

FANTASY REVIEW

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SIXPENCE

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FESTIVAL

With its March issue the *American Weird Tales*, which pioneered the development of the supernatural story as a specialised form of popular fiction and was one of the first magazines to feature science-fantasy, celebrates a quarter-century of regular publication. During that time it has published thousands of stories, of which a very high percentage remain memorable to its devoted readers and are acceptable to-day to a bigger audience; for no other pulp magazine has contrived to maintain such a high literary standard as was imposed by the late Farnsworth Wright, who for sixteen years occupied its editorial chair.

Much of the material which has been and is still being used in anthologies of modern weird stories originally appeared in *Weird Tales*, which cradled dozens of fantasy-fiction's most popular writers, including H. P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Edmond Hamilton, C. L. Moore, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, and many others. It has also featured the work of writers whose names, though they became familiar enough to its followers, were seldom if ever encountered in other magazines: such as Arthur William Bernal, Greye La Spina, Robert H. Leitfred, Arlton Eadie, Nictzin Dyalhis, Mary Elizabeth Counselman, and the late Robert E. Howard. Authors whose interest was and is to write for the magazine which, in spite of garish covers, had gained a following of discriminating readers interested in "the bizarre and unusual" in fiction.

Since the first issue, dated March 1923, some 240 numbers of *Weird Tales* have appeared; it is now in its fortieth volume. Though many scattered collections have been jealously hoarded, only a half-dozen complete files are believed to exist, and early issues are of almost fabulous value. For most of its life it has been published monthly, but of recent years has appeared only bi-monthly, under the capable editorship of Dorothy McIlwraith, with Lamont Buchanan as Associate Editor. Though older readers, recalling its pre-war days, declare that its standards have deteriorated, it still nurtures new writers and artists and, in spite of radical changes, maintains a type of reader-interest that has always been peculiarly its own.

Overleaf, Arthur F. Hillman, who has watched it with a critical eye for many years, tells the story of *Weird Tales* from the beginning. On behalf of its readers, **FANTASY REVIEW** here tenders congratulations to this unique publication on its enviable record, with the wish that it will continue to delight its devotees for many years to come.



ARTHUR F. HILLMAN reviews

25 YEARS OF 'WEIRD TALES'

Early in 1923 a small, unpretentious magazine with the simple title of *Weird Tales* appeared among the detective and Western pulps cluttering American newstands. A drab cover pictured a young man rushing to the rescue of a girl encoiled in the arms of an octopus—or was it an octopus? A panel announced: "OOZE," An Extraordinary Novelette by Anthony M. Rud — The Tale of a Thousand Thrills. A subtitle described it as "The Unique Magazine," and those curious enough to look inside found that although there were no more pictures the contents page listed 22 short stories, three novelettes and a two-part novel. The titles were attractive: "The Dead Man's Tale," by Willard E. Hawkins; "The Closing Hand," by Farnsworth Wright; "The Thing of a Thousand Shapes," by Otis Adelbert Kline . . . Worth 25 cents of any jaded reader's money.

In "The Eyrie" (a department which still survives), Editor Edwin Baird claimed the magazine "a sensational variation from the established rules that govern magazine publishing," since it would feature the sort of stories

other publications tabooed. Said an introduction elsewhere: "Tales of horror—or 'gooseflesh' stories—are commonly shunned by magazine editors. They believe the public doesn't want this sort of fiction. We believe there are . . . perhaps hundreds of thousands of intelligent readers who really enjoy 'gooseflesh' stories. Hence *Weird Tales*." It promised "fantastic, extraordinary, grotesque stories, stories of strange and bizarre adventure . . . that will startle and amaze you."

Though, like all new magazines, *Weird Tales* had its teething troubles, it established a sufficient following to appear monthly and, after a couple of issues, in a larger size. The change proved too ambitious, however, and it soon reverted to its original format. Its stories in those early days were, actually, much of a hotch-potch, amateurish efforts interlarded with proved favourites by such as Edgar Allan Poe and Ambrose Bierce. But with the advent of H. P. Lovecraft and Seabury Quinn, with "Dagon" and "The Phantom Farmhouse," in the October issue, began the regime of modern writers of the macabre who really understood the field which *Weird Tales* settled down to develop in earnest.

Lovecraft, a literary recluse with a rare gift of imagination, steeped in the traditions of the supernatural story, had already written many such tales. But he had never sought a market for them, and it was only under the persuasion of his few friends that he submitted his manuscripts to this new magazine which, he soon realised, provided opportunity for his peculiar talents. His enthusiastic following, which has multiplied since his death, has reason to be grateful for the early encouragement he received from *Weird Tales*, which found him a valuable acquisition as the years passed and his stories became an almost essential feature of the magazine.

Towards the end of '24, Farnsworth Wright, a former Chicago news reporter and music critic, who had helped Edwin Baird in various ways, took his place in the editor's chair. He soon became the supreme arbiter in the selection of material, and his sound

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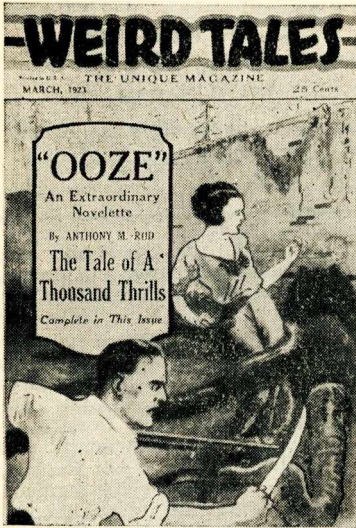
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American Correspondents: David Kishi (New York), Forrest J. Ackerman (Hollywood), Sam Moskowitz (Newark, N.J.), Joseph B. Baker (Chicago).



