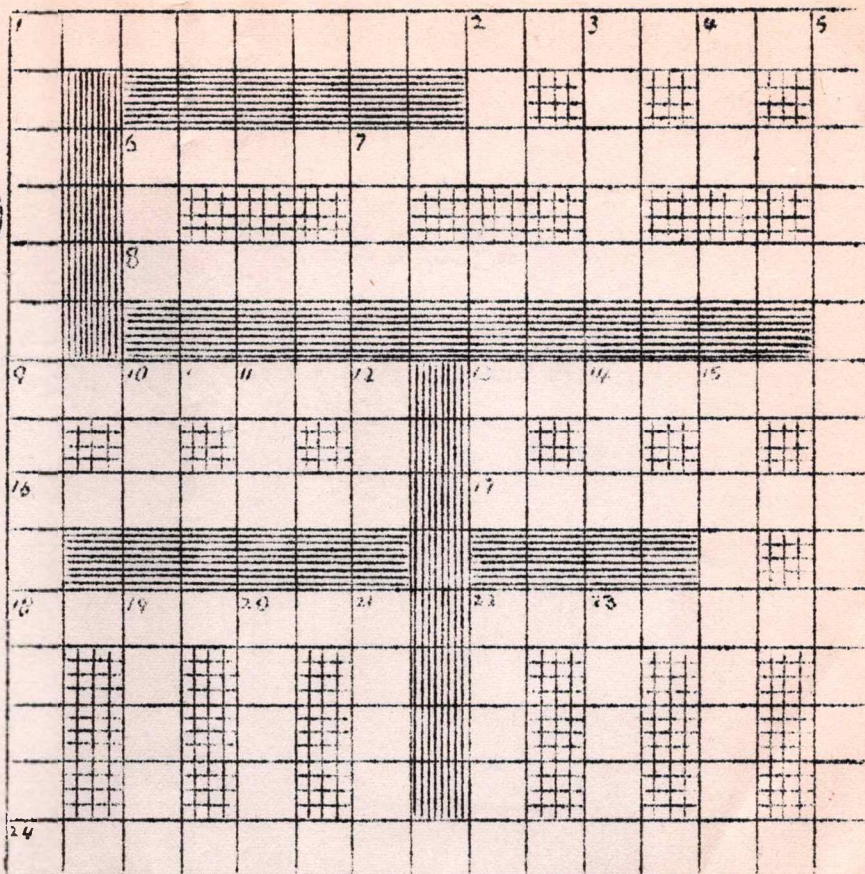


STF X-WORD

by
DEREK WILLIAMS



CLUES ACROSS.

1. Ours is 3300 odd miles per hour.
6. Often figures in STF post war world.
8. STF characters often travel this way.
9. Bean rod. (Anagram).
13. Attraction.
16. Substance.
17. Power.
18. 272,000 miles from Uranus.
22. Slim rye. (Anagram).
24. In any music stool. (Anagram).

CLUES DOWN.

1. We allare, but Mercurians couldn't be.
2. And others.
3. Nebula.
4. Eyes.
5. Wise.
6. Visual electromagnetic radiation.
7. Admit.
10. Mineral.
11. Owed.
12. Catch in one throw.
13. Opening.
14. Behind.
15. I am rung so. (Anagram).
19. Between Rhea and Hyperion.
20. "Awake, for morning in the bowl of —!"
21. Frighten.
22. He'll never pilct.
23. Lots of shots.

(Solution on page 14)

july 1155

No 12

andromeda

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"One of the most important items you do not require to publish a fanzine is common-sense."

--Henry Dopewood Fanfellow (1891-1975)

by George Whiting

Met a fellow in a bar the other day, and during the course of conversation happened to ask him what he did for a living--I am interested in people and life, you see.

"I am a mushroom farmer," he said.

I replied politely that it must be an interesting job.

"On Mars," he added by way of additional explanation.

During the long loud silence which followed this remark all sorts of queer ideas flooded through my mind, like asking him the time of the next rocket, or whether one saved money by buying a return ticket. Instead I heard myself saying in a perfectly normal tone of voice that it must be quite difficult to grow mushrooms on a dry planet like Mars.

"It is," he said gloomily. "Especially since I have run out of back copies of AMAZING."

