to be neatly on its way to take the place of the justly bemoaned "Fantasy". I do hope that luck, good fortune, and strong support will favor AD ASTRA and endow it with a full, happy life.

(Thank you, Mr. Gilbert  Ed.)

RAY PAULEY of Spring Hill, W.Va. says:-

Received the first ish. of AD ASTRA safe and sound and after due consideration think it amply worthy of what comments I may have to offer.

I believe I may safely say that this initial issue of AA is equal in most respects to the initial issue of any of the fan mags that have made a recent debut in fandom. The cover was superb. Why not have Krupa execute a few interior cuts, too, hereafter. Those produced in this issue are about as puny as the cover is good. To speak of material, it was for the most part very good. I especially liked "An Interview with RAP" and "Writing". Your story was fair but for gosh sakes don't feature more than one piece of fiction per issue. I would like to see "Did You Know That" as a regular column. Also, keep the editorial at a full page; editorials always interest me. Well, with hopes that a readers readers column may be forthcoming; hopes for a monthly publication; and a dime for the second issue, I remain, Yours for sti.

RALPH C. HAMILTON of Wooster, Ohio flashes:-

I was well pleased with the first issue of AD ASTRA, especially the article by Campbell; so here is ten cents for the next.

JACK F. SPEER of Washington, D.C. writes:-

Speaking for both myself and Bristol -- since that latter's bosses have turned thumbs down on using the government's typewriter time, and paper for personal correspondence -- I congratulate you on Chicago's first fan mag in years. The first issue shows several strong points, and many of the defects can be easily corrected.

Despite the rather hack nature of the subject, Krupa's AD ASTRA cover was an excellent piece of work. Of the interior cartoons, the one for the RAP interview was likeable, but that for Medium of Exchange not so hot.

The interview with Palmer was interesting, as were the Did You Know That items. "That" was repeated before one item, which is veddy bad. The introductory statement should have been boxed off or otherwise differentiated so as not to appear as an item.

Campbell was fair, good toward the end of the article. There is no justification for fancily set off headings to show that an article is continued from the preceding page, and they break into the flow of reading.

If The Father and the Fan had been smoothed out into better meta it would have been excellent. Gernsback fair. Probably most fans don't like him, personally, any more. Medium of Exchange a little
too obvious. Smith interesting.
Things concerning SFW repetition
pretty much of introduction to
Dawn of Flame, but suppose most
of your readers haven't that book.
Madle among the best of the writers this time. Hamling re
our sanity ditto. Think I'll
issue Harry Warner or someone. I
had an article in the first num-
ber of my FAPA magazine, Full
Length Articles, entitled Samuel
Clemens -- Scientifictionist,
which devoted nearly half its
length to a condensation of and
commentary upon The Mysterious
Stranger. Nell mentioned the
article, as did someone else, but
evidently Harry missed the
notice.

EMrys EVANS of Mountain Home, Id.
comments:--
Your first number was very
good, from the cover to that
humorous story by Mark Reinsberg.
Besides the humor I enjoyed read-
ing the serious articles by John
W. Campbell, Jr. and Lawrence
Hamling. A suggestion -- number
the pages of future AD ASTRAS;
then we fans won't have to count
them ourselves.

LÉSLIE A. CROUCH of Parry Sound,
Ontario, writes:--
This is something of a pre-
cedent with me, and AD ASTRA
marks the first fan publication I
have bought, and the only one
that has held my likes as long
as wanting the second issue. I
haven't read them all by any
means, but what I have -- I find
this one the better of them all!
Yours is the first I've had
that used a stiff cover, and I
must say it enhances the book as
a whole -- and as a whole, 'tis
time, I see you'd like opinions,
and being a fan of a very opinion-
itive nature, here's mine:
Cut those scratchy drawings
that you say are "editorially
done". If they're yours, you
oughta be ashamed of yourself!
They distinctly lower the quality
of AD ASTRA.