The first issue.

judgment and painstaking effort in the encouragement of contributors brought the steady improvement of the magazine, which had been taken over by new publishers. Gradually the standard was raised; writers who could not make the grade were eliminated, and others who were destined to rank among the most popular exponents of the macabre arose to take their places. It became apparent that, in spite of its being "just a pulp," **Weird Tales** was intent on accentuating literate values and eschewing crude hackwork. Among those who rallied to Wright's assistance and stood the test of his severe adjudication were Frank Belknap Long, Henry S. Whitehead, and Frank Owen, whose beautiful Chinese pastels reached a new height in "The Wind that Tramps the World" (April '25).

A significant trend in '26 was the broadening of the magazine's scope to include science fiction. Edmond Hamilton, who had made an auspicious start with his horror tale "The Monster God of Mamurth" (Aug. '26), began a series of interplanetary stories which were to become a regular feature and lead to the founding of the "Interstellar Patrol." In the pure macabre vein, Seabury Quinn's series concerning Jules de Grandin, psychic investigator, proved a firm favourite which never grew less.

The next year was notable for the high standard of Everil Worrell's eerie offerings in "Leonora" (Jan. '27) and "The Canal" (Dec. '27); and for Lovecraft's "The Horror at Red Hook" (Jan. '27), which gave the first indication of the now-famous myth pattern on which so many of his stories are based. Outlined more clearly in "The Call of Cthulhu" (Feb. '28), the Cthulhu Mythos was later borrowed and developed by several younger writers whom he sponsored.

Admirers of Robert E. Howard will recall that in '29 came his fine stories of King Kull, "The Shadow Kingdom" (Aug.) and "The Mirror of Tuzun Thule" (Sept.) His stirring style was also evident in the tales of Solomon Kane and his novel of the mysterious despot "Skull-Face" (Oct.). The year that followed saw Clark Ashton Smith assume his place in the forefront of fantasy writing. With his remarkable store of words, his ability to weave them well, and his vivid imaginative sense, he produced stories of an exotic cast which few others have equalled. "The End of the Story" (May '30) started a cycle of legends of haunted Averaigne whose colourful imagery remains in the mind, and from these he branched into interplanetary settings of a unique order. "The Vaults of Yoh Vombis" (May '32) is typical of his science fiction work.

Weird Tales suffered its first serious loss in '32, when Henry S. Whitehead died. His tales of West Indian voodoo and other terrors were moulded into a form which made them miniature works of art. But Quinn, Lovecraft, Long, Hamilton and Howard continued to produce good work at this time. Long's bizarre novel, "The Horror from the Hills" (Jan. '31), was a tour de force that firmly established him, and Howard's new series of tales of Conan the Barbarian infused fire into the veins of all those who followed his exploits.

The period '33-34 was probably the finest in the whole of **Weird Tales'** career. The magazine had enlarged in size and content, and although heated arguments arose as to whether the cover nudes of Mrs. Brundage were appropriate to such a reader-appeal as had now been achieved, it was generally conceded that they had beauty and delicacy. Inside could be found the best work of Howard, Smith, Quinn and Hamilton, with Lovecraft making rare

but notable contributions. But the period is most important for the rise of Carl Jacobi, beginning with "Revelations in Black" (April '33), and C. L. Moore, whose eerie tale of a Martian monstrosity, "Shambleau" (Nov. '33), quickly placed her in the front rank. The later adventures of Northwest Smith brought him a host of followers, and his creator enhanced her reputation with another series built around Jirel of Joiry, a warlike maid whose outlandish experiences began with "The Black God's Kiss" (Oct. '34).

A disturbing note was sounded in '35 when, with three science fiction magazines competing for his readers' attention, Wright was tempted to let down his barriers a trifle and introduce a few stories which were primarily detective novels. The howl that ensued drove him back to his former policy, but experienced readers sensed that at long last the boggy of commercialism had reared its ugly head. For the next five years Wright was valiantly on the defensive. Howard died in '36, and Lovecraft a year later, but in spite of these hard losses the standard was still high. Among the new writers who came forward was Robert Bloch, who in "The Shambler from the Stars" (Sept. '35) and other short pieces achieved fair imitations of Lovecraftian legendry. Henry Kuttner, in "The Graveyard Rats" (Mar. '36), also gave promise of finer things to come; while Thorp McClusky, August Derleth, Thomas P. Kelly and Earl Pierce Jnr. took increasing part in successive issues.

The introduction of Virgil Finlay's illustrations put fresh impetus into the magazine's attractions, but by 1940 Wright was finding increasing difficulty in maintaining the rigorous standards he had upheld for so long. Departmental affairs, the pressure of outside influences and his own ill-health at length proved too great a burden, and led to his resignation. His death, which followed within a few months, was a severe blow to fantasy literature and marked the end of an epoch whose like may never be seen again.

Weird Tales went on, but disintegration had settled in. After having swollen to 160 pages and cut its price to 15 cents, the magazine changed to bi-monthly publication; Brundage and Finlay vanished from it, leaving more scope for Hannes Bok's no less fascinat-

In The Next Issue

An interview with
EDWARD E. SMITH, Ph.D.,

who tells how he wrote the famous "Skylark" stories and the "Lensman" series.

ing artwork. Smith, Owen and other old contributors appeared but seldom, while the inspirational spark of Quinn and Hamilton flickered sullenly. The years '41-42 saw, however, a revival of interest in Lovecraft, with the publication of his novel, "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward" (May-Jul. '41), unearthed by his understudy August Derleth, and of "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" (Jan. '42), and the "Herbert West: Reanimator" series. They were distinguished, also, for a broadening of the trend of macabre humour; Nelson S. Bond and Robert Bloch achieving absurdities with the supernatural, particularly the latter's "Nursemaid to Nightmares" (Nov. '42), which must have set many a ghoul dancing with rage.

Then, in '43, a nova flared in the universe of fantasy-fiction. Ray Bradbury had arrived, and his fresh conceptions and sparkling prose swept like a breeze down the dusty corridors of the weird. Here was eeriness up-to-date, the macabre in ultra-modern dress! Tales like "The Wind" (Mar. '43) and "The Lake" (May '44) were stepping-stones into a world of chromium-plated horror. Unfortunately, his fellow contributors limped painfully behind him and emphasised the sorry lack of **Weird Tales'** once brilliant roster.

