



## This-'n'-That

This issue's expected crop of editorial miscellany continues the listing of 1944 books of fantasy fiction published in the United States from where it was so abruptly terminated in the last issue... Beth Brown's Universal Station (Regent House, \$2 $\frac{3}{4}$ ) is a somewhat sentimentalized treatment of the life-after-death theme, and is quite entertainingly written. The World Healer by Paul M. Kourenoff (\$2 $\frac{1}{2}$  from the author) tells of "the future of medicine in 199-" in fictional guise. If old Irish legends appeal to you, try the modern versions of several as presented in John Bayley's Forty Heads (Day, \$3). No less than three volumes in the genre have appeared under the authorship of Eric Linklater, all published by the Macmillan Company: The Wind on the Moon (\$2 $\frac{1}{4}$ ), a rather dilute Alice-in-Wonderland tale; Crisis in Heaven (\$1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ), a play of Elysium, with resurrected historical characters; The Great Ship and Rabalais Replies (\$1 $\frac{1}{4}$ ), the latter play in which is on very similar lines. The second of Vardis Fisher's fine series of novels about prehistoric man is The Golden Rooms (Vanguard, \$2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ), which is must reading for those who like the theme treated. Worlds Beginning by Robert Ardrey (Duell Sloane & Pierce, \$2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ) is a tale of the future. And in the biographical field, two authors of imaginative fiction gain mention: Arthur E. Morgan's Edward Bellamy (Columbia, \$5) and Joseph D. Bennett's Baudelaire (Princeton, \$2); the latter volume is the first in English to deal at any length with Baudelaire's poetry.

The most interesting items on the agenda of the pocketbook publishers are Penguin's two (still in print), Tales of Piracy, Crime and Ghosts by Daniel Defoe, and William Sloane's To Walk the Night; and if you missed the recent omnibus volume of Steven Vincent Benet's work, Penguin has a sampling of it ready for you in O'Halloran's Luck and other Short Stories. Bart House has followed its first collection of Lovecraft tales with a second, The Dunwich Horror, which contains two other works of this great author in addition. A few months ago The Face in the Abyss joined the five previous Merritt novels under the Avon House banner; The Ship of Ishtar is expected to follow this in August, with The Metal Monster scheduled for the Spring of 1946... All these sell for 25¢.

So far this year but four new titles of fantasy have come to your editor's attention: an American reprint of the British Fireman Flower and Other Stories (Vanguard, \$2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ); the misnamed Collected Stories of Ben Hecht (Crown, \$3) ---this being but a brief selection of Hecht's shorter tales---which contains two of the fantasies from the author's earlier Book of Miracles; Robert Frost's allegorical play A Masque of Reason (Holt, \$2); and from Britain a supernatural novel by Oliver Onions titled The Story of Ragged Robyn (Joseph, 8/6).

Of interest to those of Commentator's readers having interest in interplanetary travel are three books on rocketry that have recently appeared: Eugen Sänger's Raketen-Flugtechnik (Edwards, \$5), Hermann Oberth's Wege zur Raumschiffahrt (3. Aufl. of Die Rakete zu den Planetenräumen) (Edwards, \$8) and The Coming Age of Rocket Power (Harper, \$3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ) by G. Edward Pendray. The former two are reprints of the original German editions, and Mr. Pendray is probably better known to most fantasy fans as "Gawain Edwards," under which pseudonym he wrote some science-fiction a few years back...

Acknowledgements are hereby made to C. J. Forn, Jr., who contributed several of the titles of new books mentioned in last Fantasy Commentator's editorial, and to The Burning Glass, from whose pages Joyce Mayday's brief book reviews in this number were taken...

"By-Products," also in this number, appears at a sadly appropriate moment: I am grieved to say that it is probably the last of the author's articles to be published, for on April 16th last its author passed away. His death came as a not-unexpected blow to those who knew him personally, and as an equally keen shock to those who have followed his fantasy tales for the past eight years in the fantasy magazines. Malcolm Jameson will long be missed and remembered.

## The Day After Tomorrow

by  
Thyril L. Ladd

Introduction

I suppose that every intelligent human being has, at some time or other, pondered upon the thought "I wonder what the world will be like a hundred--- or five hundred---years from now." Authors have wondered in this fashion, too, and have produced many interesting books which tell of the days yet to come. It is the purpose of this article to mention a few of these fascinating fictional conceptions, and perhaps to introduce some readers to tales which may not previously have come to their attention.

Several novels having a future locale will not be included because in some instances the writer has had to place his story years ahead in order to use machinery and weapons not consistent with today's inventions. Rather, we are more interested in such stories as tend to emphasize, as their general theme, changes between coming times and our own. Therefore a book such as Ray Cummings' Sea Girl (1930)---which in reality is simply an account of undersea adventure---will be omitted, since the future time is here merely incidental to the story.

When we come to consider tales of the future, they appear to fall into two loose categories: those whose locales are laid in the future, and the second group (personally more appealing to this writer) wherein a person sleeps or lies in a trance to awaken in wonderment many years ahead. (In this second assortment there is also an interesting subdivision: the sleeper is actually waked in a future time---but that future is our own day, the sleeping one having been rendered unconscious in some period of the dim past.)

I can of course describe only those books which I own or have read---doubtless there are others that I have never seen. Then too, as this article will make apparent, I am more interested in the story than its literary quality. So now, in what may be considered a somewhat rambling manner, I shall describe briefly some novels of this type...

## I

One of the older examples of the world's future destiny is Omega: the Last Days of the World (1894), written by Camille Flammarion. This tale is painted upon a broad canvas, and carries forward into future years through hundreds of centuries until, through lack of water, life upon this planet becomes extinct. The book is very interesting, and gives much data of various times in the planet's history when the end of the world was foretold; it gives also an account of humanity's desperate attempts to thwart its inevitable doom by building glass-enclosed cities and by probing deep within the earth's crust for water. Not the least fascinating feature in the volume is its illustrations (of which there are over eighty) drawn by over a dozen artists.

Much more recently an excellent and profound picture of the world's coming history and final end has appeared. This book, Olaf Stapledon's Last and First Men (1930), is perhaps the most awesomely fantastic concept in fictional print. Not only does the author trace the course of this planet to its end, but he goes even further, outlining the history of the human race through its many alterations in evolutionary form and its migrations to other worlds to its final annihilation, two billion years ahead, on the planet Neptune. Even the most competent synopsis can barely hint at the magnificence of the picture of humanity's destiny that this talented British writer has painted.

The year 1906 saw the appearance of at least two of these tales. One of

them, The Earthquake by W. Holt White, tells of a mighty earthquake that shook the city of London in 1907. The resulting chaos in that city, and the efficient handling of the situation by the Prime Minister make a very good tale. The other novel referred to is The Doomsman by Van Tassel Sutphen. When this story opens, we find most Americans in its future era living in stockaded farms; the highly mechanized civilization of the land has been shattered by a great catastrophe, many years before. But in the ruins of the crumbling city of New York---known now as "Doom"---a tribe of arrogant men, descended from ancient robber bands who roamed the land in the days immediately following the disaster, have established themselves. The young hero of the book, daring existing penalties, makes his way into Doom, investigates wonderingly its half-ruined structures, and after many exciting adventures wins from the Doomsmen a maiden with whom he has fallen in love. Sutphen has written an excellent tale in this, and the reader is fascinated to the final page.

Probably one of the most famous stories of this sort is Aldous Huxley's Brave New World (1932). Huxley, though writing satirically for the most part, nevertheless gives us an interesting and absorbing story. The future world he depicts has been unified and mechanized according to a set pattern of stability. The conception on which this civilization is founded is the legends and accounts of Henry Ford's factories; indeed, every head is bowed in adoration at the mention of this man's name. Every individual is condition synthetically before and after birth to fill one particular job, to detest all others. Contrast between this civilization and that of our own day is excellently drawn by the device of allowing characters in the story to visit a reservation where Indians and certain of civilization's misfits live in aboriginal confinement. An especially brilliant young man from this reservation is brought back into mechanized society that his reactions may be studied; he proves to be a misfit there.

Herbert Best's Twenty-Fifth Hour (1940) is an intriguing picture of a Europe almost depopulated due to the present war, with a few men left in roving bands, living the life of a semi-savage. Because of a deadly plague, America is nearly void of humanity. A girl and her sick brother, alone in the Western Hemisphere, voyage to Europe and later visit the still-civilized races of the African continent. Anynoon (1919) by Horace Bleackley is another intriguing novel in the genre. Here the Prime Minister of England, serving in a time of political chaos and finally swept aside by female domination of government, succumbs to a brain-fever. In this state he dreams of being in a far-distant future where the race has degenerated to a vast bee-hive, women predominating and males being kept only for breeding purposes, to be destroyed ruthlessly when their periods of service are over. Somewhat similar to this conception is that in Ayn Rand's Anthem (1938); here too humanity is regimented to the nth degree, and in this tale one young man flees the monotonous existence to rediscover elsewhere the old way of living and to plan new happiness for his race.

In The Moon Maid (1926), Edgar Rice Burroughs also goes into the days of the future. In this book he first tells of adventures on the moon by a man of the earth; in later sections of the novel the Moonmen invade the earth, subjugate it, and make its inhabitants their slaves and vassals. And in the final pages of the novel a descendant of that first adventurer on the moon leads an onslaught on the invaders. Burroughs wrote another extremely good story of the future, but for some reason this novel has never been reprinted since its original appearance thirty years ago. Its title is "Beyond Thirty," and it was published in All Around Magazine in February, 1916. America, aghast at the continual warring in Europe and Asia, has created a sea and air fleet of such magnitude as to forbid attack, and then prevented by law the crossing by any inhabitant of North or South America of a certain degree of latitude. Caught in a

vicious storm, the young naval officer who is hero of the tale is forced over 30, the forbidden line. Since even an accidental crossing of this line is punishable by disgrace---or even death---he has nothing to lose, and therefore continues on Eastward. The remainder of the tale is fascinating: he lands in England, finding there a wild, wooded country infested with lions and tigers, with man living in camps and villages little better than those of savages. Here he meets the titular queen of the realm, and rescues her from danger amid the usual vivid array of Burroughs adventures; finally he penetrates to the continent of Europe just at the time that it is invaded by an Asiatic horde under the Yellow Emperor. Ultimate victory against great odds is given the young officer who returns to America not in disgrace but in triumph, having once more opened the rest of the world to civilization. Why this Burroughs tale was never put in book form is hard to imagine.

Ray Cummings also utilized a future locale in his Man Who Mastered Time (1929), which is a story of time-travelling; and while Turano the Conqueror has scenes laid in the future, it (like the author's Sea Girl) is really little more than a tale of interplanetary warfare.

Jack London wrote The Scarlet Plague (1915), wherein an aged man tells the boys of a crude village in the 21st century of the days when America was a great nation, and explains how all civilization the world boasted crumbled when the Great Plague swept over it sixty years before. H. G. Wells plunges far into the future in his famous Time Machine (1895), a novel that should be quite familiar to everybody. William Richard Twiford tells of a future war and a great socialistic state in Sown in the Darkness, A.D. 2000 (1941); and a picture of a downtrodden mankind trying to cast off the burden of class subjugation is vividly done in Thomas Temple Hoynes's Intrigue on the Upper Level (1934), whose action takes place in the year 2050. In Red Snow (1930) F. Wright Moxley gives the sad picture of humanity's end through a peculiar red mist cast from the heavens that causes universal sterility. Reversing this phenomenon, Tiffany Thayer ends civilization in his Dr. Arnoldi (1934) by covering every inch of the world's surface with wriggling, living humanity---for in the days he describes man can no longer be killed, even if cut to bits, as each separate portion continues to live. Mark Powell Hyde wrote a very interesting juvenile novel, The Strange Inventor (1927) which is adult in treatment; after giving an account of time-travelling into the past Hyde sends his youthful hero the very far future.

In 1922 Ella Scrymgeour wrote The Perfect World, a novel having almost everything for which the most rabid fantasy enthusiast could wish. Yet crowded as are its episodes and complex as is its plot it reads well---and where usually overabundance of plot-material ruins a tale here it serves only to make it better. Beginning with discovery of a lost race in the bowels of the earth, we are told of the destruction of our world and humanity's migration to the planet Jupiter. There it is discovered that God supposedly created two Gardens of Eden---into earth's sin was brought; but to Jupiter's, never. Yet in underground caverns there lurk worshipper's of ancient pagan gods. This novel is one that never should be passed by...