The articles were good. And
that little yarn about heavy wat-
er alright for a beginning. I
realize that the first issue of
any magazine is poorer than the
following ones for the simple
reason that contributors aren't
as handy and don't actually begin
coming in until the readers have
sort of whetted their pens and
hunched down to work.

The cover: well done, the best
I've seen yet in fact. Are con-
tributions along this line accep-
table? Can readers send in cover
designs, pictures for the inside!
and so on? Have you the facilit-
ies for using them? If so, why
not tell your readers this in a
forthcoming issue? Surely there
are, among the readers, those who
are tolerable designers and art-
ists. Such things will help
raise the quality of the magazine.

DON'T change the format, what-
ever else you do. For this size
is nice and neat, and makes it
easy to bind, say a whole vol. in
one, as I may do later on. So
DON'T change the format. What
about a monthly instead of this
blasted bi-monthly business which
is becoming a drug on the market.

Certainly give us a readers'
department. What is of or fantasy with-
out that? Let us readers get to-
gether and pound the living
blazes out of each other. But,
let the interesting ones - letters
be returned and made into an art-
icle. How's about it?

(AD ASTRA is always willing to
risk a stencil on those who are
artistically inclined. If you've
got talent, drop us a line --
that goes for anyone who knows
how to work on a stencil -- and
is interested in doing some il-
lustrating.

BUT (I might add, as long as
Julian S. Krupa so generously
donates his time and skill to AA,
you don't stand much of a chance.
We do not intend to change the
present format -- and hope to go
monthly soon.)

Ed.}
"LIFE ON OTHER Planets?"

by Henry Bott

Through the soupy, foggy atmosphere, laden with oppressive dampness, stumbles the weary figure of a man. He is clad in a rubber fabric suit equipped with a helmet and air renewing apparatus, for, in this carbon-dioxide saturated world, it is necessary to have the precious, life-giving oxygen supplied from one's portable source. Upon the traveler's feet are huge saucers, similar to snowshoes, to prevent his sinking in the soft, slimy ooze that bubbles about him. Surrounding him is a primeval jungle, filled with teeming, voracious forms of lower life. Amoeba-like animals roll hither and yon, and the ghastly struggle for life goes on, apparently interminably. The wanderer makes his way slowly along the notched tree trail, and from time to time consults a map fastened to his wrist. Soon he sights a long, lonely structure of concrete, and inside his helmet he heaves a sigh of relief, for he knows that once more he has returned alive to Post No. One of the first Earth to Venus expedition.

The above paragraph sounds as if it were taken from some current science fiction writer's imagination; yet, it is conceivably so. Modern science has given the matter of the possibility of any kind of life on foreign worlds serious thought, and has come to some definite conclusions.

True, life on Mars, or Venus, as we know it, would be very rigorous, and it would be, without question, a case of "survival of the fittest." Yet, it is possible that there conceivably might be such life.

We instinctively think of "life" as that which has to do with protoplasmic, hydrocarbonous material. But, is that necessary? No, say the bolder scientists. It is quite understandable that life forms may be based on elements than carbon and hydrogen. If you stop to give the subject a little consideration, you can readily see what I am driving at. Why should it be necessarily true that the strange impulse "to do things," which we call life, should depend on carbon

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THE SOLAR SYSTEM AS COMPARED TO EARTH
and hydrogen? Since this is only a subject of conjecture, we cannot prove anything as yet.

Suppose we consider the possibility of life for each of the planets, starting with the innermost one, Mercury. Here is a barren, sterile world, perpetually holding one face to the Sun, the other to outer space. Here, too, is an excellent example of the improbability of carbonaceous life's existing on this world of contrasts. The side of the planet which is forever turned to Sol is intensely hot, since, day in and day out, it continually receives a good share of the radiation of the mighty Solar machine. It is so unbearably and so inconceivably uncomfortable, that no human being could exist on its surface for more than a few minutes, for he would be charred to a crisp.