The period since '44 has been redeemable for three things: the illustrations of Dolgov, deserving of better stories; the transition of Bradbury's style to the status of the "slick" magazines, and the excellence of Manly Wade Wellman's John Thunstone episodes. But all have been submerged in a sea of mediocrity through which, now and again, runs a tremor suggestive of better things. Whether the ancient barque **Weird Tales** will reach a better haven than the one it left, only the future can decide. For the men who filled it with strange cargoes have gone, and perhaps the spirit of the ship has gone with them.

Walter Gillings' FANTASIA

Groff Conklin's second anthology, "A Treasury of Science Fiction," due next month from Crown Publishers, with 30 gems by Weinbaum, Merritt, Coblenz, Hamilton, C. L. Moore, de Camp, del Rey, John Beynon Harris and others. Also in the making: s-f collection for high schoolboys . . . Simon & Schuster will re-publish A. E. van Vogt's "Slan!" and "Weapon Makers" stories following novel version of "World of Null-A," to which he's writing sequel . . . New British author, Peter Phillips, will make U.S. debut in **Weird Tales** . . . After four years inactivity, Australian fantasy fans revived Futurian Society of Sydney, propose to call themselves "Auslans" . . . Roger P. Graham (Rog Phillips) doing column for fans in **Amazing** . . . Liliith Lorraine, former science fiction writer, poetess-publisher of **Different**, prophesies dawn of Matriarchal Age—a world of women without war . . .

Observer film critic C. A. Lejeune dedicated Xmas column to "fine old friend" Arthur Machen, of whom **Times** obituary said: "He fished perhaps in a small pool, but his line went deep." . . . John Bouverie in **News-Chronicle**: "Evaluating Machen's work is not too easy just now. Our times don't foster an ardour for the romantic and mystical. Twenty years ago a typical Machen first edition such as 'The Fantastic Tale' fetched £30 to £40. £6 would buy it now" . . . Baltimore, celebrating its 150th anniversary, voted Edgar Allan Poe third in list of great citizens . . . Eric Ashby, in "A Scientist in Russia" (**Pelican**: 1/-), notes that Union of Soviet Writers has section of Scientific Imaginative Literature . . .

SLANS FOR SALVAGE

Doubt had nine pages on Flying Saucers—"grand series of Fortean phenomena"—collated 389 eye-witness reports, then lost count . . . One member informed Society 'airships' manned by Atlanteans' descendants training for 'salvage work necessary in 1960. Certain persons . . . will be collected, placed in safe keeping for start of new civilisation' . . . Rocketeer P. E. Cleator discoursing in **BIS Journal** on cranks who pester him re "Messages from Mars in Morse" . . . Prof. A. M. Low gave New York **Sunday Mirror** readers grim picture of 20-year atomic Armageddon, with mole tanks, cosmic ray rockets, artificial satellites, projects to plunge world in darkness and alter Earth's tilt to produce new Ice Age . . . Christmas number of **French V** featured Jacques Spitz fantasy of festivities on man-made moon in 2047 . . . Fourth issue of **Future** depicted Britain in 1955, with articles, diagrams, photographs . . .

Raymond ("Things to Come") Massey starred in Broadway play by Donald Ogden Stewart, "How I Wonder," in which astronomer is visited by inhabitant of new planet he discovers—before atomic power blows it up . . . "Potter's Notch," by Michael Robinson, presented at Globe Theatre, poses problem of census-taker in New England village where dead mix with the living . . . Joseph Conrad's "The Inn of the Three Witches" dramatised on radio . . . J. M. Walsh's latest thriller, "Once in Tiger Bay" (**Collins**: 8/6) featured in Ernest Dudley's "Armchair Detective" programme . . .

MRS. LEIGH BRACKETT-HAMILTON

Retailing life-story in U.S. fanmag, **Fanscient**, Edmond Hamilton, writer of 200 fantasies in 23 years, revealed his marriage to Leigh Brackett, mistress of space-opera: "Our two typewriters now rattle in the same apartment" . . . Uniformed fan Capt. K. F. Slater running mimomag, titled **Operation Fantast** as mouthpiece of British Fantasy Library's Liaison Dept. . . . "Slaves of Ijax," by John Russell Fearn (**Kaner**: 1/-), tells of 28th century plot to blow up Earth from Moon . . . Thomas P. Kelly's **Weird Tales** serial, "I Found Cleopatra," reprinted in Canada as "thrilling novel," on sale here at 9d. . . "The School in Space," by Reginald Browne (**Swan**: 5/-), is story of schoolboys shanghaied to Venus . . . "Nights of the Round Table," collection of horror tales by Margery Lawrence, available in Readers' Library . . .

Prof. J. B. S. Haldane on "God and Mr. C. S. Lewis" in **Rationalist Annual** (**Watts**: 2/6) . . . And Mr. Lewis writes introductory memoir for "Essays Presented to Charles Williams" (**Oxford**: 12/6), compiled by literary friends as tribute to his memory . . . From panegyric to H. P. Lovecraft by Providence, Rhode Island, resident who knew him, sent to **Thrilling Wonder**: "His hands were ice-cold. He despised sunlight, adored utter darkness. He wrote his best horror tales after midnight" . . . Paging Mr. Chandler! **New Statesman's** "Critic" wants to "ensure the falsity of the disagreeable suggestion that if mankind commits suicide it is the race of rats that would succeed to our inheritance as lords of creation" . . .