There are many more that might be described, but to keep this article within manageable bounds I shall mention but one other in this first section: The World Below (1929), S. Fowler Wright's powerful fantasy of the future. Here, by scientific means, a man is cast far ahead into future time; he meets strange adventures in the world of that day, and finally plunging beneath its surface into subterranean caves comes upon a mighty race of physical and mental giants. Philosophy is cleverly mingled with high adventure in this tale, whose magnificent scope compares favorably with that of Stapledon's Last and First Men. Indeed, these two novels are probably the most impressive so far noted.

## II

We come now to a particularly fascinating series of tales. Asleep--- and then awake! And to a world that has changed, for centuries may have passed by while the sleeper lay unconscious of them all! And when one thinks of this theme the book which has achieved the most fame, Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward, 2000-1887, is usually the first to come to mind. Bellamy pictures a utopia in which his hero awakens, and his effort was interesting enough to elicit critical response (even in fictional form) from many other writers, all of which was perhaps responsible for his sequel Equality (1897). These were very well written, but I feel that many later attempts make more pleasant reading nowadays.

Perhaps the very greatest of these is The Messiah of the Cylinder, a book that appeared in 1917. Victor Rousseau, its author, has here created a tale that can be read and reread with undiminished pleasure. Locked in a cylinder that cannot open for a hundred years, the hero of the tale recovers consciousness to find a world greatly altered. Man's deities have been stolen from him, and a mechanistic science offered as substitute. To the awakened man London is terrible, yet somehow fascinating. Human sympathy is at a low ebb; man is for the most part ruthless in this day, and much regimented, too. Later, our hero finds suspended in a great temple a cylinder similar to that in which he himself had slept---and in it his sweetheart of that day he left behind; the cap of her prison is slowly unscrewing, which indicates that her day of awakening is near. The Messiah of the Cylinder is packed with thrills, and tells, amid much action and excitement, of the final revolutionary triumph of the olden ways of living and of the reestablishment of the Christian faith. This book is indeed one that no one who follows fantasy fiction should fail to read.

Deservedly famous, too, is George Allan England's magnificent trilogy, which appeared in book form as the single volume Darkness and Dawn (1914). This bulky novel---it is almost three inches thick!---tells the story of the awakening of an engineer and his secretary in the ruined tower of New York City's Metropolitan Building to find that civilization has crumbled about them as a result of some unknown catastrophe. It seems scarcely possible that an author would be able to cram into one story as much adventure, as many thrills, as has England in his account of how these two survivors reestablish civilization from the ruins. And he has done this well; the novel reads smoothly, and is unquestionably a magnificent achievement in the field of fantasy.

Owen Johnson's Coming of the Amazons (1931) is satire, but interesting nevertheless. Here the refrigerated hero is roused to a woman-ruled world, to revolt after a time against this feminine domination. Kenneth S. Guthrie's Romance of Two Centuries (1920) has its hero awaken a hundred years in the future; this book becomes somewhat dull in spots because the author dwells too long upon the perfections of the society he himself wishes to see some day come about. It is fascinating in many respects, however, and provides much good reading. An even more interesting conception of the future is given in the excellent People of the Ruins (1920) of Edward Shanks; here the hero finds his future England sadly retrogressed in civilization---the inhabitants can no longer make machines and use the ancient crumbling buildings rather than bothering to erect new ones. He manages to construct a gun, with consequent interesting developments.

Granville Hicks and Richard Bennett co-authored in 1940 The First to Awaken: a Novel of the Year 2040. This is merely a fictional vehicle for ideas of the authors about a perfect society, and tells of a clerk who is awakened after a century-long sleep and sees this scientific utopia. Edwin Lester Arnold's Phra the Phoenician (1890), though not strictly speaking a novel of the future gains mention here because its hero, after a number of adventures in past eras

of the world's history, sleeps again to awaken ages hence. And of course no article of this sort would be complete if its writer did not salute H. G. Wells' magnificent novel When the Sleeper Wakes (1899), whose hero wakes up in a glass case to find that over two hundred years have flown by, and that he is owner of over half the world's wealth; people without heirs have time and again left their estates to "The Sleeper"---who has all this time been but a curious museum piece. This book is especially interesting, too, in that it predicts radio and foretells developments in aircraft. It is well illustrated with some very unusual pictures. Wells has gone on record as saying that this book was written somewhat hurriedly, and that the hoped-for opportunity of revising it before publication did not materialize. Twelve years later, however, he remodelled the work slightly; feeling that it was too late for him to undertake any drastic reconstruction he adopted merely "the part of an editorial elder brother," cutting out a number of "tiresome passages." Shortened thus by some six thousand words, and having but one illustration (where the original version had boasted fifteen), the novel was re-issued in its new form as The Sleeper Awakes in 1911.

Over two thousand years ago barbarian hordes sweep over Egypt. In an ancient city in their path the high priest of Ra leads a royal prince into a hidden sepulchre, points to jars of jewels, and tells the prince that he must journey into the far future in order to find and bring back some potent weapon that will save his nation. Since his beloved has been stolen from him by these barbarian marauders, the prince accepts the proffered magic draught---and sleeps. He awakens to the year 1914, and to a weird, strange world! Because of the jewels entombed with him he does not lack wealth, and eventually learning the new tongues he travels widely in various lands. Great indeed is his amazement at such modern marvels as subways and electric lights, and equally intense is the feeling of vivid horror he experiences on seeing, in a Cairo museum, the mummy of the ancient priest who sent him on the journey for which there was no return. He finds, too, a girl who is identical in form and features to the sweetheart who was stolen away from so many centuries ago in his mother-land. He feels that she is actually a reincarnation of his beloved, but realizes that since he could never reconcile her to such a theory he must set himself to win her love once more---which he does with eventual success... All these thrilling adventures are to be found in William Henry Warner's Bridge of Time (1919); this magnificent tale is an unequivocal must on every fantasy reader's list.

Somewhat similar is the novel She Who Sleeps (1929) by Sax Rohmer. An Egyptologist and his son translate a papyrus which relates how a pharaoh, in order that his glory may be told to future generations, has caused a young princess of his court to be placed in an age-long sleep. Although the Egyptologist does not expect to find even the dusty remains of the girl he opens her tomb in order to secure any archeological remains that might be preserved there. But lo! There lies the princess, sleeping still! Carefully they follow the ancient directions for restoring her to life, and she finally awakes, to open on our present-day world those eyes that last saw ancient Egypt in all its glory.

A few others demanding briefer mention are Arthur Stringer's novel The Woman Who Couldn't Die (1929). Here, explorers find a Norsewoman encased in a block of ice; she is thawed out, and comes to life---with disastrous results. A similar tale is The Frozen Pirate (1887) of W. Clark Russell, as is the title story of Miriam Michaelson's Awakening of Zojas (1910). Maurice le Blanc's Hidden Tomb (1923) deserves mention solely to warn fantasy readers that its excellent beginning degenerates to a mundane hoax in the final chapters.

One of the most fascinating volumes I have ever chanced upon is Hannibal's Man and Other Stories (1878), whose author is Leonard Kip. Two of the fan-

(continued on page 159)

Williams, Frank Purdy (1848-19 )

Hallie Marshall: a True Daughter of the South

New York: The Abbey Press, 1900, 183pp. 20 cm. \$1.

Further information: Though dated 1900, this novel did not appear until 1901; no foreign editions of it have appeared.

Synoptic review: A fantasy collector could not be expected to be attracted to any book bearing a title such as this, nor would he be helped by sight of a cover decorated by a cotton branch laden with flowers. Nevertheless, Williams' novel is an important one, for it is probably the first to use the "Worlds of IF" theme involving parallel time.

It is not at all badly done. The hero finds himself in a South which has won the Civil War with the help of the British Navy, its slaves who rise in patriotic fervour, and its crusading sense of Right and Justice. By 1900, the South is flourishing: it has become a land of spacious cities, food, work and wealth in plenty, and gracious and enlightened people. The negroes, while still nominally slaves, are happy and live "freely," work cheerfully under an elected leader of their own race, and are only sold---when at all---in entire families. Meanwhile the North, under a narrow, grasping industrialism, lives meanly atop a wretched army of unemployed.

It requires a deal of convincing to show the hero that Gettysburg was the scene of the decisive rout of the North and that his hosts are not rebels or madmen, but he is helped by finding himself ten years younger than in his other life, and no longer married to his former wife but engaged to the radiant Miss Hallie Marshall. The final piece of evidence is the arrival of a miserable refugee from the widespread unemployment in the North.

Williams sets forth the "Worlds of If" idea very clearly:

"Was it a dream? As I look back over these pages and read what I have written; as I look into my heart and see how deeply loving memories of Hallie and the fair Southland are graven there---I find it hard, very hard, to believe that I am examining only the traces of a dream. Surely they were born of something more substantial than that. What I saw, I saw with real eyes; what I experienced was actual.

"It would be an idle and foolish quest to go searching through the known Southland of today expecting to see the flag of the Confederacy flying in triumph, as I saw it---hoping to see Hallie as she appeared to me; I know that, well. But I also know that somewhere the land of the Confederate patriots' hope exists---sunny and fair and plenteous; and wherever that somewhere is, there I have been. I know, too, that somewhere Hallie lives---in all her Southern beauty, kindness and pride; and I know that with that dear girl I have spoken face to face.

"The conceptions of noble minds---the aspirations of heroic hearts---never die. Somewhere on the planes of existence---somewhere among the spheres---they become real manifestations; and there, from time to time, they are easily seen by favored mortal eyes."

F. P. Williams' only other published work appears to be a somewhat anti-capitalistic pamphlet The Discovery of a Missing Link: an Attack upon the Enemy of Labor (1885), but though this has been long forgotten, he will still hold a minor niche in fantasy's Hall of Fame for the theme utilized in his only novel, Hallie Marshall.

---R. George Medhurst

From the Bygone Days of Weird Tales

by  
Richard Witter

Probably the greatest crescendo of quality in a fantasy magazine was achieved by Weird Tales magazine in 1927-1930. Among the multitudinous array of great authors on its roster at that time was H. Warner Munn, though he probably is best remembered for "The King of the World's Edge" of a dozen years later. However, except for a few inconsistencies, the series of stories he wrote during the period 1925-1931 remains his outstanding contribution to the field of supernatural fiction.

The first in this series, "The Werewolf of Ponkert," appeared in the July, 1925 Weird Tales. It is to be doubted that the author ever intended this tale to have a sequel, but because of the success of his initial effort he wrote another. This was titled "The Return of the Master" and appeared in the July, 1927 issue, exactly two years after the original. The first story deals with an episode in the early life of the Master, and its sequel treats the events which culminate in his death. Popularity encouraged yet a third, and since both the beginning and the end of the Master's life had been depicted Munn had only the intermediate portion to write about; this he described in "The Daughter of the Werewolf." Considerably longer than its predecessors, the latter was published as a serial in Weird Tales, running from October to December of 1928. The ratio of the lengths of these three is also proportional to their quality. This also holds true for the last two of a trio of short stories by Munn which appeared in the three issues of the magazine beginning with November, 1930. The series' reputation unquestionably suffered by the publication of these last two, for they contained little of the quality that made the third a masterpiece; by contrast the first of this group represents the high-water mark of Munn's creative abilities. They bore a general title "Tales of the Werewolf Clan" and were individually named "The Master Strikes," "The Master Fights" and "The Master has a Narrow Escape." As a conclusion to the series the last story is miserably poor, and taken separately still impossibly dull. Indeed, the tendency is to condemn the entire series on its basis, but remembrances of the earlier tales quickly banish this inclination. Since more of the newer fans read the later stories than first ones it is small wonder that the series has fallen into neglect.

"The Werewolf of Ponkert" has as its setting the tiny Hungarian town of Ponkert in the fifteenth century. This novelette recounts the adventures of the unfortunate Wladislaw Brenryk, who falls into the clutches of the Master for killing one of his werewolves. Brenryk is offered the choice of death or slavery to the Master in the form of a werewolf, and takes the latter---to his eternal regret. On certain midnights he changes into animal form and plunders and kills with the other members of the werewolf pack. In human form he is horrified by the deeds he has been forced to commit, and attempts rebellion against his tormentor. This, however, brings about his final downfall, for the Master has the suspicion implanted in his wife's mind that he is keeping midnight trysts with another woman. One night she therefore prevents his departure, and the helpless man is transformed before her eyes. Since human emotions as well as form are lost in this state he kills her, only the call of the pack preventing the tragedy from being repeated on his infant daughter. Upon his return to human form he realizes that the Master is responsible, and vows vengeance. He turns himself over to the military, they preparing to follow him the next night and destroy the heinous band. After a bloody battle the Master's werewolf pack is destroyed, but the Master escapes; Brenryk finds his only rest in death. After his death he is hanged in the square, flayed, and the account of his misfortunes written upon his skin and bound into a book. It is from this book that the story is related.

