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x "DELIRIUM TREMENS". x
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x Number 13. April 1944. x
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That bloke Tucker still assembles this thing at 87 Oakridge Road, HIGH WYCOMBE, Bucks; JMR does the dirty work and the distribution. Eternal thanks.

This issue we devote to our favourite author by reprinting his biography as written by Leslie A. Croutch in December 1942 LIGHT. Thanks, Les.

A. E. VAN VOGT.

Saturday, April 26th, 1912. Winnipeg, Manitoba. Only another of many births to the doctor but an occurrence of infinite wonderment to the doting parents. Born of fourth generation, solid, respectable Dutch parents, Alfred van Vogt looked out on this bright new existence with eyes that were inquisitive, seeking. This curiosity about the scheme of things into which he found himself so unceremoniously thrust without so much as a "thank you" and "may I", he carried into his adult life.

Although born in Winnipeg, his real home to begin with was in Neville, Saskatchewan. There he learned to take his first toddling steps and probably discovered that a cat meowed when its tail was pulled. He was one and a half when his parents moved to Indianapolis where his father attended law school. Then they returned to the home town where Mr. van Vogt set up his law practise.

In school, Alfred was a normal child, bright in some respects, dense in others. He skipped two grades. He swam, played baseball and football without brilliance. But reading fairy tales was his passion. When in Grade Six, age 11, his teacher one day took a fairy story book away from him and ordered the boy out to play. In High School he spent recesses reading Amazing Stories, anything but studying. He considers his education a hodge-podge and himself a living prood that anybody can learn to write. A couple of languages, some extra mural courses, and a couple of courses at the University of Ottawa complete the educational picture.

During the fall of 1928 he worked as a clerk in Eaton's. In 1929 he left for a farm where he worked on a threshing outfit as separator man. He wasn't cut out to be a farmer, though. In the fall and winter of 29-30 he was a trapper. He and two other fellows tramped the trapping lines all that winter. Their good fortune didn't run much better than muskrats, rabbit and a couple of weasels, though. In 1930 he worked in his father's law office. That fall he drove a truck for a ~~week~~ combine for about forty days, until the run was finished. In 1931 he wrote the civil service exam and stood well, so was sent to Ottawa. This job lasted a year. He ~~skunked~~ ended up almost as poor as when he started, for most of his earnings were lost, as he puts it, "in a queer game called poker". He was glad when the job was ended, however, for it interfered with his writing.

It was in the fall of 1932 the cheque for his first story lay in his hands. Sold to True Story Magazine, and called "I Lived in the Streets", it was all about how he, a fine looking girl, had lost his job and had had to live in the park for a while. True Story changed the title to "For the Sake of Decency" and gave him 2¢ a word for 8,000 words. It was a well-written yarn with plenty of mood. Van Vogt was just 20 then and, filled with the sublime confidence of youth, thought he was going to coin money from then on. After arriving back in Winnipeg in 1932, whence he journeyed from Ottawa, he wrote many true stories. His biggest year was 1935 when he won a first prize in one of True Story's contests. Won other prizes from time to time, but tired of this type of story in spite of the good money. During this period and afterwards

D.F.'s.

van Vogt wrote many radio plays, some love stories. In 1937 he started doing trade paper work on a large scale as a side-line. He was a reporter of this type for nearly three years, resigning in November 1939 when he and Mrs. van Vogt came east. This apparently explains Campbell's statement that van Vogt "is a Canadian newspaper man". All this time fiction was his main job. He wrote, among other things, the very familiar BLACK DESTROYER, DISCORD IN SCARLET and the first seven scenes of SLAN.... In every young man's life a little romance must fall. Dan Cupid didn't miss van Vogt in his perambulations; we wonder if, perhaps all this time, he wasn't keeping an eye out for Alfred and chuckling behind his chubby little hand. In March 1936, the Fates, a meeting of the Writers' Club in Winnipeg, and Dan Cupid, laid a trap for the wandering feet of our young hero. At this meeting of the Writers' Club the young lady, daughter of a Wheat Pool executive, who was also Editor of The Western Producer, which is the important farm paper of the west, and Alfred van Vogt somehow found themselves together. She was, at this time, writing feature articles for the magazine sections of the Winnipeg Free Press and for the Winnipeg Tribune. Since then she has written some fiction.

To cut a long story short, Dan Cupid found an arrow bright and sharp: van Vogt was wounded in the quick. The virulent poison was never successfully combatted and wedding bells soon rang for the happy couple. Today we find her influence in every story he writes. The "E" in A.E. van Vogt is hers because of the work she does on every story that leaves the van Vogt menage.

In 1938 Alfred picked up a copy of the July ASTOUNDING. In it was Don A. Stuart's WHO GOES THERE? He started to read it in the newsstand quite idly, he says, finally put it down, impressed and thinking that sooner or later he'd better examine the magazine more thoroughly. But meanwhile he had other writing to do.

The way he got off science-fiction was that he considered AMAZING the magazine and all the others merely inferior junk. Then, when AMAZING faded out, he kept picking it up occasionally to see what was happening to the "best" in the field. Of course, he found as thousands of fans did, that it was growing worse.

But when he read WHO GOES THERE? he realised for the first time that the real stf magazine was ASTOUNDING. He returned to the newsstand a week later and bought that issue. Then he bought some back numbers. After this he sent a story idea to Campbell, who said go ahead. First it was written in the ordinary manner, but van Vogt didn't like the result, worried over it for a few days, finally wrote it mood. Campbell called it "a perfectly beautiful yarn, a top-notch novelette".

Now to bring this up to date and to conclude. In November of 1939, the van Vogts returned to Eastern Canada, first to Ottawa, then in 1941 to Thistletown, a suburb of Toronto. Recently, since September, they have moved to Toronto proper. They will dwell but temporarily in their present home as he has purchased a house and will move in after the first of the year. [This article condensed in some parts.--Ed.]

- YE ED.'s WANTS LIST....
- "Astounding Science-Fiction". 1940: Feb.Mar.July.Sept.Oct.Dec.
 - 1941: Aug.
 - "When Worlds Collide" and "After Worlds Collide" by Edwin Balmer and Philip Wylie.
 - "Planet Plane" and "The Secret People" by John Beynon.
 - Almost any issues of "Famous Fantastic Mysteries". I thangyew.