The Fantasy Film

PROPHECIES IN CELLULOID

By Frank Edward Arnold

Few followers of science-fantasy are unfamiliar with the theme that their favourite literature forms, as it were, a body of modern mythology, with its superhuman heroes and its sagas of the future. Those of us who have been devotees since pre-war days are also familiar at least with the titles of the many films which have presented in celluloid the sort of imaginative excesses our science-fiction writers so often indulge in: particularly the old German silent films, such as "Metropolis" and "The Girl in the Moon." Those who did not actually see them will have heard of them, as unforgettable experiences in the life of every true fantasy fan.

It is interesting, now, to find Dr. Siegfried Kracauer, a former editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, regarding these films as representing a cinematic brand of prophetic mythology, which he does in a fascinating survey of the German cinema in its heyday*. From 1913, dawn of the first Great War, until '33 when the Hitler regime began, the German film formed a powerful mythos drawn from the very subconscious of its people, expressing their hopes, fears, visions, ambitions, despairs and desires over the fluctuating history of twenty years. That at any rate, is his theory, and he produces an impressive weight of evidence to support it.

Dr. Kracauer has been an American citizen for some years, but he is German-born; he was a newspaper editor and art reviewer throughout the period he describes, and appears to have seen almost every German film ever made. He analyses about a hundred films, many of them internationally famous, in minute detail, dealing with their plots, their characters, their psychological and sociological implications.

His chief thesis is this: that after 1920, when the post-war world took shape in Germany and film-making got into its stride, the various film-makers, who were serious artists

*From *Caligari to Hitler*, by Siegfried Kracauer. Princeton University Press, \$5.00.

drawing their material from contemporary life, envisioned the world as a helpless thing threatened by an insane tyranny on one hand and wild chaos on the other. The people were undecided either way; they were fascinated by visions of both tyranny and chaos, and in moods of fear they turned to whimsical day-dreams. Screen dramas prophesied the coming of some insane tyrant who would dominate the world with fear before plunging it into a final doom. The prophesies piled up, until with the advent of Hitler the monstrous villains of the early silent films—the Caligaris and Mabuses, the Golems and the rest—stepped right out of the screen and walked about the world in real life, committing hideous crimes in actuality.

When people and artists are in such a condition of mind, it is inevitable that fantasy becomes the staple diet of drama. This state of affairs was foreseen back in the comparatively stable reign of the Kaiser.

The first German film of real importance was Paul Wegener's "The Student of Prague," made as long ago as 1913. It was re-made ten years later, and the original film is lost. It is the story of a student who makes a pact with a sorcerer for immense wealth and a titled wife in return for—his reflection in the mirror. On signing the compact, the reflection steps out of the mirror and becomes an independent creature. The man gets his wealth and wife, but the reflection kicks up hell's delight in the usual Jekyll-and-Hyde fashion, until in the end he stands before the mirror and puts a bullet through the reflection, so killing himself.

A second film by Wegener was "The Golem," first made in '15. This monster is a clay statue brought to life by a magic sign, and it is a perfectly good, obedient robot until, as you might expect, it falls in love with the master's daughter. Everyone is horrified, not least the Golem itself, realising it is of monstrous origin; and so it runs amok, as monsters always do.

A more ambitious melodrama, almost unknown to the English filmgoer, was

"Homunculus," a thriller-serial which was very successful in Germany during the first war. As the title suggests, it is a Frankenstein story of a man from the test-tube; a handsome and brilliantly intelligent creature. But, like the Golem, he has trouble with women—and runs amok. He then wanders the earth like an outcast, though often received in society with delight—until people hear he is Homunculus, the man without a soul. In a distant country he becomes a dictator; in secret, he rouses the masses in rebellion against himself, whereupon he crushes them with ruthless cruelty. Finally he wanders up a mountain in the midst of a storm, and is finished off by a thunderbolt.

In '20 came the famous "Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," tale of a fairground hypnotist who keeps a performing somnambulist in a coffin, sending him out on murder frolics at dead of night. The film was made memorable by the bizarre "expressionistic" settings then fashionable in contemporary art. (Expressionism itself, says Dr. Kracauer, was an aspect of prophecy.) The film still exists, and is frequently revived by film societies.

Many films after this followed a crypto-fantasy pattern, but it was not until '27 that a piece of genuine futuristic prophecy appeared—the celebrated "Metropolis." Adapted by Fritz Lang from the novelette by his wife, Thea von Harbou, it tells of one Freder, son of the tyrannical capitalist who rules Metropolis—a soaring city that Lang conceived when he first glimpsed the rising, expanding New York of Calvin Coolidge and his "prosperity." Freder joins the workers who slave in the city's bowels, and falls in love with the girl preacher Maria who consoles them in their misery. The mystic theme in the story, that the heart must be the mediator between brain and hand, appears to Dr. Kracauer to have proved useful for Josef Goebbels a few years later.

"The Girl in the Moon" was another Lang-von Harbou collaboration. Made with the help of the German rocket societies of the time, it was a genuine attempt to construct this kind of story, though "the lunar landscape smelled distinctly of Ufa's Neubabelsberg studios." The film was shown for about one week in London in '29, before it was submerged by the talkies. A great pity, for it is the only real interplanetary film yet made.

Contemporary with it was another Homunculus film, "Alraune," being a woman concocted in a test-tube. Daughter of a hanged criminal and a prostitute, she turns out a fascinating super-vamp who ruins everybody she meets, finally killing herself off. It was shorter than the earlier film and less spectacular.

Probably much better than any of these films was 'Secrets of the Soul,' a psychological drama, made ten or fifteen years before the boom in this kind of thing set in. It opened with a shot of Professor Freud in his study, benignly nodding his approval of the film. A man suffers a sudden shock which gives him an inexplicable fear of knives, razors and other lethal ironmongery. He has curious nightmares which show him climbing ladders in empty space and falling off invisible precipices into bottomless depths. There is also an urge to murder his loved and loving wife. A psycho-analytical cure is neatly effected, and everything ends normally and happily. This great film also has been completely lost, and there seem to be few people beside myself who remember seeing it.