I decided, since AMAZING is my favourite mag, to ignore this last remark, and merely contented myself by adding that the canals must come in handy.

He looked at me queerly. "Why naturally," he replied sharply, but it's getting the water out of them that's difficult."

I murmured that back issues of AMAZING didn't seem to be much answer to the problem.

"Well," he said seriously, "almost any science-fiction mag will do, but AMAZING is the most suitable. You see it takes a lot to make a Martian cry; they aren't a very emotional race, as you know."

I replied rather faintly that would he like another drink and yes I knew that from reading Bradbury.

"Thankyou, a whisky," he answered gravely. "I don't see what a railway guide has to do with it, but you are probably familiar with the expression, 'It's enough to make a Martian cry'." At this point he paused to toast my health and order another round. "Well," he continued, "My place is right alongside the main canal but, as you may have

heard, all the canals on Mars contain heavy-water and no pump will lift it." He sighed, twirling the whiskey in his glass. "I was nearly at my wit's end until, quite by accident, I hit upon the present simple scheme. I used to--and still do--get a lot of Martian visitors and, in keeping with Martian custom, they invariably spend the night with me. Since they like a dark damp place, I used to stick 'em in the collar with the mushrooms. One night I happened to have my old Martian friend

Gort staying with me, and he asked me if I had something to read. All I had around at that time was an old copy of AMAZING I was

using as a doorstop, so I gave it to him." He paused and looked me in the eye. "When I went down into the cellar the next morning, it was flooded and Gort was still crying like a babe. The Martians carry a lot of water around inside them, you know, and when they cry they really let it go."

He drained his glass with a flourish. I signalled the barman and at the same time expressed the opinion that one copy of the mag should be enough.

"Trouble is the blighters are fond of paper," he sighed.

I looked puzzled.

"They eat 'em," he said, noticing my bewildered expression. "I have a year's supply of AMAZING," he indicated the bundle on the floor at his feet. "Can you suggest any other mags that would be enough to make a Martian cry?"

I said I could and mentioned a few of the fanmags I have read.

He nodded. "Thanks," he said, picking up his bundle of mags and turning to go. "By the way," he paused in the doorway, "I forgot to ask you what you do for a living."

I replied that I grow vegetables on Venus, but the trouble right now was that I had run out of back issues of SLANT.

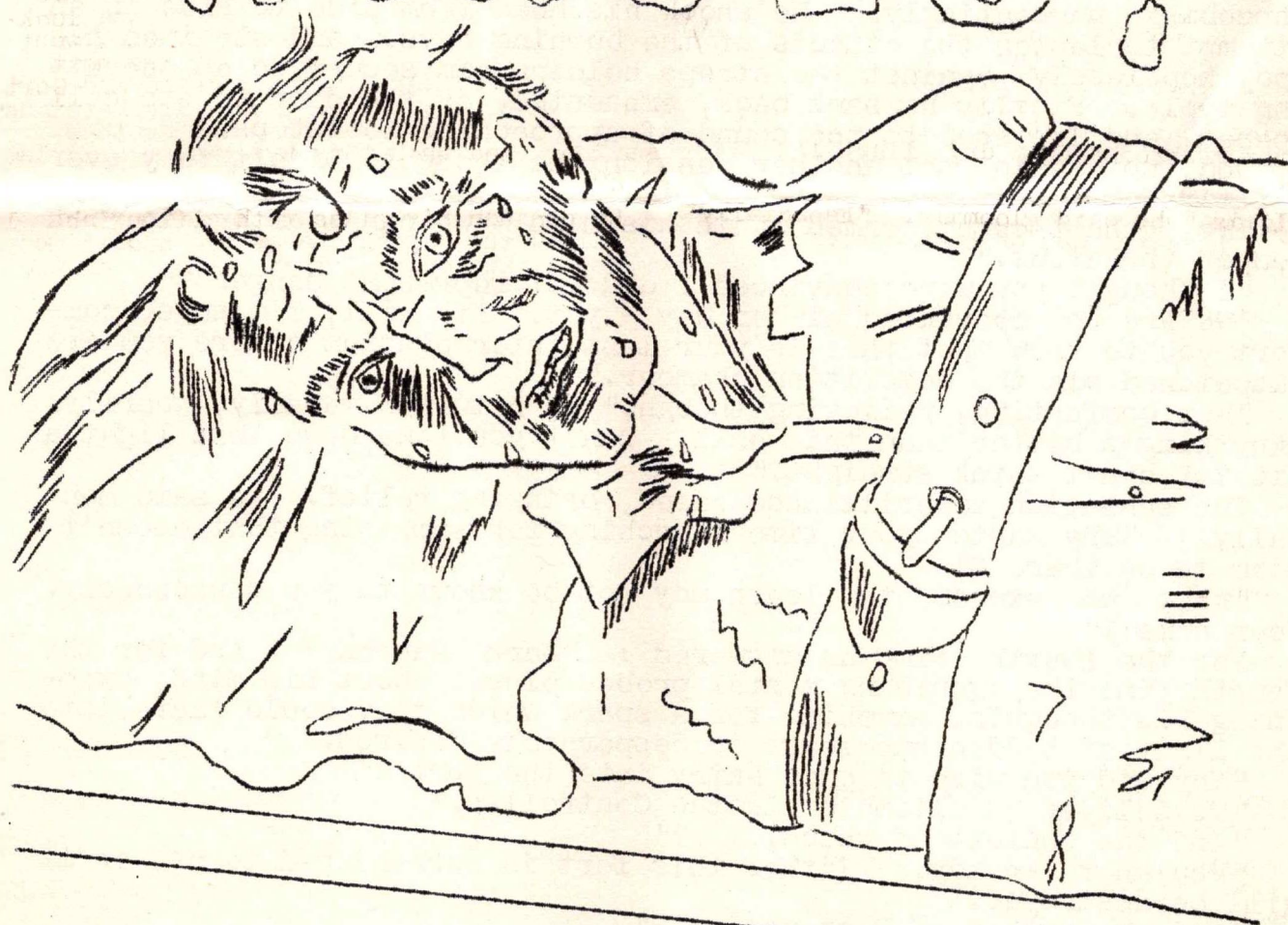
"I understand and sympathise," he replied gravely, disappearing into the night.