"The Werewolf of Ponkert" achieved great popularity, and in all probability this caused the appearance of its sequel. "The Return of the Master," while its early chapters are not equal to those in its predecessor, nevertheless has in its final portion some points that are truly of the stuff which makes classics. Monsieur M----, translator and narrator of the initial tale in the series, is called urgently to France, bringing the book with him. Upon arrival there he learns from one of Brenryk's descendants that he has been lured to the place by the Master, who is forming a new band. The two flee together, only to be trapped in a deserted building. At this point Munn's narration reaches the tremendous heights that he maintains throughout "The Daughter of the Werewolf" and climaxes in "The Master Strikes." Gathering all the candle-stumps scattered about they hold off the Master, but as the candles fail the band closes in. Flame is the only thing to which the Master is vulnerable---and it is this that is finally to bring about his downfall. As the last of the candles flicker and die nebulous shadows take form. They thicken, coalesce, and dim bodies appear. It is the rising of the slaves! One figure gradually grows stronger as all the others unite to give him strength. And there ensues a titanic struggle between the Master and the form struggling for materialization. Finally the figure takes on tangible existence---Wladislaw Brenryk has returned for vengeance! Multitudinous voices tell Monsieur M---- to hurl the lamp, which he does, and the two are able to escape. Their last vision is of the master dying, held down by Brenryk, thankfulness in Brenryk's eyes. Thus perishes the Master.

Throughout the third story in the series, "The Werewolf's Daughter," Munn's narrative style continues to remain on this same high level. The novel opens with a gypsy train passing through fifteenth century Ponkert. Hugo Gunnar, riding at the head of the train, sights a beautiful---though obviously miserable---girl. Despite being told that she is the daughter of the Werewolf, hated and feared by everyone in the town, it is to Gunnar still love at first sight. At an accidental forest meeting they reveal mutual passion. Swirling events come to a head when a woodchopper is found murdered in the forest. This crystallizes the townspeople's hatred for Ivga into action; naturally she is blamed for all such misfortunes that occur in the community. Dmitri, her crippled stepfather, is unable to protect her, and since Hugo is away nothing prevents the superstitious villagers from spiriting her into the town where she is to be burnt at the stake as a witch the next morning. During the night she is visited by the Master, and there ensues a discussion where the fate of the world hangs in the balance. He offers her freedom in exchange for one in every generation to come being born his slave; and faced with the choice of the born and the unborn, she accepts her freedom. At this time the Master tells his own story---how he is in reality a bodiless entity from a dark star near Algol, how he was brought to this planet by a Babylonian sorceress, and how he has occupied the deathless body of a Chaldean named Althusar during the long and weary centuries of his stay on Earth. After he leaves Gunnar arrives, slays Ivga's guard, and frees her. The two flee over the mountain away from Ponkert; unknown to them, Dmitri has followed behind, and holds the narrow mountain pass with "Gate-Opener," his gigantic sword, that the lovers may make good their escape. This poignant struggle, wherein Dmitri gives his own life to save the others', is almost another story in itself. Hugo and Ivga eventually reach France and Blois, Gunnar's home, after a lengthy journey. Shortly after their arrival the place becomes known as the city of werewolves. And the Master is soon to have his vengeance upon Wladislaw Brenryk's descendants for the annihilation of his werewolf band.

With "The Master Strikes" Munn's style reaches its brilliant peak, only to fall off anticlimactically in "The Master Fights" and drop to an abysmal nadir with "The Master Has a Narrow Escape." Munn's name has a narrow escape

with this one. It is perhaps significant that after this apparent loss of style eight years were to elapse before any more of the author's work appeared in the pages of Weird Tales. Sudden and strange are the ways in which authors sometimes lose their touch... In this first "Tale of the Werewolf Clan" we find ourselves viewing a parade which is passing before Philip II of Spain. There we see a device of fiendish cruelty known as a "cat-organ." This is composed of a number of cats with strings attached to their tails; these lead to keys, which when depressed thus arouse a fearful howl from the poor animals. (One cannot help wondering if the author was not led to such vicarious tortures because of having been kept awake nights by feline choruses!) The author explains the perversion by referring to an ancient legend which states that should the corpse of a man be leaped over by a cat, then the dead one would rise and drink the blood of his fellow men. (This is no invention of Munn's; such beliefs, with variations, do exist. The interested reader is referred to Mortague Summers' Vampire: his Kith and Kin, p. 168ff. for further details.) Baudoin Gunnar is the "organist", and it is in relating the reason for his dislike of cats to his son that we learn he is one of the seven sons of Ivga. Baudoin then tells of the circumstances of his mother's death, and of her revelation to her sons of the terrible bargain struck between her and the Master. Before Ivga's body was cold some demon had entered the peaceful souls of her sons and they quarrelled, two drawing daggers and being killed...

"But a few seconds and we seven had become five. Then in a dark corner we saw a swirling gray mist like river fog and from it came a voice, a strange, dry, unhuman voice ---oh, horrid to hear!---it chuckled and gloated and was pleased---!"

Gunnar shivered at the remembrance.

"It said, 'Children of Ivga, the Master keeps his word. Brother slays brother and the curse begins!'" And straight from the mist a cat came leaping toward us, bounded across [dead] Anatol, circled and leaped over [dead] Hugo, fled into the mist, and it and the mist were gone altogether."

The family scattered and burned the dwelling with the three in it. However, even as Baudoin relates his tale the Master is setting to strike once more. Unknown to him, his dwarf helper is in reality the Master himself. And that day the dwarf unlocks the cage where the cats are kept to allow them at their tormentor. Theophide, Baudoin's son, arrives on the scene just in time to see his father's death; he flees the place on horseback, his last remembrance being the master's horrible laugh and sight of Baudoin's torn body beneath a snarling mass of fur.

The second section of "The Master Strikes" takes place a score of years later, when Theophide has become a man. The scene is one of the bloodiest massacres of the Thirty Years War in eighteenth century France. Theophide has hidden himself on a street just traversed by massacring pillagers. Dead Hugenots litter the streets in scores. Amid this butchery Theophide thinks of his wife, safe in a neighboring city and beyond reach of the mob. Suddenly the Master appears, and prophesies his doom; looking down, Gunnar sees the body of his wife lying with the slain---she has been lured there on a pretext by the Master. Theophide prostrates himself beside her; one of the passing mob comes on the scene, and implants his spear, binding the two together in a last embrace as the last gloating laugh of the Master rings out on the air... Thus concludes one of the most powerful pieces of supernatural fiction ever written. Because of its intimate connection with the earlier stories in the series, however, it is almost valueless to those who have not had the privilege of reading those preceding it.

"The Master Strikes" was the climax of H. Warner Munn's writing career, and is unquestionably a forgotten classic.

"The Master Fights" opens abruptly on the decks of a Spanish galleon which has survived the battering the English fleet has given the Great Armada. Leon Gunnar is aboard, and the vessel is drifting toward the rocky Irish coast. Murderous Gaillics await it on the shore. At this point the Master appears, and offers Leon protection in exchange for his body after death. Leon accepts, and is guided inland to safety by means of the Master's invisibility. Later in life Gunnar again is forced to call on the Master for aid, and this being given he is granted thirty more years upon the earth. The time leaps ahead this thirty-year span and the scene shifts to France; Leon is with his son, preparing to unlock the tomb where the book relating the original Wladislaw Brenryk's tale is reputed to be hidden. Suddenly there is a stirring within. The two enter, and suddenly the dead bones leap from the sarcophagus---the Master has claimed his own.

The final tale in the group, "The Master Has a Narrow Escape," shifts its scene to the British Isles during one of the numerous Scotch-English wars. As Joriam and Hanne are secreting themselves in a hollow an aged man leading a girl staggers forward. Gottfried Gunthar has been hounded all of his life and now is approaching his final doom as he leads his daughter Achsah to safety. Gottfried remains behind to hold off the advancing marauders as best he can, ordering the remaining three to safety... The final scene is merely a witchcraft trial taking place in Colonial America, with Achsah as its defendant. The proceedings are recorded in archaic English---almost intelligible---and the story culminates in conviction and the burning of the victim at the stake.

The themes and treatments utilized by Munn are excellent. He traces a hereditary curse from generation to generation and from country to country with deft touches of descriptive realism that accentuate the impression of relentless Fate itself harrying the characters to their final doom. Had the author's style remained at its towering heights to the very end, each tale in the series would have become an unquestioned classic. As it is, Munn's reputation must rest upon first four of the half-dozen. Singly, each represents an integral piece of a puzzle; together, a magnificent picture is reproduced. And besides accomplishing all this, Munn must be credited with the creation first of events passing in rapid kaleidoscope fashion and then enlargement of the kaleidoscopic form in the final trio, smaller areas being magnified into reality.

H. Warner Munn should in all justice be nominated as one of Weird Tales' best authors on the basis of his "Ponkort" series, which scarcely is deserving of the critical neglect that has so far befallen it.

---oOo---

The Mourner

by

Nora May French

Because my love has wave and foam for speech,  
And never words, and yearns as water grieves,  
With white arms curving on a listless beach,  
And murmurs inarticulate as leaves---

I am become beloved of the night---  
Her huge sea-lands ineffable and far  
Hold crouched and splendid Sorrow, eyed with light,  
And Pain who beads his forehead with a star.

Jepson, Edgar (1864-1938)

The Garden at No. 19: a Novel

New York: Wessels & Bissel Co., 1910. 299pp. 19 cm. \$1½.  
London: Mills & Boon, (1910). vi-309pp. 20 cm. 6/-.

Further information: The American edition contains four illustrations by Richard Boehm, and has a pictorial cover. The English edition is titled No. 19.

Synoptic review: From out the wood of ancient time  
One darksome night there roared a voice:  
"Great Pan is dead!" But that tongue lied:  
Pan lives! Today! Even as you and I!

The above lines quoted from a forgotten classical scholar fittingly express the final implications left with us by the absorbing and rather remarkable novel The Garden at No. 19. Jepson's thesis is scarcely new, of course, but in this work the age-old legend of Pan is handled with admirable restraint and a distinctly modern outlook of considerable interest. The author does not strive for unusual word effects, nor does he engulf us in adjectives. He tells his story in a circumstantial and completely straightforward manner---and a harrowing tale it is, indeed!

When John Plowden, a young English barrister, bought the house at no. 20 Walden Road he was seeking a haven for quiet existence in this drowsy lane. The beautiful garden of no. 19 next door seemed an additional promise of peace and contentment. Yet before many days had elapsed this same garden had become a place of sickening terror, a genius loci of cosmic horror which was to change utterly Plowden's concepts of life and the universe.

What was the great, sluggy creature which he heard dragging its pendulous body over the lawn, just beyond his hedge? What loathesome terror caused Pamela, who lived at no. 19, to run to the house---shrieking for her uncle's protection? What was it that her uncle, Woodfell, drove back into its lair by invocations in bastard Latin? What night horror lurked under the tiny cupola in the garden, from which birds and rats fled in headlong panic?

Bit by bit, John pieced the incredible story together with the help of conversations with Pamela and with his friend, Marks, who was a skeptical dabbler in black magic. The damning revelations come under the full moon on that terrible night when John looks down into that accursed garden from his top window---and has his sight and soul blasted forever by a vision of the abominable rites conducted there.

Earlier he had noticed the queer characters entering the dwelling for their unholy rendezvous: the horrid, fat man; the battered Apollo; the mincing fellow with the pointed beard; a queer, shambling red-haired man; the odd old professor; and finally his friend Marks. Now, in their cabalistic robes and blasphemous head-dresses, he saw them grouped before the unhallowed cupola. Amid dense clouds of incense---with Pamela's uncle acting as high priest---they invoked the Seven Lords of the Abyss in the Seven Pristine Tongues: in turn, the rites of Adonis, Pan, Hecate, Mithras, Nodens, Apollo and that last deity---whose very name it was forbidden to mention---were performed.

The sacrifice of the lamb completed the ceremony. There was a moment of dread silence: and then the Abyss vomited its spawn---not the Lords themselves but their minions, for this occasion at least. The fetid odor of the goat well-ed up noxiously; the garden teemed with wild, nightmare entities which danced

lasciviously on the greensward. Demoniac tittering and loud peals of inhuman laughter polluted the air. Finally, at the first cock-crow, everything returned to normal and the hierophants staggered from the garden---drawn and exhausted.

John's acquaintance with Pamela had grown by natural degrees into a tender love. Naturally he feared for her safety although she had never taken part in her uncle's rituals---he had always locked her securely in her bedroom on all such occasions. John's terror and concern rose to almost insupportable heights, however, when he heard Woodfell assert to his evil companions that they would never succeed in raising the Lords themselves until a missing feminine element--the disgusting rite of Ashtaroth---was added.