Dr. Kracauer makes no mention of "F.P.1," a fine flying film dealing with a floating aerodrome in mid-Atlantic. It was adapted from the novel by Kurt (Robert) Siodmak, and an English version was made with German collaboration. This was in '32, just before the Hitler regime commenced. About the same time there were still-pictures in English film magazines of an interesting piece called "Gold," dealing with artificial manufacture of the metal; but the film, if completed at all, was never shown in Britain.

All this is the barest outline of the amazing story Dr. Kracauer presents, which must appeal to all students of the fantasy medium, and which is all the more astounding for its being true and historic.

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NIGEL LINDSAY & KENNETH SLATER

giving reviews of current issues and news of stories to come

AMONG THE MAGAZINES

Good news this month for our booksy friends. **Fantastic Novels**, war-time companion of **Famous Fantastic Mysteries**, has been revived after seven years' suspension, and will feature reprints from the old Munsey magazines. Following a surprise announcement by Editor Mary Gnaedinger, the first of the new, bi-monthly issues appeared last month, dated March '48, with A. Merritt's famous "The Ship of Ishtar," scheduled to appear in **FFM** just before that magazine changed hands. Illustrations are by Virgil Finlay.

Appearing originally in July '40, **FN** saw only five issues before it was combined with **FFM** in June '41. The two will now appear alternately. In addition to C. S. Forrester's "The Peacemaker," the current (Feb.) **Famous Fantastic** has a Murray Leinster short, "Planet of Sand," and a nice study in child terror by August Derleth, "The Lonesome Place." Next issue comes Augusta Groner's "City of the Dead."

Since we previewed the first issue of **Fantasy Book**, four months ago, we've been able to digest it thoroughly. It finally turned up as a large-size, 42-page job with an eye-catching cover in two colours by Milo, showing a pink lady (the most curvacious we've seen for many moons) and a shadowy thing looking suspiciously like a BEM. The interiors, by Neil Austin, Charles McNutt and Robert K. Murphy, are not so impressive, however.

Editor Garret Ford declares a liberal story policy: fantasy, science and weird fiction will be used as long as it is "different." Andrew North's novelette, "People of the Crater," has a Merritty atmosphere, but no more than that. Among the shorts, "Black Lotus" is in Robert Bloch's best style; "Strange Alliance," by Bryce Walton, is a vampire tale told from the viewpoint of the vampire; Weaver Wright's "Micro-Man" is the same story as appeared in **New Worlds** under a different by-line, and van Vogt's "Cataaaaa" is an exquisite little piece which might have derived from "The Smile of the Sphinx."

Sorry, but we were misled about a Festus Pragnell serial, which is miss-

ing; though there's to be a story by "an English author" in the next issue, among others by van Vogt, Basil Wells and Gene Hunter.

The BEM (a giant fly, for a change) is back on the cover of February **Thrilling Wonder**, with the Bergey beaut appearing tentatively in the middle distance. In addition to the stories we mentioned last issue, there's another gadget piece by Margaret St. Clair, "The Dobridust," and "The Long Way Back," a short with a Martian setting by one John Barrett. Coming up in April is a novel of intrigue in the post-atomic world by veteran Arthur Leo Zagat, "The Faceless Men." Arthur J. Burks, one-time million-words-a-year man, will also be back with a microcosmic tale, "Thieves of Time," and Frank B. Long, Carl Jacobi and George O. Smith will provide a robot tale, an interplanetary war story and a piece called "A Dog's Life," respectively.

Hannes Bok's "The Blue Flamingo," in January **Startling**, is an excellent fantasy with the true Merritt touch, indicating he is the right man in the right place when it comes to completing those unfinished manuscripts. Ed. Hamilton's "Conquest of Two Worlds," latest in the Hall of Fame gallery, was a good story in '32 and still is now; it doesn't show its age like most of these old-timers. Mrs. St. Clair gives us more of the sort of humour we like in another "Oona" episode; "Ultra Evolution," by Polton Cross, is a not very successful blending of old ideas, and a short-short, "Guaranteed," by E. Everett Evans completes the issue. Leading the next will be "One of Three," a Wesley Long time-tale, with Weinbaum's "Brink of Infinity" as the classic reprint.

In February **Amazing**, Editor Palmer apologises for sacrificing quantity for quality . . . There are only three stories, most of the issue being occupied by "Prometheus II," by S. J. Byrne, incorporating the Shaver Mystery, the city of Agharathi, the King of the World and the Elder Gods of Space—plus a plot which "staggers the imagination." The others are "Strictly

from Mars," a novelette by Robert Bloch, and a short Berkeley Livingstone fantasy concerning "The Phantom Hands." Next issue brings yet another Shaver novel, "Gods of Venus," to the tune of 87,000 words, and in April RAP threatens to "knock you right over" by proving "part" of the Mystery. Don't say we didn't warn you.

Meanwhile, we've been enjoying the January number, especially Chester S. Geier's "Flight of the Starling," an interesting slant on the faster-than-light theme. "Hate," by Rog Phillips, a mixture of science and black magic, poses the negation of the Earth and creation of a new one by thought-materialisation. "The Rikits of Mars" is better than usual for Don Wilcox; quite amusing in parts. "The Fire Trail," by Oge-Make, is the same as in January **Fantastic Adventures**—the supposedly true story of an ancient Red Indian rite with a message for mankind that ties in with Shaver's moralising.

Best in this issue is William P. McGivern's "Orders for Willie Weston," a fantasy about a soldier who joins the army of the dead with a nice touch of pathos. H. B. Hickey's "The Drums of Murd" is science fiction of the '30's, but a refreshing change from the usual **Fantastic** stuff. There's a novelette by Robert Moore Williams, "The Isle of Doom," with a new life-form, a crooked scientist, a hero and a girl, and a neat little item by the De Courcys about a violinist whose music wasn't of his own making. The lead story, "Secret of the Serpent," we put last intentionally—it's Wilcox at his worst.