Anybody got any back copies of SLANT they don't need? It's kinda wet here.....

((Unfortunately the warders came before Mr Whiting could finish))

FOOLS DIE HEROES!

by
Anthony
Roche



He shook his head from side to side in an attempt to lessen the effect of the burning rays.

illustration by
GAIL DAVIS

fools die heroes

by A. Roche

The telepaths had a horrible fear of dying - and Hanson had lived with death !

The lights overhead shone brilliantly down upon his upturned face, searing his eyeballs and setting his dulled, fatigued mind throbbing nauseatingly. He shook his head from side to side in an attempt to lessen the effects of the burning rays, and strained his body hopelessly against the straps holding him secure to an operating table. Finally he sank back, exhausted, as the door to his cell opened, and listened to the sound of approaching footsteps.

God, not again, not another session, he thought. Didn't they ever get tired ?

"No," the thought formed within his mind, "we can't afford to when danger threatens."

"I thought you were convinced I did not represent danger ?"

"We are not convinced either way - yet. It will, I'm sure, comfort you to know that this is your last interrogation before you are dispatched via the demolition chamber."

"Not comforting, relieving though," he returned mentally, wearily. "Anything's better than this hell. Can't you tone down that light a bit ? I can't think straight."

The sensation of brilliance eased, bringing relief. He said mentally : "Why waste your time searching for something that doesn't seem to be there ?"

"What we expect to learn may not be known to you consciously. Your name ?"

For the fourth time he answered : "Mark Hanran." And for the fourth time the agonising mental probes played about his mind, examining his thoughts, searching for a spark which they could flare into the light of hidden knowledge so desperately desired.

"Why did you wish to gain entry into the fort ?"

"To deliver an ultimatum to the Controller."

"And the context of which.....?"

"You know already. Either this fort is surrendered to us, or it will be destroyed."

"And the method of destruction ?"

"I don't know." He squirmed and shuddered in agony as the merciless probes attempted to verify the accuracy of that answer. Then :

"You killed two agents, then surrendered. Why ?"

"Their deaths were necessary to gain notoriety in the eyes of the Ruling Council. The reason for my subsequent surrender would then appear important enough to grant me an interview within the fort."

"So for the purpose of being taken seriously by the Council, you killed two agents and surrendered. Yet you cannot supply us with an adequate reason for such foolish suicidal actions."