The story reaches a tremendous climax on that awful night---the night of the last ritual. With a priestess of shunned Ashtaroth included in their vile circle, the ceremony was complete. Terrible and revolting things took place which it would be unfair to reveal to a prospective reader. Let it suffice to say that it was a night of abysmal horror not often equalled in literature of the weird and the supernatural.

First of all, it must be noted with extreme pleasure that the author has scrupulously avoided two fatally familiar cliches: Pamela's uncle, the magician Woodfell is not a despicable monster---he is a quiet, serious student who goes beyond forbidden barriers in his zeal, and suffers a terrible fate. Nor is Pamela made the sacrifice in the final rite, nor is she made to perform its foul mummeries via hypnotism, possession or any other means.

The author shows a considerable knowledge of the ancient mysteries, especially as evidenced in his magnificent descriptions of the happenings in the garden. He submits a fairly fresh variant on the creepy idea that a wizard's control over what he evokes may be weakened merely by the vicissitudes of age and personal health. Even so, he does not try to force the supernatural down our throats. A chance for a completely psychological explanation is hinted at---if the reader insists on such an explanation. However, we do not have to see Jepson's checked tongue to understand just where his real beliefs lie.

We are inevitably lead to comparisons. Jepson has little of the quality of the late M. R. James in his ability to produce frightful vistas by mere matter-of-fact narration, but it seems to this writer that a likeness to the somewhat bland terrors of E. F. Benson is a closer simile. One is remorselessly reminded of "Negotium Perambulans..." and also, somehow, of "The Horror Horn." Jepson's concept of the Gods (Pan in particular) has nothing of the sly, sensuous and terrible beauty of Dunseney. His Pan is vile and malevolent--uncompromisingly so. Here some readers may try to draw a parallel with the works of Lovecraft but such a similarity is only on the surface. Jepson's mythos is purely classical in nature: his terrors arise from the ancient mysteries and the Black Art---his conception of the supernatural is clear and unadulterated. Lovecraft, on the other hand, created an eclectic mythos new to literature: a blending of modern space-time elements with certain of the ago-old concepts of the weird and supernatural; his achievement was an attitude which lod us to look upon the strange and unexplained attributes of the universe in the light of the supernormal.

Now, this is not to belittle Jepson in any way. He is a writer of definite stature in the realm of the weird, characterized by certain deft touches of suggestive technique, the implications of which dawn upon us out of a clear sky from the supposedly innocent words of his narrative. A few examples: John's finding of the queer device in the sycamore tree which later on turns out to be the mystica vannus Iacchi, or bull-roarer, used to summon initiates to the Bacchic mysteries in elder ages; Mark's refusal to reveal to John what the tracks were which he (Marks) stamped out of the gravel in the garden; John's terrified puz-

(concluded on page 155)

## By-Products

by  
Malcolm Jameson

Before putting my oar into the controversy of whether science-fiction is recreational or educational, I want to make it plain at the outset that my views are strictly personal ones and that some of them are by no means original. Frankly, I side wholeheartedly with most fantasy authors in thinking that science-fiction is escapist literature and is written primarily to entertain. I also endorse their denial that it is basically educational, for along with sound scientific facts it also includes a vast quantity of distortions and misinformation. And to separate fact from fantasy presupposes a considerable technical education and a discriminating mind.

On the other hand, some fantasy fans, in sticking to their belief that science-fiction is educational (if they indeed mean what I think they do) are right also---but in another sense. My reason for qualifying that agreement is that they seem to me to flounder a bit in their arguments, and to say things they don't truly mean. For example, to quote a fan's opinion I chanced upon in print a while ago:

...there never has been a good science-fiction story written but what the author thought the idea was probable...

Probable is a fairly strong word. That lets out Wells' Food of the Gods, The Invisible Man, The Time Machine, "The New Accelerator"---virtually all of them, as I don't for a moment believe that Wells thought those stunts were even possible, let alone probable. He was simply playing with free fancy, based on a big "if," and the fascinating quality of those stories lies in the thoughtful and logical treatment of the implications growing out of an "if" turned into an "is."

However, it is not my purpose to quibble over any possibly ambiguous statements. Nor have I any desire to demolish this fan's position, for in the main I think it sound. I have the feeling that he regards those stories much as do I; and since I know how I regard them, I'll go ahead and talk from that point of view.

We needn't waste words discussing why science-fiction is written. I believe it to be generally conceded that it is written to entertain, and certainly it is read for that purpose. Who would read fiction that didn't entertain? I think it's also accepted that no important research or inventions have sprung from it. But, some have asserted that since it is science-fiction, each story is necessarily based on a sound scientific fact, and that therein lies its educational value.

Well, let's look at some of those "scientific" ideas. The bulk of them consist of deliberate perversions of some known law of nature---such as the themes of the Wellsian tales referred to---or else they are unwarranted extrapolations of a curve which frequently lead to absurdity. Many stories start off with a cockeyed state of affairs, intriguing and mystifying, and after awhile the writer explains and justifies it all by a more or less plausible mumbo-jumbo of quasi-scientific reasoning. Or often---far too often---he simply gestures carelessly toward "a bewildering array of apparatus, bathed in coruscating, lambent flame" and lets it go at that.

Can the frenzied fan or any non-psychotic reproduce that apparatus? He cannot. Not now or ever. The chances are that the main tube is powered by a most delightful chemical element found only in the thymus gland of the rare Tuxajarkus---which is the scourge of the fifth planet of Sirius, and got to Earth by the laborious process of warping itself through a couple of higher dimensions.

If that's science, the people who hand out Ph.D.'s don't recognize it. Digest the entire existing files of science-fiction, decant away all the incredible monsters, the alien menaces, the foul villains, the resourceful heroes and the dizzy red-heads---and what is your residuum? Whatever it is, it isn't worth much. An I.C.S. course in high school physics would be much more to the point---it's acquired with a minimum of effort and is entirely dependable.

I have said that many fans do not mean exactly what they say, but just for the record, let's examine their words. To return to the gentleman quoted previously:

Whether the author consciously puts a modicum of real possibility in his work or not, the reader can usually find something in it the author didn't know was there.

Since I believe I know precisely what he's driving at, let me tinker with his sentence a little; I wish to clear up what to me are some ambiguities. Most important is the word reader. Let us modify that, for there are readers and readers. Let's say "an alert and intelligent fantasy reader"---or we might use the word fan, which presumably means the same thing.

Something is one of those omnibus words that has the sky for a limit. To pin the meaning down more clearly, I suggest the addition of "stimulating." Now let's restate the sentence my way: "Whether the author puts a modicum of real possibility in his work or not, and however pseudo- is his science, an alert and intelligent fantasy reader can usually find something stimulating in it."

Note that: "stimulating." That is the essence of the whole thing, and it does not mean 'instructive' or 'informative.' The apple that bounced off Newton's head was stimulating---but it told him nothing that every thinking animal has not known since the beginning of time. My thesis is that the science in science-fiction, if garbled expertly, can be suggestive, provocative. It is like the reductio ad absurdum of logic---it jolts a fellow, makes him sit up and take notice. It calls his attention to things he knows, but has not realized. Also, it is like the spark of a firing circuit, and for that reason the quality of the reader is of immense importance. Is his head packed with mud or dynamite? The spark's function is merely to initiate a reaction; the reaction itself is a reader-function.

When I was a kid and read Wells, I think it was the implications of his stories that steamed me up. They had the effect on me of dramatizing physics so that instead of being a dry technical subject, the text became a wonder-book. We had an old Natural Philosophy in the house---a relic of the 1880's---and I read every thing in it. Then I borrowed current physics books and studied them to such good effect that years later I was able to master an advanced course in the subject without ever having had any formal training of elementary nature. It was fun. It was fun. And it was far more fascinating than the comparatively useless cross-word puzzle solving that has been so popular for years.

To illustrate I shall speak of one item only from a single story, "The New Accelerator." In it, the characters soon observe that human voices become inaudible, and they can hear the shrill sounds of insects as the pitch of these latter lower---relatively speaking---because of the characters' change of sensory perception. That was eye-opening to me. I knew vaguely that sound was a wave motion, but I had never been able to visualize it, thinking always of water waves. I studied the subject, and made myself a set of musical glasses and a sort of xylophone; then, with some understanding of wave motion, I progressed to optics. Observe, please, that Wells taught me none of those things; he merely stimulated my interest in them---my curiosity, if you like---and I did the rest.

Noteworthy is it also that Wells did not exhaust the latent possibili-

ties of his story-idea. I have thought of many others, as have doubtless thousands of other readers. And so, too, have later fantasy writers. There was a very good yarn in Unknown Worlds magazine, as I recall, dealing with some further manifestations of the same impossible phenomenon of time-acceleration. Indeed, there is hardly any limit to the number of details an active imagination can supply. All that Wells does is to start our mental cogs whirring.

None of us can know what was in Wells' mind when he wrote "The New Accelerator." I think, though, that he must have omitted many of the amusing incidents that occurred to him in the process, simply in the interest of keeping the story within the bounds of manageable length. But a working author knows what was in his own mind when he wrote, and since I am attempting a reconciliation between the authors' and fans' points of view, I shall give a slight account of what one of my own stories was meant to contain, and also some of the things I found in it later, perusing it as a reader.

For a guinea-pig, I shall choose a mediocre yarn, neither outstandingly good nor bad, which appeared in Astounding Science-Fiction magazine some years back, and received fifth place in the readers' rating of the issue. In "Mill of the Gods" I used the rings of the planet Saturn as a sort of super-grindstone. Essentially it is an action story with a thread of love-interest. Part of the science in it is true; part is false. Let's examine it.

To begin, the entire idea was simply a stunt, a peg on which to hang a story. As far as I know, all of it is impossible---but those who enjoyed it didn't mind that. And as far as I can recall, except for a few commonplace facts like the order of Saturn's satellites, the only accurate information I tried to convey graphically was that the planet's rings are composed of fine solid matter distributed in a near-vacuum. To some that might well have been instructive. But hold on! I further stated that the satellite Phoebe was composed of solid iron (which is pure surmise) and that at its core was a five-mile-thick diamond of rather special characteristics (which is utter nonsense). Yet how could a person unfamiliar with astronomy discriminate? Credulous readers would absorb as much misinformation as true fact.

What about the stimulating aspects? The by-products? Those I don't know. Some readers, of course, probably found a number of them. How would it disturb the rings to encounter a dense meteoric shower? What would be the effect of the mutual perturbation of separate particles? What is the cause of the rift between the rings, and why is the inner one so thin? Why are the rings' thicknesses so uniform, and the edges so sharply defined? Those are just a few of the teasing queries that occur to me at this writing.

Looking at my own conception from the writer's point of view I at once see the ideas for a dozen more variations on the same theme---though I probably won't write them. I don't want to be known as the Saturn ring specialist. But let's glance at a few anyway. Wouldn't the ring be an ideal haven for a nest of interplanetary pirates? Or escaped slaves? Wouldn't it be a grand advertising sign, with "Use Percy's Pink Pills" spelled out in colored letters? Why not use the rings as a model for a mine barrage around a planet to keep away hostile ships? Returning to the abrasion idea, could not the rings be used to decelerate a spaceship whose rockets had been disabled? I can think of still more ideas, but since I wish to reserve some for future stories of my own I shan't mention them all. But I believe that most readers would have little difficulty if they were asked to lengthen my brief list.

To sum up, we writers do write to entertain, and the more conscientious and better-informed we are, the more likely is our work to contain some accurate information. But its real value lies in suggesting and opening the eyes of some readers to a great vista of possibilities. Neither an author nor an editor can

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## Apostle of the Outside

## William Sloane and Howard Phillips Lovecraft: a Curious Affinity

by

Matthew H. Onderdonk

The right of William Mulligan Sloane III to a niche in fantasy's hall of fame seems secure, although it rests on the publication of only two novels: To Walk the Night (1937) and The Edge of Running Water (1939). Both books are works of considerable artistry and power, though the first is by far the best, known and the most popular among devotees of weird literature.

We must wonder always with keen regret why Sloane apparently abandoned this form of writing after such a magnificent beginning. He was eminently successful in initiating a fresh variant in the realm of the imaginative, and his work is of particular interest to those steeped in the peculiar lore of the great H. P. Lovecraft.

There is a strange, characteristic atmosphere enveloping these stories which keen observers recognize as containing flashes and definite adumbrations of the cosmic viewpoint of Lovecraft---an attitude so transmuted and so reintegrated, however, as to constitute a new and most intriguing byway off the beaten path of ordinary fantastic fiction.