We don't mention **Planet Stories** often enough. Spring '48 issue features "The Outcasts of Solar Three," a sequel to "Beyond the Yellow Fog," by Emmett McDowell; "Design for Doomsday," by Bryce Walton, and several others which are above the general space-opera level, except for Henry Guth's "Planet in Reverse," which is well-dressed tripe.

February **Astounding** concludes the E. E. Smith epic, which we have only just begun to disentangle; also featured is a Ted Sturgeon story, "There is No Defence"—not just another atom-bomb warning. But there's another Alejandro cover, and a sequel to Jack Williamson's "With Folded Hands" is promised for next issue. At the moment we're engaged on the January issue, with the much-requested sequel to Isaac Asimov's "The Mule" which is also the story of the Second Foundation, titled "Now

You See It . . ." Supporting shorts are "The Helping Hand," by Burt MacFayden, and "Advent," by William Bade.

Weird Tales goes to town on its 25th birthday (March issue) with novelettes by Ed. Hamilton and Allison V. Harding; short stories by Sturgeon, Bradbury, Quinn, Wellman, Bloch, Derleth, Jacobi, Smith (C. A.), and English stalwarts Blackwood and Wakefield. Lovecraft, fittingly, provides the verse. Hamilton's is a science fiction piece on the branches-of-time theme, "The Might-Have-Been." If you've moved house recently, Sturgeon's story of "The Professor's Teddy Bear," which has to do with metempsychosis, will appeal particularly. Old contributors Quinn and Derleth reminisce in "The Eyrie," by way of celebrating the occasion.

If you're a collector, you might like to invest a shilling in the second (undated, unnumbered) issue of the British **Strange Adventures**, which has a cover labelled "Metaphysic Fiction—Queer—Supernatural." There is only one story within: "The Green Dimension," by N. Wesley Firth, in which a mad scientist revenges himself on his fellows by importing wild creatures from thither. Another **Futuristic Stories** has also appeared at the same price, frankly announcing its contents as science fiction and featuring "Dark Asteroid," by Rice Ackman, which continues the adventures of the Space Hobo amid the metal men of Neptune. Said metal men are mixing it with our hero on the cover, in the best traditions of Mr. Hamilton.

GILLINGS DIRECTS WRITER'S COURSE

Walter Gillings, Editor **Fantasy Review**, has been appointed Director of Studies of the ABC Correspondence Schools, belonging to Hutchinson's the publishers. He is now supervising the well-known course in journalism and short-story writing previously conducted by Fleur McKitterick, former editor **The Writer**.

Mr. Gillings' varied experience of both newspaper and magazine fields, his long record of coaching new writers as editor of **Tales of Wonder** and **Fantasy**, and his contacts with authors, editors and publishers here and abroad, eminently qualify him for this important post. He will continue to edit the **Review**.

Book Reviews

Out of the Archives

EDISON'S CONQUEST OF MARS, by Garrett P. Serviss. Carcosa House, Los-Angeles. \$3.50

Reviewed by **Thomas Sheridan**

This is the first production of a new publishing house with the avowed intention of resurrecting fantasy "classics" of specially rare vintage and of particularly interest to the collector. In this instance they have us all agog; for the newspaper serial from which the book was compiled has the rarity-value which comes of its having lain dormant in the Washington Library of Congress for half a century, secure from the ravishment of fantasy's ardent fans until its recent discovery.

However, it has not remained entirely obscure, being known at least by its title among lovers of scientification since the days when readers of the early **Amazing Stories**, regaled by the reprinting of other Serviss works,* pleaded in vain for this one. Evidently Mr. C. A. Brandt, who was then helping Mr. Gernsback skim the cream of existing science fiction, did not know where it was to be found—that it had, in fact, appeared in the ephemeral **New York Evening Journal** way back in '98, and now lay buried in musty files. Unless he contrived to unearth it and, reading it, decided to let it rest, for the same reasons that we found it difficult to accept as more than of historical interest. Though we doubt that he did, for it is no less bearable than Mr. Ursin's "Station X," which delighted us at the time and is not half so hoary.

But this is, now, hardly the sort of thing which can be read and enjoyed by the average reader for its intrinsic qualities of story-interest or writing technique, or even for its idea-content, which is remarkable only for the fact that it was written so long ago. It must

*"The Moon Metal," reprinted from **All-Story** (1905), and more recently revived by **Famous Fantastic Mysteries**; "A Columbus of Space" (**All-Story**, '09); "The Second Deluge" (**Cavalier**, '11), also reprinted in **Amazing Quarterly**. These stories have also been presented in book form. Other magazine pieces which have never been reprinted are "The Sky Pirate" (**Scrap Book**, '09) and "The Moon Maiden" (**Argosy**, '15).

indeed have been sensational in that day and age, in spite of its deriving inspiration from Mr. Wells's "War of the Worlds," which had just been serialised in the American **Cosmopolitan** magazine, to which Serviss was a regular contributor. All the evidence is, in fact, that he wrote the story, for publication as fast as he penned it, at the express behest of the **Journal**, in an attempt to exploit the public interest engendered in Mars and the Martians.



Martian: genus Serviss

But while it is by way of being a sequel to the Wellisian classic, dealing with a second Martian invasion attempt and how it was repelled, Professor Serviss' Martians are not those of Mr. Wells; and although it has greater imaginative scope, it has much less of the plausibility and genuine story-value which have made "The War of the Worlds" so universally popular. Since it was actually the first essay into fiction writing of the already noted astronomer, what more can we expect than that it should bear all the earmarks of "legitimatised sensationalism presented at the psychological moment"?

The definition—and the inference—is that of the New York fantasy litterateur, Dr. A. Langley Searles, who has garnished the book with an Introduction on its author and his work which is no less interesting, and certainly better written, than the story itself; while his wife Elizabeth has furnished a five-page bibliography of Serviss' magazine articles and books of popular scientific interest, which would appear to have been as appealing for their imaginative content as his—to us—more familiar fiction.