"I bear a message for the Controller, or leader, or whoever he is. It may not be adequate in your eyes, but I can't go beyond that."

"We know that you did not intend the message to be taken seriously. It served to get you inside the fort. You're in - what next ?"

"You're the telepaths; you tell me."

"Before your entry you were examined under the scanner. You have no false limbs, or contagious diseases. Your original clothing and effects have been destroyed, which rules out the possibility of hidden bombs, though it would take an atomic bomb to destroy this vast fort - or rather the contents of it, since the forcescreen is indestructable. You are neither mentally nor physically dangerous to us, yet you entered the fort with the firm belief that such an entry would result in our destruction. But you yourself do not know how this is to be accomplished ; you have nothing but your leader's assurance that it will be so."

"You don't think they'd draw up blueprints with telepaths kicking around do you ? Why not just throw me out if you're convinced I'm harmless ?"

"We aren't convinced either way yet - as I informed you earlier. You may know something subconsciously."

"Then why not interrogate me beyond the fort ?"

"It's too late for that. Things have happened outside since your arrival, and we cannot leave the fort. Besides, the plot depends upon your presence within the fort, something you may witness, some little sound, or, most likely, the Controller's face. Since you bear a message intended for him, coming face to face may release knowledge of the plot, but - "

"But you're afraid of the consequences, even though I'm unarmed, dying from cancer, thanks to the abolishment of all medical centers. A helpless, incompetent wreck, yet...." He laughed.

"You are conscious of coming death, yet you find this amusing. I can't understand your levity...."

"Can't you ? Look again. If you don't kill me, cancer will. Me, a diseased nonentity, driving best mutant brains to distraction, and all because of a little something that doesn't seem to be there. I consider that very funny ; but then you wouldn't know anything about that, not being human."

He licked his parched lips and turned his head to one side. His eyes had begun to smart again from the decreased but ever consistent light-beams. The light-beams were there merely to keep his eyes closed, to forbid his gaze wandering about, occupying his mind with trivial, but, to the mutant telepaths, thought-disrupting details.

The darkness helped to generate mental activity, brought it forth like evidence from a dank tomb to be scraped and examined, and evaluated against meagre suspicions.

His left eye had begun to itch ; he squeezed the eyelid tightly against the ball. He ceased at a command from the other who thought he was trying to hide his thoughts by concentrating upon another subject. Instead Hanran thought : "You did not show offence at the implication of your non-humanity. I thought that was a sore point with you people ?"

"A show of raging emotions before facts denotes a weak, mentally defective being, like you humans. To us, you are nothing but emotion wrapped up in flesh ; a failing, but to you, of course, a mark of humanity. Suppose I had remarked instead that I was mutant, you're not, would you have felt insulted ? Of course not. I was born a mutant, so therefore I cannot envy you your humanity, particularly since we consider emotion a failing. Your emotion towards us is one of hatred which is understandable considering our slow extermination of your breed ; yet you would not label yourself mutant to save your life. To us, hatred is not an emotional failure, but a necessary instinct equal to that of survival."

"Well, they say ignorance is bliss.."

"Not in the long run. I'm as ignorant as you of the planned method of destruction. Does it make you feel any happier ?"

"It's comforting. What I don't know will hurt you, if you'll pardon the pun. It's good to know you can at least experience frustration ; small reward for a breed that fostered and took care of you, a breed you hope to destroy."

"Must I point out that man's present predicament is of his own making ? He proved his inability to rule the earth without converting inhabited chunks of it to energy. We are the result of one of his mistakes ; a new race, creations of an unsettled age and raging emotions. Then, like a child fears the dark, you feared us. Our form inspired supernatural nonsense of devouring monsters, demons out of a mythical hell, bent on the damnation and dissolution of miserable souls. Those of us who weren't killed were sent to a guarded, isolated island to die away. A hellish, torturous, desolate existence for us simply because of your great fear of the unknown, your conditioning from birth to fear and destroy any unknown thing that didn't walk on two or four legs or resemble anything you call earth normal. We appeared evil, so therefore, you assumed, we were evil. Warped reasoning which is, incidentally, the cause of your downfall."