## II

To those who read with more than casual attention it at once became evident that Sloane---like Lovecraft---was obsessed with the concept of a menace to mankind and its world from shadowy and terrifying entities of a space-time outside our normal, known universe.

With Lovecraft, this horrible idea finally developed into a pantheon of supernormal gods (the Cthulhu Mythos) which attempted to personify the forces ruling all space and time in a manner not too unpalatable to minds with a modern scientific background. Sloane never went this far: he was content to deal with super-intelligences from an alien cosmos in his first effort; in his second, he strongly intimated that tremendous dark forces lurked in nearby dimensions beyond a barrier---apparently insuperable, but in reality vulnerable to the efforts of a keen, fearless scientific brain. All of these entities were never personified beyond the extent that (in To Walk the Night) the body of the idiot girl, Luella Jamison, served as a temporary receptacle for the intelligence from outer space which we know as Selena. This was merely the familiar phenomenon of possession because we recall that when the mind---Selena---decided to return to its own people we were left with the dumb, hollow shell of the unfortunate Luella---devoid of all the dazzling attractions and cosmic knowledge which it had exhibited during Selena's residence.

One of Sloane's favorite conceptions appears to be that of a psychic force somewhat akin to electrical energy. Selena could create fire, could control or even kill human beings through its use. When this force was inadvertently amplified to a colossal degree by mingling with the mind power of thousands of football fans in an adjacent stadium---all concentrated on one single thought: the next play---it achieved catastrophic proportions and literally incinerated the body of unhappy professor Le Normand, toward whom Selena's original, merely controlling thought had been directed.

Le Normand, the great astrophysicist, knew too much. His equations---culminating a lifetime of research far beyond Einstein's original concepts---were almost completed. Then he would know who Selena really was and where she came from and how she arrived on this planet. The secrets of her mighty race

would be an open book to our world of science. This must not be! The elders among her people had sensed the direction of Le Normand's research, and had directed her intelligence across the vast ocean of space and time to stop him before it was too late. But in endeavoring merely to cloud his mind and direct it into other less dangerous channels she destroyed him utterly through the strange concurrence of events mentioned just above.

Selena almost failed in her mission when likeable Jerry Lister, one of Le Normand's few friends and his only disciple, found the equations and continued work on them. Jerry was drawn to her by a strange fascination, however, so that it was a simple matter to influence him to marry her with almost indolent haste shortly after her husband Le Normand's death. Perhaps she gained a little of the idea of human love from him because when his work was completed and he knew her secret, she hesitated to silence his lips. Being only a mortal earth-man, however, Jerry could not bear the awful revelation when the whole soul-freezing truth about the Outside broke upon him. And his only solace was suicide. Selena departed---successful but unhappy---man had not broken down the barriers to her world, for a while at least. Nevertheless, she had forever lost something which she appreciated only dimly and which she could never hope to regain.

In The Edge of Running Water we find Julian Blair, the brilliant but misunderstood electrophysicist who is obsessed by the effort to reach the realm of his beloved wife who has passed beyond the pale of life. Forced to leave his university because of the unorthodox direction of his researches and theories, he set up his laboratory in the wild fastness of Maine. Looking upon spiritualism with a scientist's eye he had postulated that the force engendered by a circle of kindred minds at a successful seance was semi-electrical in nature, but weak and uncertain withal. He reasoned: why not take the energy of one sensitive mind---his own---trained and aided by an authentic medium, and purifying its current with suitable filters, amplify it a billionfold by special coils, transformers, vacuum tubes and colossal electrical force, thus setting up an electromagnetic field of tremendous proportions? Surely then, if ever, this mind should be able to shatter the ramparts of that other dimension wherein lie the minds of the dead.

His friend, Richard Sayles, never guessed the true magnitude and direction of Blair's work until he was finally allowed in the laboratory, and thus suffered an almost soul-shattering experience. For it was demonstrated that Blair had progressed very far: his weird and unholy set-up actually worked! The shrouded circle of semi-human figures built of glass, wire, relays, etc., hummed with the pressure of millions of volts, the flow of millions of amperes. And as Blair, at the head of this blasphemous circle, advanced the controlling lever to almost maximum, over the dim personages surrounding the insulated table there began to appear a shadow. A shadow from the Outside hovered over the two scientists and the terrible sitters in the circle. Blair was utterly hypnotized, but Sayles had the wit to shove the control lever back to zero. There was a tremendous shock, the dark shadow retreated to its own domain, and the icy finger from the depths of Time was present no longer.

Sayles had felt the nadir of cosmic horror and he trembled at the enormities toward which Blair was striving, but Blair was eager to go on after this promising taste of fulfillments yet to come. Sayles did his best to dissuade his friend but Blair was a man possessed---adamant in his determination to reach out to his wife's spirit. When the law finally stepped in Blair seized his final opportunity. He locked himself in the laboratory, and from the sounds heard by those without it was evident that the controlling lever had been pushed to its maximum position. The listeners fled, barely in time to escape the catastrophe which followed. There was a colossal implosion; the earth itself was shaken by the cosmic forces let loose. And when the survivors returned they found to their

wonder that Blair and nearly all of his laboratory had simply disappeared. They had not been blown outside, nor had they been reduced to mere rubble. Where they had actually gone was a question that Richard Sayles never liked to speculate on thereafter. He hoped, however, that Julian Blair had found his beloved at last.

### III

Now, a number of similarities to Lovecraft (aside from the cardinal menace from Outside) at once leap to our attention. First, the welding of modern scientific concepts of space and time with the oldest and best of the weird and supernatural (see "The Lord of R'lyeh" in Fantasy Commentator, vol. 1, no. 6). Then we have the sober narration of facts in almost a documentary style by a participant---long after everything has happened. This is a favorite device of Lovecraft's. This gives us the mature, reflective, analytical type of story in which instead of being dazed by the swift-moving statements of events as they occur, we have the benefit of the narrator's considered judgement and the advantage of a considerable temporal perspective.

Next comes to mind the choice of significant detail. Remarks carefully chosen to arouse our darkest apprehensions which are later confirmed in a most agreeably horrible manner; hints vague enough to keep us wondering yet concrete enough to foreshadow the terrors yet to come. A few illustrations will suffice:

In To Walk the Night we are told that on the evening after the strange Selena first appeared from nowhere into Le Normand's house, the professor made a mysterious trip with his car and was known to have stopped on some unimaginable errand off the main highway near the town. Was it to destroy evidence of Selena's arrival on this planet? Perhaps the space-time envelope in which her mind had traversed the vast expanse of a trans-galactic ether? We can only surmise, but the incident leaves us expecting the worst and in the end we are not disappointed.

When Jerry and Selena are lying in each other's arms gazing at the soft, beautiful moonlight, Selena murmurs, "It is this which my people do not know." Did she refer to an ecstasy of love's consummation which was completely unknown to her race? Or was it the moonlight: were her people of a dim night-world where no satellite existed to help make the long hours of the sun's absence bearable? We are never completely sure, but a terrifying feeling of her absolute alienage from our world and its emotions grips us. Her mind was a cold, ruthless product of a science and a culture gone ahead of ours and as remote as Sirius or Antares. Yet at the end she actually cried like a human child over Hans Christian Anderson's beautifully sad fairy tale of the little mermaid who tried to become human for a while but finally had to return to her own aquatic world.

In The Edge of Running Water Julian Blair's niece, Anne, tells Richard that on one terrible occasion she heard in the laboratory a whisper a whisper not unlike the faint swish detected on a short-wave radio when an incredibly weak signal just barely fades into audibility. A thrill of horror creeps through the reader's mind at this chance remark. Later he understands: it must have been a faint rustle from Outside. Further on in the story, when the hired woman, Elora Marcy, is found at the foot of the staircase it is assumed that she died of a fall. But, anon, when her body is discovered in the river we learn she was killed instantly by a blow and thrown into the water after walking from the house in company with the sinister medium, Mrs. Walters. It dawns on us with dreadful clarity that Elora was only stunned by something she observed or felt in the laboratory while cleaning. She must have been carried to the foot of the stairs by the hulking Mrs. Walters to fool the rest of the household, and later enticed by this same personage to the river where she was disposed of. Horrid speculations

arise in our minds regarding what she experienced the laboratory that made her lose consciousness: why was it so urgent that her tongue be silenced forever? We wonder dumbly, and we finally comprehend, to our horror.

Compare these examples to the feelings aroused in our minds by Lovecraft in "At the Mountains of Madness" when the narrator tells how the clothing stolen from the bodies of the murdered explorers has been cut and altered in such odd ways---as though to adapt the garments for the use and convenience of beings with utterly unimaginable structures and appendages! Later, our dim feelings of horror are amply confirmed.

In "The Shadow out of Time," when the narrator in his own time visits the eon-buried city he marvels at the height of the reading tables in the hall of archives: they tower far above his head. Yet when his mind awakes in the same city in its own time, these same tables have resumed a convenient height for him. A sick feeling envelops us, and we know why the narrator tries with a paralyzing horror to keep from looking down to see what manner of body he is now imprisoned within. Later, we see it all and are sorry it was revealed to us.

Or take an instance from "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward." After the reader knows that young Ward is dead, we are told that the Ward butler saw him come down the stairs from his room and leave the house. From the story thus far we can sense only the worst: the arch-fiend, Joseph Curwen, has been resurrected by Ward's meddling with forbidden lore and has now seized the body of the unhappy man for his own vile purposes.

A classic example from "The Whisperer in Darkness" might be mentioned. After the narrator, Albert Wilmarth, has received many letters scrawled in long-hand by Henry Akeley telling how his home in the Vermont hills is besieged by winged creatures from the Outside, his horror at their disgusting activities, and warning Wilmarth to stay away, Wilmarth suddenly receives a typewritten letter from Akeley signed in an unintelligible blot. This letter reveals a complete change of attitude: Akeley now understands and respects the creatures and he invites Wilmarth to visit him immediately. The letter also reminds Wilmarth to bring with him all the photographs and letters that he has been sent in order that the two may go over the whole story together. Is the reader taken in by so obvious a fraud? Not at all---he scents the approaching danger; but poor Wilmarth, although puzzled, follows the letter's directions. And with a tightening feeling in our throats we see Wilmarth go to an inevitable doom---powerless to save him.

Many other parallel illustrations might be cited from the works of both authors. The similarity of method and purpose seems equally clear in each. Finally, we have the sinister atmosphere of impending doom and nameless evil which pervades both of Sloane's novels and almost all of Lovecraft's works. The tone is lighter in Sloane yet it is equally effective. Creation of this atmosphere is an elusive achievement almost beyond analysis. It depends upon selecting just the right word and putting it in just the right place in the narrative. Each of these writers has that unique ability: to chill and thrill us by the judicious choice of words and by their happy arrangement in the story.

#### IV

We must at last consider William Sloane on his own great merits, and particularly for those qualities in which he differs radically from Lovecraft. Here, it must be granted, we encounter a comparison in which Lovecraft comes out second-best.

Sloane's world is a real world of everyday life in which we have such things as a typical university town with its familiar football crowd, and so

homely a touch as the Elite Lunch in a small Maine village. Lovecraft's world is never a reality: it is the unique world of accursed Arkham; the dark Miskatonic; great Cthulhu; degenerate Innsmouth; the abhorred Necronomicon of the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred; eon-cursed R'lyeh in the Pacific deep. This is a vaster and far more picturesque sphere, truly---but one in which we can never truly believe or feel at home. It is a dark intellectual conception and a terrifying emotional experience. Sloane's---on the surface at least---is not too incompatible with what we know and see of existence outside our library window.

The people in the world of Sloane are authentic three-dimensional characters. They wise-crack; they dance and mix cocktails; they laugh. Some are recognizable small-town types: narrow, shrewd, suspicious. Others, such as "Prexy," are familiar to any typical college community. Some of these characters fall in love in a beautifully natural manner (such as Anne and Richard) or from exotic fascination (as did Selona and Jerry). We feel a measure of self-identification with them: there is the give-and-take of ordinary persons which we can sense from our own personal experiences.

Lovecraft, in the main, neglects characterization almost completely. The creations of his Cthulhu myths are never credible as living things, naturally. Even the narrators and doomed individuals in the tales never have any real existence save as props to be surrounded by an atmosphere of the marvellous and the sustained mood of terror and horror. Almost uniformly they are morbid, sensitive, learned delvers into arcane lore and abysmal night thoughts. Naturally, too, there is never any possibility of love interest. We never imagine ourselves in the places of these unhappy people.