Although, as an astronomer, Garrett Putnam Serviss was internationally renowned (we were wont to regard him as the American Flammarion), it was news to us that in his early years he was a working journalist, having chosen to start as a reporter on the New York **Tribune** instead of practising law. Thence he rose to an editorial post on the **Sun**, to which one fancies he gravitated naturally, since it was that paper which organised the famous Moon Hoax. So he began to write anonymous pieces on astronomy, which became so popular that he was inspired to take up lecturing on scientific topics. In this he met with such success that, in 1892, he abandoned newspaperdom to tour the country giving the "Urania Lectures" sponsored by Andrew Carnegie; but he continued to produce articles and books in a constant stream until his death in 1929.

This first of his half-dozen pieces of science fiction, if less successful than those which have not remained in hiding, claims our attention as one of the earliest works to employ the interplanetary theme, with battles between spaceships, vacuum-suits, atomic disintegrators, and all the other appurtenances which were to become the stock-in-trade of later writers. And if there is a certain mediocrity in the writing, and a positive naivete about the dialogue, we can excuse these faults as adding to its charm as a curio. As for the plot, we may have met it before, but we are prepared to believe we have it here in the original.

When a repetition of the flashes which heralded the first (Wellsian) visitation are observed on Mars, Earth's scientists, headed by Mr. Thomas A. Edison, resolve to go out to meet the invaders without more ado than is necessary to raise the wind for an ex-

pedition into space. So the nations of the world pool their resources and the scientists their inventive capacities (though there is little left for the rest of the Brains Trust after Mr. Edison, Lord Kelvin and Herr Roentgen have got cracking), and the attack on Mars is launched with a fleet of space-ships armed with disintegrators—weapons more deadly than were wielded by the monsters who found our germs too much for their delicate systems.

But our heroes do not engage and defeat Professor Serviss' more human Martians without some interesting preliminaries involving a landing on the Moon, the capture of the interplanetary squadron by a comet (which brings it back to Earth, to make a fresh start), and another landing on an asteroid which is being used as an outpost by the enemy. This provides excuse for opening the ball, after which, scarred but triumphant, the Earth-men move on to make war on a planet which wreaths itself in cloud to frustrate their attacks. In spite of which they land, learn its secrets, and subdue it by striking a mortal blow at its canal system, incidentally rescuing a lady whose ancestors were brought from Earth by the Martians on a previous visit—when, believe it or not, they built the Pyramids and Sphinx!

To produce this ancient item in modern binding, the publishers extracted it from the newspaper files by photo-copying, complete with illustrations which a new artist, Bernard Manley, Jnr., has redrawn in what we presume is a similar style. But, acceptable as they are to the connoisseur for their quaintness, we feel this adherence to the fetish of originality was a mistake; for they are ugly things, and give the book an aspect of juvenility which might well have been avoided.

Mr. Derleth to the Rescue

THE SLEEPING AND THE DEAD: 30 Uncanny Tales, edited by August Derleth. Pellegrini, Chicago. \$3.75.

Reviewed by **Arthur F. Hillman**

In this new collection, started by Stephen Grendon and subsequently taken over by the indefatigable Mr. Derleth, is seen the same guiding hand that gave us the three weird story anthologies which came from the house of Rinehart. Mr. Derleth's greatest

asset as an anthologist is not the flair which he undoubtedly has for picking excellent material; for there are many with such a knack. Rather, it is the boldness with which he has explored further and further afield for his selections, as the result of which much brilliant work has been duly recognised.

Ten of the pieces comprising this bulky volume have never before been published in book form, and most of the

remainder have been unavailable for too long. Altogether, the book is something of a mixture, with little attempt to inject order or suitability among its varied contents; the thirty stories jostle each other like new recruits on the parade ground, each eyeing the other askance. But time can reveal the merits of the most awkward bunch of rookies; and their comparative newness will not for long obscure the fact that here is an assembly of really first-class tales chosen with rare astuteness.

Once more there is the inevitable deference to H. P. Lovecraft; not only in the inclusion of "The Dreams in the Witch-House," but in other pieces, such as Hazel Heald's "Out of the Eons" and John M. Leahy's "In Amundsen's Tent," which bear the imprint and influence of the famed recluse of Providence. There are also from the pages of **Weird Tales** such noteworthy stories as "The Double Shadow," by Clark Ashton Smith, "The Shadows," by Henry S. Whitehead and "The Ocean Leech," by Frank Belknap Long.

To dispel once and for all any charge of mustiness, Mr. Derleth has also included some really modern macabre

pieces, like Robert Bloch's "One Way to Mars" and Ray Bradbury's "The Jar." To leaven the mixture he has added a few old favourites, of which one might name "A View from a Hill," by M. R. James, or Arthur Machen's "Out of the Picture," as a typical example. But even these are not too familiar compared with the titles one usually encounters in a book of this character; for the compiler has long since resolved not to fall into the trap of contemptuous familiarity, and for this alone he deserves our thanks.

Two items might be singled out for special attention, not because they are better than the rest, but because of their unusual features. Henry Kuttner's "Masquerade" not only destroys Mr. Derleth's argument that one cannot effectively weld together the humorous and the weird, but delivers a high-powered punch in its final revelation. And Everil Worrell's "The Canal" is a vampire tale which is right out of the groove of its numerous forebears. Already reputable among the readers of **Weird Tales**, its appearance here should bring some of the notice its little-known author merits.

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. . . And Other Expositions

THE GREAT FOG and Other Weird Tales by Gerald Heard. Cassell, London. 8/6.

Reviewed by **John Beynon**

This is a book which has already seen at least two different editions* in the U.S.A., where the author has adopted the name of H. F. Heard and apparently endeared himself to our American friends. Had he attempted, within the scope allowed by 234 pages, to provide something for every type of fantasy reader, he could scarcely have been more comprehensive.