"You're forgetting a mutant's instinctive hatred for humanity," Hanran thought, "and it was you who perpetrated the slaughter that was to follow. Our mistake lay in letting you remain alive, giving you a chance to filter disguised into every important walk of life. Our humanitarian instincts blinded us to all else. We should have exterminated every damn one of you, right down to the last suckling monster."

"Exactly the attitude we telepaths discovered in many. We knew the hatred you felt for anything dangerously unnormal, and sensing what your psychopathical fears would lead to, we prepared for the

fight for survival.

"Our so-called underhand activities were due to our incredibly diminished numbers and not, as most humans believe, to cowardice and savagery. It took many years of sweat and preparation to achieve control of human life. And now, with an impregnable screen to protect us, plans for the total annihilation of that life are nearing completion. All life beyond the fort, from the birds to the lowest worm, will be destroyed."

"Yes," answered Hanran's sudden questioning thought, "even those of us beyond the fort. You see, there are too many varied mutant forms existing at present for safety. One will repulse another. There will be jealousy, hate, fear, all the ingredients necessary for a bloody holocaust when they have killed the last human and are looking around for further targets."

"You see, we plan ahead, logically, intelligently. We gathered the best brains of alike or nearly alike, forms, wrapped this screen around them and breathed freer. If we breed carefully, selectively, our future is assured."

"You make it sound so cut and dried." Hanran shifted and tried not to think of his nagging left eye. "They say plans are made to be broken."

"Human plans, perhaps. What have we to fear....?" The thoughts broke off, and Hanran smiled.

"My superiors went to a hell of a lot of trouble to get me here, even arranged the murder of those two mutants. And they didn't intend I should commit suicide for laughs while you go crazy trying to figure out what it's all about."

"Of course, you could kill me now, or drop me in the Atlantic safely out of harm's way. But as you say, you can't leave the fort, and you're afraid to kill me here... Why can't you leave the fort?"

"There are several thousand armed humans in the forest, completely surrounding the screen. They even have fliers circling about. At the faintest sign of a break in the screen, they'll be ready to lob a dozen atomic bombs inside. Our agents beyond cannot help us, or rather - help themselves; we're safe enough in here." The thoughts faded, and as Hanran waited for him to continue, he was aware of a vague, long slumbering memory nagging insistently against the shores of his conscious mind. He felt it was important that he should remember; yet he was afraid to remember with a telepath present.

"Perhaps," continued the telepath, "words with the Leader may release something. There's nothing more I or any other telepath can do. I'll see if he's willing."

A door creaked open, and slammed, and he was alone with his thoughts -- and the vague memory.

Was it all a vast hoax, he wondered. An attempt to bamboozle mutant minds for a few short hours, to prove man's unwillingness to die impassively by the hand of a hated enemy, however overwhelming the odds were?

Then he thought of the great underground cavern wherein the best human minds had hidden to plan and carry out activities of nuisance value. These activities had been strenuous and hurried, for it had been considered only a matter of time before mutant scanner beams

routed them out to face blasters. They had sensed the end was near, and prepared for the final effort.

The fort could be destroyed only from within; that had been proved only too well. To smuggle in a destructive element was like walking to the moon. Many said it couldn't be done, but the scientists put their heads together and announced that they had a plan worth a workout. They refused to explain it, and instead called for a volunteer. Hanran had offered himself with the others, and he, like all the rest, had been subjected to a thorough physical and mental examination through hypnosis. He had been selected, and they had appeared quite pleased with his capabilities, though they hadn't told him what they were. He wondered about that. He had average intelligence, and a ravaged body, but so had many of the others who had volunteered.

Capable? Incapable was more like it. Had he, then, been chosen because of his incapacities? And were these, in a sense, to be regarded as capabilities? All right then, what were his failings? He had gone over them all -- "all," he mused offhandedly, "except- " shocked as memory flooded and enlightened his mind, "-- except the eye."

Emotion shuddered his body as he experienced the delightful ecstasy of knowledge. "Of course," he thought wonderingly, "that's it. Why didn't I realise it before."

And the answer was simple. When one has been wearing a useless synthetic eye for forty years, knowledge and awareness of it recedes into the dimmest region of the memory cells. And when it had not been commented upon by others, and when it need not be changed or made aware of through ill-fitting, it becomes merely a subconscious remembrance. And it will remain as such unless a circumstance of pain or some occurrence to the eye forces the memory of its syntheticity to return.