Compared to Lovecraft's frequent ponderosity, Sloane's style is for the most part light, cheerful and even breezy. It moves quickly and easily: episode to situation in a straightforward manner. Lovecraft uses a dozen adjectives and qualifying phrases where Sloane is satisfied with a single expertly chosen one. Nor is he morbid---he shuns this trait, while Lovecraft revels in incredible and sometimes revolting ghouliness.

Lovecraft's plots are very involved and complicated. Sometimes we must keep several different sub-plots and psychological concepts in mind simultaneously if we are to grasp the full implications of what is happening. In one or two cases we must remember or turn back to the opening lines of the story if we are to understand its closing sentences. By comparison, Sloane's plots are direct, crystal-clear and simply constructed.

Perhaps the most serious and valid criticism of Lovecraft's work has been its characteristic lack of restraint. Sometimes a tale seems to defeat its own purpose by piling horror upon horror to an utterly prodigal degree. Our minds become numb, and we can no longer register any emotion except irritation. That great master of the weird and spectral, Algernon Blackwood, has been reported as saying, in effect, that Lovecraft's horrors leave him absolutely unmoved because of their sheer weight. He admits Lovecraft to have a fine feeling for atmosphere, but he remains cold to the plethora of physical horrors. Blackwood is the acknowledged king in the realm of the psychological terror tale, so we must agree that he is well qualified to judge.

It must be admitted that there comes a blocking of the channels of horrific perception when they become overloaded. We become satiated and unfeeling under a burden of terrors which if carefully selected, each in a separate story, might have made our flesh creep in the authentic manner. Sloane's terrors are thoughtfully chosen, and, with a distinct faculty for understatement, are completely developed into an absolute artistic unity. Most great tales of the weird have been comparatively short because their effect depends upon the crystallized essence of a single mood which is sustained throughout. Yet Sloane has managed

in works of novel-length to keep this quality of integrity confined to one all-important mood---unmarred by the other elements present.

## V

What must our final conclusions be? It seems to this writer that in To Walk the Night and The Edge of Running Water there has been attained-- without any cheapening---a refinement and maturity of the intellectual type of horror tale so well exemplified by the works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft. None may gainsay the greatness of Lovecraft, but it would appear that Sloane has humanized the cold, often abstract inhumanity of the Lovecraftian concept of the universe.

Of course, there will always be a narrower circle of readers who will revel in the pure, unsullied type of psychological weird tale, the unmixed story of atmosphere and mood. Machen, de la Mare, Blackwood, Onions and Henry James are among its greatest exponents. Lovecraft---while perhaps not at the very top---has his own unique place of honor among the elect of this pantheon. He will always be remembered as a host in whose writings the reader of analytical mind and subtlest intuitions may find his greatest enjoyment.

But we have a larger group of those who demand more action in their reading. They like the weird and fantastic, the spectral and horrifying, but they want something to happen in their fiction---happen in the physical sense rather than merely in a psychical one. They want more events---swiftly moving---and have no patience with psychological subtleties or abstruse cosmic concepts. In short, they want a story! They want recognizable characters and situations which are readily grasped. They demand a measure of self-identification in the persons involved. And to make this more extensive circle of readers more fully appreciative of the greatness of the Lovecraftian attitude is a task well worthy of the best efforts of all of us who know and revere Lovecraft, we who believe that they are missing one of the noblest reading experiences of a lifetime in not being able to take Lovecraft straight.

Sloane must be remembered and honored as one who has reinterpreted basic concepts amazingly similar to the superb visions of the great master, expressing them in a form more intelligible and palatable to this wider segment of the reading world. Perhaps his work may well point the way towards the future when the epochal viewpoint of Lovecraft in weird literature may be made cognizable to a vaster portion of the book world. Perchance even some day a sublimation of the the mythos into the greater domain of the novel of character and manners may come.

Only then, perhaps, will the world know what a great mind passed on when Howard Phillips Lovecraft died: what a true genius this man was who created a whole new world in literature. A fair share of the credit must therefore be extended to William Sloane, who has done a great deed in carrying the spirit of Lovecraft's works towards a more complete and satisfying artistic perfection and maturity.

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The Garden at No. 19---concluded from page 146

element at the weight of the footsteps he heard on the stairs---steps far too heavy for any human foot to have made.

In some episodes of this novel we may be reminded of Marsh's Beetle and the whole mood of the story is probably very close to that of Buchan's Dancing Floor and even more so to Lovecraft's "Case of Charles Dexter Ward." In the last analysis, however, Jepson is himself---his work a comparatively unknown and refreshing addition to the list of great weird tales. ---Matthew H. Onderdonk

## Crack-Pot Heaven

by  
Thomas S. Gardner

The predictions made in the preceding article, "Calling All Crack-Pots," that Editor Palmer of Amazing Stories was attempting to capitalize upon a new field of readers is borne out by Palmer's own statements in Fantasy News, in the June, 1945 Amazing and in the preceding issue of Fantastic Adventures. However, from just a publicity stunt this hoax is rapidly becoming psychopathic.

The present contribution to the progress of mankind, "Thought Records of Lemuria," is somewhat difficult to analyze from a scientific standpoint as it is sheer fantasy---and of a poor grade at that. How can you analyze a fairy story? Nevertheless, there are a few statements that can be discussed from the scientific viewpoint.

Repeated here is the same error that was made in the preceding story, "I Remember Lemuria." Shaver states that as the Titans grew in size they migrated by necessity to a larger and denser planet. This is contrary to all known laws of physiology and muscular dynamics that concern the problem. A larger body would seek a smaller planet where the pull of gravity would be less; the greater the gravitational effect the more difficult it would be for a large body to move about.

Repeated also is the confusion of mass and inertia, which demonstrates lack of elementary knowledge in the realm of physics. The statement that inertia is absent whenever weight is absent is, of course, ridiculous.

With regard to the super-sized animals in the story: nerve currents in animals known today travel at a rate of about four hundred feet a second. This seriously mitigates against the animal's size increasing too greatly, as a rapid pain-response is necessary for survival. One of our giant humans died recently of an unnoticed foot infection, in fact---and doctors believe that this was not detected in its early stages because the excessive length of the nerves in the leg had rendered them less sensitive than normally.

One of the most interesting features of "Thought Records of Lemuria" is the detailed story of the appearance of voices, delusions of touch, etc. The similarity these latter bear to the reactions of schizophrenia victims is remarkable; every development of the illusion follows a phase of this mental disease very closely.

However that may be, the social implications of the Lemurian Hoax, and the campaign instituted to present it as authentic are much greater than most fans imagine. In order to understand the situation it is necessary to remember that throughout history there has always existed a small percent who, although apparently normal, are yet on the borderline of sanity. In the more enlightened countries, such as the United States, it has been estimated that about five percent of the population is on the lunatic fringe. This is equivalent to approximately seven million people living their daily lives under delusions of grandeur, believing in lost races, "ancient wisdom," astrology, pyramidology and the like. What can the result be but possession of a warped mental outlook? Probably a far larger number than this dabble in fortune-telling, spiritualism, etc., but are nevertheless relatively stable. The lunatic fringe has been unorganized and its members have as a rule fought each other bitterly because their beliefs vary so widely from group to group.

The largest and most influential of these cliques is an order claiming fifty thousand members. It claims descent from the early Egyptians---circa 1340 B.C.---although evidence indicates formation in Germany about three hundred years ago. This order teaches and believes in a sort of Lameria - Atlantis - Mu mythos

resembling that given in Shaver's stories. One wonders, indeed, if this is not the prime source of the author's material!

By good publicity this lunatic fringe being catered to might easily be led to persuade others in a similarly unenlightened condition that this Lemurian material would form a suitable background for social and political action. They could influence and control a great deal of public school education in many communities. If Palmer were to succeed in uniting the elements in the lunatic fringe he would have created a powerful public opinion backed by people with a crusading spirit. In many cases persons of this nature are dissatisfied with existing faiths and do not possess the mental stability to grasp the facts of modern science nor the breadth of vision to collate available data; they feel a yearning, and "sense" things unseen---an action characteristic of schizophrenics and paranoid patients. Also, many of them have run away from the hard work required to master some field of knowledge and prefer to dream of attaining it without effort by the use of "ancient wisdom." The slow development of knowledge by experience and experiment is too laborious for people with unstable mentalities. It is far easier to believe that the hard work of gathering and systematizing data has already been accomplished, and that all that is necessary is to get the key to unlock reams of useful and astounding wisdom. (The crack-pots usually speak of "wisdom" instead of knowledge---possibly because the traditional form of religious wisdom, supposedly pulled down from thin air, is more analogous to their preferences than is knowledge, which implies hard work.)

A united lunatic fringe even slant education to such an extent as to menace progress. Impossible? Well, did you ever hear of Tennessee's anti-evolution law? Or of Zion, Illinois, where (until comparatively recently) school books taught that the earth was flat and had the form of a huge, round dinner plate with the North Pole at its center; and that the sun was a glowing ball of iron some 3000 miles away? Almost all states have passed laws banning certain aspects of science, in fact. (Clement Woods, in his War of Modern Science, discusses several examples of these.) At the present time there is in Congress a strong lobby which has the avowed purpose of stopping all forms of experimentation in which animals are used. Already some states do not have adequate medical schools because they are not allowed to use animals in experimental work.

Let us suppose, just for a moment, that the Shaver system of history is taught, and that his nonsensical theories concerning physics, physiology and biology were also taught. Then all research work can stop---for why should anyone slave in a laboratory when all knowledge has been discovered ages ago and is awaiting discovery in various caves? Then we can spend our time in lunatic asylums, as Mr. Shaver's letter implies, taking down the ravings of the insane, and utilizing them as a basis for our science. Sounds fantastic, doesn't it? Yet in India today a large portion of the population relies on the religious utterances of fakirs, many of whom are insane, for their knowledge. Many of the crack-pots have both the money and influence necessary to sway venal educational boards. The danger lies in the fact that the saner elements of most communities simply do not believe that such things could ever happen, and therefore make no effort to prevent the early symptoms from spreading.

A recent letter to the readers' column of the Summer, 1945 number of Planet Stories indicates the general trend of this vociferous group; the typical anti-social, Gott mit uns mind possessing some "inner knowledge" reveals itself clearly.

Should unified action ever be taken against the lunatic fringe because of their detrimental effect on society, the effects could be far-reaching. Were public opinion to crystallize against the Lemuria-Mu bunk in Amazing Stories, it  
(concluded on page 162)

## Forgotten Creators of Ghosts

by

A. Langley Scarles

III - Cecily Hallack

It has been noted by several critics, Lovecraft among them, that supernatural fiction written by authors who believe in the ghostly phenomena whereof they treat are, as a rule, less effective than stories on the same themes produced by materialists, to whom such conceptions appear awesomely impressive violations of the world's natural order. Despite the numerous striking examples which might be quoted against such a dictum, on the whole it appears to be generally true, so that veteran readers in the field who approach such works as Hallack's Candlelight Attic (1925) expecting to be disappointed usually will find that their pessimism has been justified.

Aside from the basic reason just mentioned, two others contribute to the lack of reader-response commonly encountered by tales having this background. Firstly, they all too often show a religious weft---which in itself would not be objectionable were it not almost invariably interwoven with a moral. It is simply a fact that the moral tale is completely out of fashion nowadays; didactic homilies are passe in a world where most adults read fiction for entertainment and not for allegorical instruction. Secondly, writers such as Franciscan Tertiary Cecily Hallack are forever prefacing their timid excursions into terrae incognitae either with claims that the truth of the incidents to be related is vouched for by themselves and personal friends, or else with roundabout verbiage that amounts to the same thing and which infers in addition that only the stubborn denseness of the materialistic readers addressed prevents the matter from being stated in unequivocal terms. It would be difficult to imagine a method more likely to evoke a prejudiced response, however unbiasedly such fiction is approached.

In all justice to its author, however, let it be said that evaluation of an example of supernatural fiction does not involve consideration of its parallel in reality; rather, any story of this type should be judged solely on the basis of the emotional reaction it produces in the reader, such emotional reaction being decided by the writer's success in presenting a sensation-arousing supernatural concept cloaked in that plot, development and stylistic vehicle which best suits it. Whether the author intended his work to have the effect that it does is entirely irrelevant and immaterial; the results are obviously the only criteria to be taken into account.

Weighed thus, the tales of Candlelight Attic are found to be wanting that essential "high point" which all successful weird fiction must have. Indeed, despite the claim of the book's subtitle that it contains "...Seven True Stories of the Supernatural..." it is stretching the imagination to label three of them as supernatural at all. The other four deal primarily with visitations of various sorts, and with the possible exception of "The Mind of God" are all exceedingly tame. The high ratio of coincidence to probability present also operates against these tales, so that Hallack's capable, pictorial prose, sharp characterization, and well-written conversation are completely wasted as far as followers of the outre are concerned. The plan of allowing a story to introduce itself from casual drawing-room conversation has been utilized to good effect by other writers in the genre---especially in Benson's Mirror of Shalott---but when (as here) the introductions exceed the tales proper in length such a literary device becomes more of a burden than an aid.