And, on the other side of Mercury, which has never, excepting in dimly remote ages, received any heat from the Sun, one finds just the opposite conditions. Long before our time, this side of the planet had radiated away any heat it might once have had. So, it is rather obvious to astronomers that the temperature is very close to zero degrees, Absolute.

The existence of organic life on this ancient, heatless world is, to all practical extent, out of the question. But then, the idea of life based on some other element than carbon pops into the mind. Since we do not know of any such life on Earth, we are all to ready to assume that it does not exist. However, it is the general tendency of mankind to disbelieve until he can see it with his own eyes.

We have pretty nearly eliminated the possibility of life on Mercury, so let us next consider the planet which has played a great part in Tellurian romance and literature; namely, Venus.

Here is a warm, cloud-covered world, whose atmosphere is heavily laden with carbon dioxide. Yes, it is highly likely, that, if life exists on any other planet than Earth, it will be much like this one. For Venus has much that would aid in supporting life. While we do not know whether the silver-clad sphere rotates on its axis, we think that it most likely does. Some day, when we shall have some type of telescope employing the infra-red or ultra-violet light, we shall see what enigma lies beneath the moisture-saturated air.

Of course, the third innermost planet, Tellus, does support life — life of a particularly conceited nature — life of a malignant form — life which insists on preying on its own type. The greater majority of life forms on Earth have the hatred for one another which seems to have been inbred in them.

Next comes Mars, whose capabilities for the support of organic life have been argued over ever since the telescope was turned on its surface. As on Mercury, violent extremes of temperature are found. During the day the temperature soars to normal, but at night, when Mars no longer absorbs the Sun's life-giving energy, and when the thin atmosphere permits the rapid radiation of heat, then the temperature drops to a very low point on the Absolute scale. This condition precludes most chances for the survival of or-
organic life forms. But a surface covered with red sand, as Mars probably is, immediately suggests the silicon life base. Silicon, with its similarity to carbon, is a highly appropriate element to permit a logical departure from the conventional life-form standards, is it not?

Far beyond Mars revolves the stupendously gigantic mass of Jupiter. This majestic world no chance to organic creatures, since its atmosphere consists of Ammonia and Methane, and other more virulent gases. All suggestion of life is immediately precluded by this condition. It is more likely that one of Jupiter’s moons, such as Io, Europa, Callisto, Ganymede, or one of the others, would support organic life, and even this is improbable, because these satellites are so far distant from the Sun.

Saturn, with its density less than that of water; Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, with their enormous distances from the Sun, will unquestionably not support organic life. These last three are so remote from Sol, that they catch but the merest and most minute quantity of the Solar System’s furnace radiation. How forbidding must the thought of living on one of these worlds be!

We have considered each of the planets of the System, and we have seen only two — possibly three -- Earth, Venus, and Mars, who have conditions under which the seed of life could successfully propagate.

Most of us, with our inherent vanity, will not concede the possibility of the existence of non-organic life. Of course life would not have to assume the forms we know of. As a matter of fact, the chances are strong that, due to increased or decreased gravity, due to dense or thin atmospheres, due to high or low temperatures, the supposedly inorganic life-forms, or creatures, would develop radically different shapes, more so than we can possibly imagine.

Consider, for example, an inhabitant of Jupiter. What would he look like? Well, due to the great gravitational attraction of mighty Jupiter, he would most likely be short and aquat. The high density of the methane-laden atmosphere would give him an enormous set of lungs, if by any chance, he breathed in a manner similar to ours. And so on.

We might mentally construct these imaginary inhabitants for all the planets, if we so desired. But until the first intrepid explorer sets foot on an alien world -- we shall never really know. "Life on other planets?"

The End

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Should AD ASTRA continue this new feature? It's up to you. We want to, of course, but we're guided primarily by your likes and dislikes.

Each issue we propose to feature a science supplement on the order of this by some fan or author. There will be no set topics; the writer can roam the universe at will -- with the only proviso that the article must hold interest to the general reader. No highly technical material will be printed -- just down to earth language.