He had lost the original at the age of three, and with a perfect, faultless replacement expanding to suit the socket as he aged, coupled with forty years of unspoilt vision, how could he become aware of it? -- Particularly when the mind does not desire a recurrent memory of inferiority.

His superiors obviously had learned of it during hypnotic interrogation, and had, unknown to him, tampered with it and replaced it in such a manner that it would act up; to itch and nag, forcing him to remember. "But what," he thought after a while, "could such a small object accomplish? Certainly not explosive matter. Germs, most likely. Thought of his own diseased body would supply the clue to its purpose. A deadly virus which, once released, would spread incredibly fast, accomplishing its purpose within minutes, and that, he thought, could be none other than the terrifying Organic Plague -- so called because it attacked and destroyed the body within ten minutes.

Death held no terrors for him; he had lived with it and reconciled himself to it for the past ten years. Rather he experienced a vague sense of relief intermingled with pride. Pride because he was one of a race to whom the word impossible existed only to be proved otherwise; a race too unbowing and aggressive to give up the ghost, admitting defeat only when it lay cold and very dead in its grave.

FOOLS DIE HEROES

9

Somehow he had to keep the knowledge of the eye hidden from the telepaths until his hands were loosed. A rhyme, that was it, persistent recurrent verses to confuse the telepaths. There was one he had learned as a child, a silly child's prattle still going strong in the young minds of today.

He lay there, running over the lines mentally, until they played around his consciousness like a never-ending record - an effective automatic mind-screen.

There was the noisy opening of the cell door ; a scuffle of feet and the sensation of brilliance from overhead ceased. He opened his eyes and, blinking against the soft rays of a normal fluorescene illumination, regarded with curiosity the mutant who was engaged in unbuckling the straps holding his body firmly to the table. Its body was thin and the colour of putty, its face was a sallow oval with long retractable eye-stalks and an extended sucker serving for a mouth. Boneless, ten-digit tentacles protuding from either side of the body swiftly completed their work, and the mutant stepped back.

"Your last walk before demolition - make the most of it."

Hanran swung his feet to the floor and followed the other on shaky legs out into a passage.

"....knicking, knocking, roundabout..."

"Youve decided then.....No more interrogation ?"

"Other than a brief word with the Leader - no. He is convinced it is nothing more than an attempt to send us all into a panic. Indeed it appears he is correct."

"....Knocking all the mutants out..."

The passage stretched long and dismal, despite the bright illumination; grey walls marred by dull metal doors heightened the effect. Chilled, Hanran fell into step behind the mutant, and two near-human guards followed him.

"What's that in your mind ? Something about mutants ? Patriotic fool to the end. Fools end up dead heroes and much good it is to them. Still, I'm curious. Why risk a rewardless death and go to it with that silly rhyme in mind ? Don't you fear the nothingness that is death ?"

"Most of us are too egotistic to believe death to be the ultimate end of an individual," Hanran said aloud, helping to confuse the telepath still further, "but merely a transition to a higher spiritual plane. Me, I don't know either way, I've lived too long with death to fear it. Most important, though, I'm of the race of man -- man ; the unique animal, master of the earth and soon to make his bid for mastery of the stars. A fine proud race searching for the meaning behind creation. Freedom-lovers who'd die fighting rather than submit to the tyrannous mutant rule. Their future depends on me and I gladly give my life for that future."

"Exactly the attitude I expected from one of a race of emotional, immature weaklings. You call fear of death - fear of going into battle, fear of facing death-dealing situations - cowardice. We call it common sense." The telepathic thoughts were vehement. "A human, who would show contempt for the cowardice of a fellow human who pre-

fers to seek safety at times of danger is a mentally defective being who doesn't understand the value of life or the significance of death ; who rather is more concerned with living up to false ideals. Life is precious and should at all costs, be maintained ; can you not understand, then, our eagerness to destroy a race whose bestial instincts threaten not only their own existence, but also that of ours?"

"...Knicking, knocking all until..."

"I know," said Hanran softly, "that those sentiments of yours are those of a race in an advanced stage of stagnation. Your fear of death blinds you to the joys and advantages of real life. Pit your wits and muscles against the elements - experience the aches and rewards of life. Danger is the spice of life, and you mutants are too busy looking after your own miserable hides to see that the pleasure you have denied yourselves will be completely lost. And a race who have tired of merely trying to stay alive will die for want of a laugh."