It is to be doubted, in fact, that the author here is capable of employing the malevolent climax most commonly found to be effective in ghost sto-

ries, for in "The Attainment of John Evangelist Wedgwood" he refers to this variety as "...diabolic journalism, which does the devil's work by putting more fear into the world...." In the light of such a statement as this, one can only regret that strait-laced religious beliefs have prevented his talent for writing an emotionally moving tale from embracing the field of the supernatural, where it might well have flowered into rich and satisfying maturity. As it is, however, a critic must deal with things as they are: and since this is the case, there is little else to say other than that the stories in Candlelight Attic will probably never be remembered by those who take the trouble to peruse them, and that as a forgotten creator of ghosts Cecily Rosemary Hallack deserves neither resurrection nor critical recognition.

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By-Products---concluded from page 149

gauge correctly his readers' powers of association. All that we can do is to fire at the pile and hope for a fair percentage of hits. Therefore, even if authors write primarily to entertain---and that is certainly what they do--- I still think a story a dud unless it is also stimulating to an alert reader. The truly great writers do much more than amuse: they change the whole trend of their readers' thoughts. Verne and Wells accomplished that, and some of their successors did, too. So the authors are right as to their conscious motives, you see, and yet the fans are also right in ascribing a certain educational influence to science-fiction. All in all, I don't believe there are any grounds whatever for disagreement.

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The Day After Tomorrow---concluded from page 139

tasies in this collection deal with awakened sleepers. The title story tells of the revival of a soldier of Hannibal's army, who has been miraculously preserved in a glacier for centuries, and of his reactions to the present-day world. More fascinating a tale than this, however, is the longer "Secret of Appolonius Sепtrio." When the scientists of his time scoffed at his claim that a common herb, when eaten at certain intervals, would keep a human being alive indefinitely, the Professor said no more; but he, his wife and her brother ate it---and lived on and on. Decades and centuries passed, nations rose and fell, but time could not touch them. Then came separation, none of the three knowing the whereabouts of the others. In one far distant epoch the Professor met a merchant selling tiny flasks of a potion each drop of which would, he claimed, give its drinker a year of sleep. Anxious to leap ahead ten years or so into the future, the Professor retired to a secluded cave to test its efficacy; forgetful, however, he drained the flask---realizing to his horror just as lethargy sweeps over him that he was destined to remain in suspended animation for centuries. He awakens to find most of the country a jungle; faring forth, he is captured by human beings, who have by obscure evolutionary processes increased greatly in stature and grown wings. The tale concludes with a meeting of the trio: beside the cage in which the Professor is confined is another wherein is his brother-in-law, who has gone mad through ages of loneliness; and approaching the two is the Professor's wife, now larger and winged, for she has eaten the strange foods and lived in the environment that initiated these bodily changes. Can her mind bridge the gulf of time to remember them? The answer to that intriguing question may be found in: "The Secret of Appolonius Sепtrio," which has a surprisingly modern cast considering the fact that it is nearly three-quarters of a century old, and which appears to be a relatively unknown classic of fantasy.

## Tips on Tales

by Joyce Mayday

Joan Grant's Winged Pharaoh (1938): Of rare literary value, this book stands securely on that foundation alone. But it has other praiseworthy qualities, the most important of which is a spiritual quality seldom found in modern fiction. It is written in the first person by a priestess who was co-ruler of ancient Egypt with Menes, he of the first dynasty when rulers were wise in the traditions of the divine kings. Primarily a novel of Egypt before its olden glory was dimmed, the author writes also of the civilizations of Crete and Sumeria, entwining with both the literary device of reincarnation, which gleams like a slender thread of silver throughout the story. And proof of the inadequacy of the adjectives used by many reviewers to describe it lies in the very reading of the novel itself.

Dion Fortune's Sea Priestess (1938): Of all Dion Fortune's novels, this is the most magical in effect. Its hero is a provincial business man, somewhat frustrated by the limitations of his life in a west country English town. While invalidated by a severe attack of asthma he takes refuge in the world of imagination. And as he recovers, a series of strange adventures befalls him---he meets Morgan le Fey, an ageless, bewitching priestess from the temples of lost Atlantis, and she teaches him "moon magic." His experiences with her and the ancient wisdom taught him provide highly entertaining reading. The rhythmic prose which constitutes the novel is conducive to an unusually strong identification of the reader with the characters, a psychological experience which the author, incidentally, recommends. Whether this experience is pleasant or unpleasant matters little: the effect is bound to be keenly salutary.

Rumer Godden's Black Narcissus (1939): Here is a book to delight those readers who enjoyed Lost Horizon. On a Himalayan mountain peak is a palace owned by the ruler of a native Indian state. Built by his father and called the House of Women in earlier days, the present owner offered it to the Anglo-Catholic nuns of Saint Faith to be used as a convent. And strange indeed was the influence of the former palace on the lives of its new occupants, which is told by Sister Clodagh... "The house would not conform; look at the way they tried to say Saint Faith and always said Mopu. The flimsy walls did not shut out the world but made a sounding-box for it...and everywhere in front of them was that far horizon and the eagles in the gulf below the snows. 'I think I can see too far,' said Sister Phillipa. 'I see across there, and then I can't see the potato I'm planting and it doesn't seem to matter whether I plant it or not.'"

Dion Fortune's Goat-Foot God (1936): Whether a reviewer who is enchanted by a book is capable of describing it objectively is problematical, but the reader is likely to find that he too is captivated by this fascinating story. At the time of a major crisis of his life Hugh Paston meets an elderly bookseller, wise, kind and philosophical, through whom he avoids a complete breakdown. By means of this friendship he acquires a new set of values, and thereupon hinges this engrossing novel. Hugh pursues a course of action designed to open to his sight the subjective world, and in the process uncovers memories of a past life in ancient Greece and of experiences as one Ambrosius, a prior in an English monastery of the Middle Ages. "But was Ambrosius reality or was he fantasy? Hugh had no means of knowing, and was probably the last person to be able to form an unbiased opinion. But whatever Ambrosius might or might not be, he corresponded to reality as the movements of the hands of a clock correspond to the passage of time." Through such curious mental byways Hugh reorganizes his life, and the drama, romance and strange adventures that accompany the process combine to form a story that no thrill-loving fantasy reader should miss.

## Thumbing the Munsey Files

with William H. Evans

Argosy magazine for August of 1905 began an important serial which ran for five numbers, William Wallace Cook's "Marooned in 1492." Professor Percival Tapscott develops a plant whose seeds have the peculiar property of projecting backwards in time anyone who eats them. He and two friends try them, going back to 1492, where they meet Columbus; at the end of the September installment the three are captives of the Moors. Although somewhat melodramatic, the story is quite interesting. In the September issue is also a tale of average quality but of historical importance---"Professor Jonkin's Cannibal Plant"---this being one of the first botanical stories. It describes how an enormous animal-eating pitcher plant is grown by artificial means, and its author is Howard R. Garis.

The July, 1905 Allstory had a minor short by C. Whittier Tate; in "The Thread of Chance" a penniless young playboy is about to commit suicide when a burglar stops him and stakes him to a chance at roulette. He wins, and returns to discover that the burglar was a ghost. In the same magazine for August was an interesting "Isle of the Blessed" type of story by J. Aubrey Tyson. In "Harbor of Living Dead" he tells of a strange island in mid-Atlantic visited by all ships that come within its sphere of influence, but forgotten by everyone after leaving it. Here are the passengers and crews of ships that have disappeared at sea, now eternally youthful---but never able to leave the island. Frank Vantyse, however, retains memory of the place, due to a seasickness remedy he has taken, and returns to rescue successfully the girl with whom he has fallen in love. The tale is quite well told and makes enjoyable reading.

Blue Book magazine offered George Allan England's "Time Reflector" in its September, 1905 issue. Here, Adolph Baum builds a super-telescope to catch the light reflected back from the heavenly bodies so that he can see the past. His friend kills him and destroys the apparatus, however, when it reveals that Baum had murdered his friend's fiancée.

Ten years later Argosy, still a monthly, offered one of Edgar Franklin's Hawkins stories---a revival of an old friend. In "Hawkins-Heat" (which appeared in the August number) the eccentric inventor is trying to sell his invention that uses Trihawkinsdinitrocarbopyrogen as a heating device when the process gets out of control and events culminate in an amusing mess. In the same number is James Francis Dwyer's "Froth of Dreams," a semi-mystical tale about a pair of ancient anklets, originally made for an Egyptian temple-dancer, which have the power of making the wearer---if she is only a good dancer---into a great one. John Hemingway, an archaeologist, discovers an Arab dancer wearing them. He follows her about, enchanted by the anklets and by her dancing. When her jealous lover kills her and then himself Hemingway gets the anklets, only to go insane; finally this unusual tale ends as he returns them to the girl's ghost. In September readers met with Ralph T. Yates' "Peculiar Cruise of the Tortoise," which is all about a mysterious ship that crosses the Atlantic in 24 hours; in the end it turns out to have been a hoax, however.

Allstory had a very good---and historically important---tale in its July 3, 1915 issue: "Terror Island" by Alex Shell Briscoe. This is one of the earliest uses of the size-changing theme. A mysterious ray enables an inventor to reduce his secretary and a big-game hunter to the size of insects so that they can secure details of insect life. He plans to put them on a small island in a lake with everything they need and keep watch on them. However, just as they are landing he has a heart-attack and dies; all the supplies are lost, too, when the boat capsizes. The two midget-sized humans survive and are eventually restored to natural size.

With "Terror Island" appeared "The Indigestible Dog Biscuits," by J.U. Giesy, in which the famous professor Xenophon Xerxes Zapt invents a wireless ray that will explode gunpowder at a distance. Complications develop when the invention is tried out on the professor's lawn. On the whole, this story is fair. A rather unusual novel is George Allan England's "Fatal Gift," which was published as a four-part serial beginning in the September 4th number. More of a psychological study than a fantasy, it tells of an attempt to remake a woman into a perfect physical specimen. The experiment fails, however. In the September 18th issue Achmed Abdullah began a series of connected stories concerning "The God of the Invincibly Strong Arms," a secret Asiatic society which tries to bring about a general revolt of the East against the West. In the first two tales it is attempted to thwart the cult's plans, which have already resulted in a revolution in the Philippines.

Blue Book's sole contribution is an amusing Irish fairy tale by Seumas MacLanus in the September, 1915 issue, "King Fintonnack and His Grandsons," that is very good reading.

Munsey's likewise offer but one story; in the July issue is "The Be-lated Tears of Louis Marcel," by Perley Poore Sheehan. This excellent story describes the thoughts of a murderer---after he has been beheaded!

1925 found fantasy at a low ebb indeed. In the three-month period of that decade being covered here Argosy-Allstory had but two tales, Blue Book and Munsey's none. "The White Chimpanzee" of L. R. Sherman (August 8th) is a story of a tailed man from South America who visits and shocks distant relatives in rural England; it is a poor effort viewed from any standpoint. A three-part serial beginning in the September 5th number is "The Red Hawk"---which, despite its wild-west title, is the last of Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Moon Maid" trilogy. Here the author depicts the final revolt against the moon men who have subjected this planet; it is very well done.

In the August 10, 1935 Argosy appeared Murray Leinster's above-average time-machine story, "The Morrison Monument." The villain of the piece kills the inventor and attempts to send the body into the farthest possible future; however, the operation of the time-machine requires it to be in existence at each instant in the same spot from start to finish---and this results in the evidence of the crime---the Morrison Monument---remaining visible. With September 7th we have Theodore Roscoe's "Mununguru," an eerie tale of a curse which an African witch doctor lays upon a modern psychiatrist. The weird atmosphere here is very effectively sustained.

The August, 1935 Blue Book's contribution is a delicate fantasy authored by Kingsley Moses. The "Maid of the Moon" crashes in the Atlantic near a radio-compass station. She makes shore, and, being invisible, manages to keep her existence secret. Finally falling in love with one of the keepers, however, she reveals herself. In the same number of the magazine is G. E. Wheeler's "Pachydermo," a farce in which a strange drug transforms a man into an elephant.

(An apology is due here. In my last column I stated that Peter "the Brazon" Moore had been untrue to his first love. This is wrong: a check shows that she was actually killed in a hospital-ship sinking in World War I; and Susan came into the picture years later, when the author revived the series.)