Could you write a "science supplement for AD ASTRA? Why not try?
Editorial

A weary, but happy editor lets off
some steam... and finally relaxes.

Out a little late, but then
the whole staff worked overtime.
Writing from my little padded
chair -- where the rest of the
staff hustled me off, after fin-
ishing all but this final page--
I have just been informed that
our faithful Business Manager
has just had his relapse and
will presently join me in this
cozy little sanitarium.

Seriously, though, we're real-
ly proud of this, the second is-
issue of AD ASTRA. It shows not
only what can be done in one
number, but also gives just a
hint of "things to come". We
definitely intend to maintain
this pace -- constantly improv-
ing, always with an eye to the
future. You're on a comet --
the tail of a comet -- and our
motto is: "to the stars".

Two new features this issue.
AD LIB, our readers' column, and
something really new in s-f fan
magazines -- our Science Supple-
ment. These were part of the
surprise we promised last issue;
Krupa's TWO drawings are the oth-
er part.

We've improved the format at
least a hundred percent. The
mimeographing is much better;
our headings are neater, and
most important, the great line-
up. Where will you find such a
glorious array of names?

Something else new. The two
thick, colored pages present-
ng Krupa's masterpieces. We're very
proud of them. And we want to
publicly thank Julian S. Krupa
for the prominent role he has
played in putting our magazine
over. I know the many fans who
receive AD ASTRA will chorus the
appreciation expressed.

Much remains to be done befor.
we will even slacken our speed.
More pages must be added -- even
as this issue presents more than
in the first. To give these ex-
tra pages, we must have plenty of
material -- GOOD material. We
don't want any second rate stuff.
We want things of lasting inter-
est -- things that strike a com-
mon note of appreciation among
fans and professionals alike.
We need more material; we're go-
ing to get it.

We intend to go monthly as
soon as a regular schedule can be
worked out. We don't like this
bi-monthly stuff anymore than
you.

Above all, we are herewith
launching a campaign for more sup-
port -- more subscriptions. It
takes support to do what we plan
to do -- to make it worthwhile.
We need about twice as many sub-
scribers to justify our next sto.

And when we take that next
step it will explode like a bomb-
shell in fandom. It's big -- very
big -- but we can't say too much
about it now. Plans go astray.
It may be the next issue -- per-
haps the one after that, but when
it happens -- you'll learn about
it. That is, in time to reserve
your copy of AD ASTRA.

Our statistical resume was
squeezed out this issue due to
lack of certain figures -- which
are now complete -- but it'll be
featured next issue, thanks to
Jack Darrow. And the contest was
called off at the last moment.
It interfered with other plans.
Everything was returned with re-
grets.

NEXT AD ASTRA
out about July 20th!
EVERYTHING IN SCIENCE FICTION!
* Here is just the opportunity to*
* start or complete your s-f col-
* lection. If it is the first *
* issue of AMAZING or a copy of *
* "Moon Pool" I have it.
* PRICE LIST of monthly *
* science fiction magazines:- *
* AMAZING-ASTOUNDING-WONDER *

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* These prices do not apply for *
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* gazines, on which a premium is *
* required. My stock also inclu-
* des the Annual, Miracle Science* *
* and Fantasy, Weird Tales, Ghost,* *
* Strange, and Edie. Also En-
* glish publications and fan-mags.* *
* Prices on request. BOOKS, s-f *
* and weird, by Merritt, Taine,* *
* Cummings, Wells, Kline, Gerns-
* back, and others. Many s-f it-
* ems such as "The Science Fiction*
* Series", (as advertised in the *
* early Wonders) "The S&F Class-
* ics", and an innumerable list *
* of other unusual items. Later *
* issues of magazines not listed *
* above may also be obtained.
* Your correspondence will rec-
* eive prompt attention. WRITE *
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* and WEIRD FICTION, 640 Wave-
* land Ave., Chicago, Illinois. *