"Ridiculous," thought the telepath as they reached the end of the passage. "There's an old saying of yours which goes : He that laughs last laughs the longest. We shall kill all but one human, and that one human shall be constantly subjected to torture, and we shall, I can assure you, laugh long and loud."

Hanran smiled grimly as the telepath made to open a door set into the wall. The last line of the rhyme began in his mind and he murmured softly, repeatedly : "Dead, dead, they all lie still."

He followed the telepath into a large, high-ceilinged laboratory bustling with mutants attending machinery. A circular metal door to his right led to the demolition chamber, and before it stood a group of varied forms. One in particular stood out from the rest, a large incredibly heavy-looking figure with wide, grim features, piercing bulbous eyes and a commanding personality.

"So this is the fool," he snorted contemptuously. "A true human, weak and sickly." He raised a cigar to his mouth and puffed hurriedly, nervously, as he stared half-expectantly at him.

Hanran ignored him, staring instead through the tall laboratory window to where the forest spread away beyond the curved screen of force. Fresh and green and very beautiful was the forest and he longed to walk between the friendly trees; to lie full length on the crisp grass and feel the warm rays of the sun upon his upturned face. Suddenly he was afraid. Death - the unknown - was so permanent, so mind-numbingly final, yet here he was dying for a cause which shortly, would no longer interest him. He fought down the fear and turned listlessly as the mutant with the cigar expelled breath heavily in preparation for speech.

"Well - nothing happens, yet we wait here like fools. Didn't you learn anything further from his mind ?"

"No, sir," said the telepath who had arrived with Hanran, "he keeps repeating a silly rhyme in his mind and I can't get through."

"Well, there are four of you. If you can't learn anything now, into the chamber with him."

"Wait," said Hanran, and moved away from the group. He smiled -- a leer on a disfigured face - and dropped the eye to the floor .

FOOLS DIE HEROES.

It ground to dust beneath his heel.

There was a heavy silence, and slowly, fearfully, the telepaths reached into his mind and learned the truth. They staggered back and began to babble hysterically at the Leader.

"Fools !" he screamed. "What's this? Plague ? Impossible do you hear ?" He shrank back, his features a ghastly hue. "No, no," he whispered, terror-stricken, "it's a lie--"

"Ten minutes !" one of the telepaths screamed, "Ten minutes to live !" He suddenly rushed from the room and his action released the entire gathering from a shocked paralysis. With the exception of the Leader - who was too petrified to move - and Hanran, They stampeded for the door, a shouting, milling pack desperate to put as much distance as possible between them and the deadly room.

"Five minutes," said Hanran softly after a while, "there's no escape for anybody within the fort. Five minutes and the rotting flesh will drop from your body."

The Leader's mind had finally realised that death, the feared abyss, was very near. Fear clouded his vision and unsettled his mind, and he stood there as the fires of insanity threatened to engulf his reasoning powers and send him into maniacal fits.

A great swelling human roar rose up from the outside, and Hanran moved to the window.

The screen was down, and panic-stricken mutants were racing out into the forest - to meet death from the weapons of vengeful humanity streaming out in thousands from the forest, yelling and triumphant as they butchered everything in their path.

Hanran shouted and waved joyously towards them ; until suddenly sickeningly, he thought : "But the plague - it will spread now that the screen is down....."

There was the sound of running footsteps and a telepath came in. He skidded to a halt and wiped his sweat-soaked face. "Leader, the fools have let the screen down to escape," he panted, "but there is no plague ! I learned that from the human minds below - it's all a trick !"

The Leader looked stupidly at him. His mind was going, and that added shock served to unbalance him completely

"Fear," Hanran thought, wondering, "their great fear of death drove them to their deaths." He turned suddenly. The Leader had drawn a blaster and fired at the telepath, who was now a smoking ruin. Hanran turned to escape through the window, but the Leader leaped and his muscular, mountainous bulk descended upon him and he collapsed under the weight, bruised and dazed. He struck out blindly at those insane features, and the other's maniacal laughter screamed into his face, while iron fingers clamped around his neck and squeezed hard. Long after Hanran was dead the Leader lay straddled across his still form, his fingers still gripping the throat and his voice still screaming : "Laugh now, damn you ! Laugh, you dead fool ! Hero, are you ? Much good it will do you - dead ! Laugh, do you hear !....."