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Crack-Pot Heaven---concluded from page 157  
might spread to a denunciation of the better fantasy publications as well. And a blanket ban of this entire segment of the pulp field would not be out of the question. Let's hope for the best, of course---but on the other hand, don't be surprised at anything!

## Open House

(Editor's note: As an experiment---in deference to the many interesting and publishable letters received as well as to outright requests for such a feature---a column devoted to readers' letters is being instituted in this issue. Both its length and its continuance as a regular part of Fantasy Commentator's line-up is dependant, of course, on you. If you'd rather see this space devoted to other material, write in and say so. On the other hand, the best way to insure its staying permanently is to send in letters of general interest to fantasy readers so that they may be printed. May I hear from you?)

Concerning the last issue's "Lord of R'lyeh" Fritz Leiber, Jr. writes:

Onderdonk hits the nail on the head in pointing out how Lovecraft effected a transition from the supernatural to the supernormal. He himself put it nicely in the introductory section of his Supernatural Horror in Literature: "...men with minds sensitive to hereditary impulses will always tremble at the thought of the hidden and fathomless worlds of strange life which may pulsate in the gulfs beyond the stars, or press hideously upon our own globe in unholy dimensions which only the dead and the moonstruck can glimpse." (The only thing questionable in that statement is the "hereditary impulse" angle---modern science has certainly been as responsible as tradition for opening the eerie vistas he mentions.)

But right there Lovecraft tells us that he is not looking to religion or folklore for the main source or rationale of his horrors---he is taking them out of the realms of the possible.

The transition shows plainly in his own tales. The relatively earlier ones tend to depend on black magic, incantations, spells, etc., as major factors, while the later ones do not. Compare, for instance, "The Dunwich Horror" with "The Shadow out of Time." (Come to think of it, there may be chronological exceptions to this, but at any rate the transition is there, whether neatly chronologic or not.)

In an interesting backhand sort of way, the Necronomicon mythology---Arkham-Al Hazred set-up) illustrates this transition. In "The Dunwich Horror," the Necronomicon is a vital factor; incantations from it are used in the story to effect important ends; it could not be eliminated. But by the time he was writing "At the Mountains of Madness" and "The Shadow out of Time," the Necronomicon mythology was merely a source of local color, so to speak, and could have been eliminated without harming (perhaps even helping) the tales.

The fascination of the Necronomicon mythology is so great that one is apt to mistake the shadow for the substance. Personally, I think it eventually became a minor millstone around Lovecraft's neck. For instance, Wilmarth of "The Whisperer in Darkness" might just as well have been an instructor at Brown or Harvard, and no references made to forbidden books at all---they weren't necessary to the tale. (This criticism is of course a casual and minor one; I just make it because admirers of Lovecraft, writers and readers both, are apt to think that the mythos was the important thing about Lovecraft instead of his vastly more important achievement in working out the transition from the supernatural to the supernormal that Onderdonk describes.)

We hear next from J. O. Bailey, author of the soon-to-be-published book Pilgrims through Space and Time:

"Calling All Crack-Pots," with its detailed listing of inconsistencies, seemed to me a good and entertaining job. I don't know what the whole secret of success in a piece of fantastic or scientific fiction may be, but the key to failure, as far as I am concerned, is the inclusion of a minor irrationality or stu-

pidity that discredits a major fantasy I am willing to believe imaginatively. In the preface of his Seven Famous Novels Wells comments to the general effect that a reader will willingly suspend disbelief in a major fantasy if it is surrounded by prosaic, credible detail---or, I might add, unprosaic detail that is consistent and congruous. To cite an absurd example, we are willing to believe in man-like creatures on Mars, even with opposable thumbs, but when the Martians speak English, and it is rationalized that they do so because "the course of their evolution was very similar to ours," I am ready for bed and dreams that, even if more grotesque, have a riper logic in them.

The long and interesting letter which follows is from Robert Bloch:

I'd like to comment briefly on "The Lord of R'lyeh," which makes several points and makes them well---but before rambling on, I must take the precaution of stating that what I say is not to be construed as either criticism or objection.

But I am curiously impressed with the entire phenomenon of Lovecraft-appraisal. During the past two years, particularly, I've read scores of items concerning HPL's life, personality and works. And I see but a small fraction of the fan publications. Strange that he should be more alive in the minds of fandom eight years after his death than at any time during his actual existence... or is it?

It took the accolade of book-publication, general critical recognition and successful reprinting to awaken even Lovecraft-aficionados to the man's literary importance. I can well remember when the really dyed-in-the-wool Lovecraft fan of the late twenties and early thirties was actually looked down upon by the lofty readers of Astounding and Wonder Stories, to say nothing of the Weird Tales group which preferred "fast-action" authors. The Lovecraftophiles were then distinguished by their intensity rather than their numerical supremacy.

But now (needless to point out the obvious reasons) the picture has changed. Everybody who knew him seems to have come out with an "I knew him when" piece...and those who didn't at least manage an "analysis" of the Master's works.

Far be it from me to carp or cavil. I personally have enjoyed each and every bit---and it delights me to find such recognition (even belated and posthumous recognition) of his importance in the fantasy field.

Still, I confess to a certain uneasiness as I contemplate the aggregate content of these articles. They tend, I fear, to place emphasis on aspects of Lovecraft's life and writings which obscure the man himself.

There are many readers who never knew HPL through either personal correspondence or personal contact...many more who didn't even read his stories during his lifetime. They must therefore depend upon existing articles for a picture of the man and an interpretation of his literary efforts. And the picture is distorted.

Too often the sincere attempts at reminiscence on the part of his social intimates and correspondents resolve inevitably into the presentation of a series of trivial anecdotes unconsciously emphasizing the pride of the narrator in his friendship with Lovecraft. And frequently the analyses display an erudition of the author at the expense of an accurate appraisal of his subject.

For this reason I have never written a line about him for publication save for a brief, impulsive statement in Weird Tales immediately upon receiving news of his death. For I too feel myself liable to unconscious bias. I did correspond with him, was a great admirer, and am proud of his friendship. Indeed, I must admit that his dedication of "The Haunter of the Dark" to me, and his use of me as protagonist of that tale remains the high spot of my life to date---and

I've had some pretty gaudy high spots. But in the face of the growing mass of Lovecraftiana extant, I'd like to mention one aspect of HPL's life and times that has never (to my knowledge) been properly presented to fandom.

When I think of Lovecraft the man, I think of a rather different picture than the one generally presented. (The tall, thin, ascetic eccentric; encyclopedic in his knowledge, picturesque in his philosophy, renowned as a recluse ---you know the story; you've read it in almost everything written about him.)

When I think of H. P. Lovecraft I think mainly of his most outstanding attributes...his kindness and his courtesy.

Lovecraft was the kindest, most courteous man I have ever encountered.

(And dammit, I'm not given to gushing or to using such hackneyed words loosely or profanely.)

In order to elucidate I must descend for a moment to that "I knew him when" level...but I trust the spirit will not be misinterpreted. I wrote the first (and just about the last) "fan letter" of my life to Lovecraft in the early months of 1933, when I was fifteen. As I recall it, the letter contained a specific request for information as to where I could purchase magazines containing his older stories that I had not read.

So you get a letter from a fifteen-year-old kid wanting to know about magazines...you tell him to try the second-hand bookstores, and forget it.

Not Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

I got back a complete typed list of all his published stories, together with an invitation to send for them in any order I chose. He would mail me the tear-sheets, and if they were unavailable, he'd send me the original manuscripts or carbons. And of course I must feel free to write again.

I felt free. The second letter mentioned my general interest in fantasy and some of the reading I'd done.

Lovecraft didn't rattle off a list of supplementary book titles. Instead, he sent me a handwritten complete list of every fantasy book in his own library---again with an invitation to borrow at will.

His later kindnesses in introducing me to the "gang", his interest, encouragement, critical readings of and suggestions for my early stories---all were typical of the man. His delicacy, unflinching tact and finesse in the critical approach were unsurpassed. Of course his letters were magnificent---but it is the spirit behind the letters that overshadows all else for me; the erudition, the profundities, the prodigality of his correspondence.

As to the psychological and philosophical motives which led to the creation of his stories, I am not qualified to speak. But in all that I have read, I have never heard one important consideration mentioned as a factor in Lovecraft's work...and to me it was the most human aspect. I refer to his enthusiasm for writing the weird tale. He loved to turn out a story, and through all his misgivings and self-recriminations and self-criticism it is impossible to read through a sheaf of his letters referring to work in progress without consciousness of that enthusiasm shining through.

Lovecraft wrote weird fiction because he enjoyed it; because it gave expression to escape-fantasies. In other words, he wrote for the same reason that most of us in the fantasy field write our yarns. The fact that he wrote much better stuff does not mean that his motives in doing so were any loftier, or that he was consciously attempting to build up a cosmological philosophy or create a new school of writing.

I don't know whether I'm coherent or not---I rather doubt it. But one point is important to me: having been one of the "Lovecraft circle" of correspondents, I cannot think of the man as primarily a genius, an eccentric, or a literary prodigy. To me, first and foremost, Howard Phillips Lovecraft was a hell of a swell guy.

From overseas Cpl. Paul Spenser comments:

"The Lord of R'lyeh" is excellent---I love this sort of stuff. Whether or not it sprang from the motivation indicated, the Cthulhu mythos does, I have always felt, represent a new and fascinating blend of the weird and the scientific. In touching upon Azathoth, the author skirts a relevant and intriguing thought. The idea behind Azathoth is that beneath the superficial order of the universe lies chaos. This is perhaps the ultimate in horror to most human minds, and is easily integrated into the author's thesis of Lovecraft's attempted reconciliation of rationalism and indeterminacy---and the suggestion of horror from the Outside. Incidentally, I am bothered by the existence of two Lovecraft entities which, however different, symbolize the same thought: Azathoth and Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos. Perhaps Lovecraft was vacillating between the two as the preferential allegory---or it may be that Azathoth represents the total truth of the cosmos, and Nyarlathotep merely approaches Azathoth as a limit; do you have any idea what I mean? On the other hand, this tends to confuse Azathoth with Yog-Sothoth. I'm getting a trifle dizzy at this point, and will abandon further discussion of this admirable article with parenthetical notation of the facts that I found "Dagon" disappointing, and that I have a higher opinion of collectivism than Mr. Onderdonk, who I strongly suspect to be Mr. Searles. (Although this allegation is most complimentary, I hasten to deny it; Mr. Onderdonk is a genuine entity. Those who might be interested in discussing "The Lord of R'lyeh" with him in more detail may address him at R.F.D., Delmar, N.Y. --ed.)

And in conclusion, we hear from the well-known London reader and collector R. George Hedhurst:

In going over the books of William Hope Hodgson in the British Museum Library I gathered further examples of the pitfalls that surround conscientious bibliographers. It appears that there are four more Hodgson editions to be added to the list that appeared in Fantasy Commentator #3. To wit: "Poems" and "The Dream of X", London: A.P.Watt & Son, 1912, 84pp (note: the volume contains also a sea story called "Mutiny," which---so far as I can tell---was not subsequently reprinted); Carnacki, the Ghost Finder and a Poem, London (no publisher given), 1910, 14pp (paper covers); The Ghost Pirates, A Chaunty, and Another Story, New York: Paul R. Reynolds, 1909, 68pp (note: this also is paper-covered; the other story is "The Thing Invisible: (Thomas Carnacki, the Famous Investigator of 'Real' Ghost Stories, Tells Here One of the Most Thrilling of his Experiences)"); and a cheap reprint of Captain Gault: London: Holden & Hardingham, 1921, 251pp.

I have further news which, I think, will please you; it concerns this fantastic price that is being extorted for copies of Scientifiction. In speaking to Walter Gillings recently, it transpired that he has a few hundred copies of numbers 3 to 7 of this publication, which he would be glad to dispose of to interested fans; he will swap two copies for one war-time issue of Astounding Stories, Famous Fantastic Mysteries or Fantastic Novels, and one copy for one of any other fantasy magazine sent him. The address is 15 Shere Road, Ilford, Essex, England. (Scientifiction is a printed fantasy magazine devoted to critical articles, book reviews, etc., and is unquestionably one of the best amateur publications to appear; its third issue, for example, contains the only interview with Olaf Stapledon extant. I strongly urge both readers and collectors to take advantage of this offer---especially in view of such unconscionably extortionistic prices as the \$3.50 quoted by "fan-dealer" Forrest J. Ackerman for a single copy of this periodical, which has a cover price of sixpence and which is still available from its publisher. Those who are averse to contributing to a 3500% profit would do well to transact business with Mr. Gillings himself. --ed.)