And he was still laughing as human blasters thundered him into oblivion.

The End.

A WATCHER OF STARS

by

George Wetzel

Beyond the meagre bits in Derleth's HPL: A MEMOIR and "Addenda to HPL: A MEMOIR" (this latter in SOMETHING ABOUT CATS), there is obtainable no more information on Lovecraft's interest and writing anent astronomy. This is regrettable, as such information would help to reveal the flesh and blood personality of Lovecraft which hitherto has been mostly an untrue amplification of him (by Winfield T. Scott for one) as "his own most fantastic creation", depicting Lovecraft as a pallid, scholarly neurologist.

Such erroneous character-sketches I hope to disprove--as in the present article--with biographic miniatures of Lovecraft. A prior article of mine, "An Early Portrait of Lovecraft", embodied actual quotations of Lovecraft himself besides similar quotations of friends concerning him: such were new data unknown to Derleth, Scott and all other Lovecraft essayists. This article evidenced his human qualities.

As to articles anent HPL's astronomic interest, there exists only Dr. David H. Keller's admirable but all too short "Lovecraft's Astronomical Notebook," in the October 1949 issue of Zorn's LOVECRAFT COLLECTOR. Unfortunately this printing was limited in copies, and should be reprinted in some widely known fanzine. Dr. Keller's article was mostly of quotations from Lovecraft's astronomic notebook, among which was a quasi-Fortean phenomena observed--a halo around the moon. The impression left upon me from such of Lovecraft's notes was that he learned astronomy as he wrote about it, both in that notebook and his astronomical articles for various newspapers.

Many of Lovecraft's astronomical articles in newspapers like the PROVIDENCE JOURNAL could not be printed entire as they would pall even on an ardent HPL fan, being but close copies of school astronomy texts and couched in a surprisingly restrained, conservative tone. And

this is amazing when one considers Lovecraft's fertile imagination on the one hand and the colorful possibilities of astronomic objects on the other. How to explain such a curious, inhibited attitude towards such material is puzzling. The only idea I can advance is that Lovecraft had not completely unfettered himself from an old-fashioned conservatism. There is some basis for this conclusion when one considers his adherence to studied 18th century mannerisms in his early poetry, and his antipathy to simplified spelling, and other controversial subjects during his early manhood.

Despite such beliefs of his, occasional revealing flashes are to be found amidst dry, run-of-the-mill astronomical facts all too familiar to grammar school students. Such little gems or "fragments imaged" I found in the series "Mysteries of the Heavens" which he serially wrote for the ASHEVILLE GAZETTE-NEWS from Feb 16th 1915 to May 17th 1915.

His attitude towards astrology is contained in Part I, "The Sky and its Contents," Feb 16th 1915, by this sentence:

"..It is hoped that this series may help in a small way to diffuse a knowledge of the heavens among the readers of the GAZETTE-NEWS, to destroy in their minds the pernicious and contemptible superstition of judicial astrology..."

Scientific curiosity might explain some of his interest, but the following long quotation proves his paramount reason was the viewing of those mysterious, awesome worlds, suns and nebulae of infinite, tranquil space, and -- but HPL can best put it himself:

Part XII "The Constellations", April 27th-- "The exquisite and enduring pleasure engendered by a familiar knowledge of the stars and constellations is beyond the power of mortals to describe. The friendly face of the heavens has smiled down upon the earth in all ages, cheering the people and inspiring the poets of every race since the dawn of human life. In no other manner can we obtain an equal degree of sympathetic kinship to the men of other lands and other times, than by establishing an intimacy with these pictured gods and heroes of the sky, the eternal and unchanging companions of all mankind, ancient and modern alike. To him who knows the constellations, each season brings expected and beloved acquaintances.

"With the spring comes the bright Arcturus above the northeastern hills, whilst Altair as surely leads on the summer. In the autumn majestic Perseus greets us familiarly from the north, and the kindly Fomalhaut from the south. The frigid horrors of the northern winter are alleviated by the splendid beams of Taurus, Orion and the Dogs, besides a whole gorgeous host of starry friends