In his dedication he himself refers to this collection as 'samples and simples,' and such they are of ingenuity, supposition and contrivance. Whether he expounds a scientific calamity, an uncomfortable experiment, a mystic experience or—most surprising where the heat of competition is more intense—a new technique of murder, he should not be missed. Here is versatility of interest backed by wide knowledge, careful consideration and accomplished writing to hold the attention—troubled only by a slight uncertainty as to what it is he is writing.

Criticism of matter for what it is not in general as unrewarding as

* Originally published under the above title by Vanguard, New York, in '44, and reprinted as **Weird Tales of Terror and Detection** by Sun Dial, New York, in '46.

comparing incomparables, and no less productive of cross-purposed red herrings. Yet it is possible to feel justified in questioning whether 'tales' is an entirely apt description of pieces that break up at about 80 per cent. ingenious exposition and 20 per cent. story. From a less accomplished source the point might be passed, but it is disappointing to find nine interesting essays and inventions in such confident prose hung upon such skeletons of narrative.

It might be noted, for instance, that one of the best conceptions, "Wingless Victory," collides head-on with two editorial canons: it is unnecessarily a story within a story, and it leads off by cross-talk in a bar. Such a slap of amateurism seems unthoughtful in a writer of skill. Elsewhere, too, superficiality of story which is almost mere perfunctory attention to it induces regrets.

It is not traducement of the skill of a painter to deplore his habit of using unsuitably inferior frames, but rather evidence of a desire that good work should be displayed to the best possible advantage. In any case, this is a book which every fantasy addict should read, whether or not he may feel at the end of it that were the simples compounded with the samples the vitamin content would be increased.

An Epic from the Dark Ages

THE MIGHTIEST MACHINE, by John W. Campbell. Hadley, Providence, Rhode Island. \$3.00.

Reviewed by **John K. Aiken**

In what John Taine, somewhat justifiably, calls "the dark ages of science fiction," Science—and not necessarily good science, at that—was all that was required of it. Take a quasi-scientific idea, no matter how preposterous if novel: an invasion of giant beetles from the Cretaceous epoch, female vampires living in interstellar space—anything; add a handful of totally trite characters: the Professor, his lovely daughter, the ingenious hero and his stooging pal, the super-villain; stir into an improbable and ungrammatical mush, and you had an acceptable story.

This "epic" of Mr. Campbell's, which appeared serially in **Astounding Stories** in the middle thirties, before that magazine came under his capable editorship, is not like that. But, reading it in these days, it is fascinating to realise just how much the best of magazine science fiction has advanced since its first appearance. Then, it was deservedly voted a "classic," and epitomised all that was best in the tradition of its period. Yet it is doubtful whether, if it had been written to-day, it would even have been accepted by the magazine which featured it—and which, of course, has been largely responsible for this striking advance.

Science—or pseudo-science—was then the only as well as the prime requisite; and in "The Mightiest Machine" we

are given science in full measure, pressed down and running over. It is interesting, self-consistent, well-thought-out science, but there is too much of it and too little else.

The book opens with five chapters of solid physics, during which a Jovian scientist taps the power of the Sun (the mightiest machine), produces isolated magnetic poles, develops an anti-gravitational field and travels faster than light. After this rather bulky and indigestible hors-d'œuvres comes a surfeit of action: a conflict à outrance in another universe between the descendants of Lemuria and their somewhat naively conceived hereditary enemies, demon-like creatures with horns and hoofs who live on a planet called Teff-el. The remainder of the story is concerned with this struggle and the efforts of the small party of Solarians, precipitated into it through over-hasty application of one of their new physical principles, to win it for their distant cousins and get back into their own universe.

Personal interest is negligible, the various characters being merely pegs on

which to hang a further series of highly ingenious inventions, ever more rapidly produced by both sides as the climax approaches. The ideas themselves are excellent, far surpassing in imaginativeness those of Mr. Campbell's modern counterpart, George O. Smith; notable among them (to a chemist at least) is the enemy-produced catalyst which condenses the Lemurians' atmosphere to an ocean of nitric acid. But the speed with which they are developed and applied is something less than plausible and might, indeed, be quite irritating to a technician with experience of the inevitable "teething troubles" of plant construction.

None the less, the climax is genuinely thrilling, for here the author's technical resource and his capacity for conveying the impression of stupendous power come fully into their own. And although Mr. Campbell, particularly when masquerading in the Stuart tartan, has given us many better, because better balanced, stories than this, "The Mightiest Machine" is first-class value to the enthusiast who likes his science concentrated.

From Mars to Charing Cross

REVELATIONS IN BLACK, by Carl Jacobi. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wis. \$3.00.

Reviewed by **Arthur F. Hillman**

Good writers, even for the lowliest magazines, will sooner or later acquire a coterie of admirers. Carl Jacobi's flair for creating the perfect tale in the genre of the weird and fantastic was long since noted by discerning readers, to whom it is of no small satisfaction to see this first collection of his work emerging from Arkham House.

"Mive," the story with which he made his debut in **Weird Tales** just sixteen years ago, gave evidence of the addition of yet another worthy contributor to that magazine. But it was "Revelations in Black" that, in '33, marked the beginning of his more mature period. A strange tale of a vampire, in vein with Chambers' "The King in Yellow" and the best of the Lovecraft school's products, it is one of the few in this narrow field which can be read and re-read. For, like the tales which were to follow, it bore the hallmark of craftsmanship; it was obvious that

hack-work would not be a weakness of Mr. Jacobi's, and although his contributions in the years to come were intermittent, the way in which they were written showed the wisdom of his policy of quality rather than quantity.

To take but one example: "Canal," one of his later stories, stands out as a striking picture of the age, magnitude and decay of a Martian civilisation. The book also contains such memorable narratives from several magazines as "The Tomb from Beyond," "The Face in the Wind," "Cosmic Teletype," "A Study in Darkness," etc. Mr. Jacobi is perfectly at home in such incongruous locales as Pistol Key, Trinidad, Charing Cross, the Malay Archipelago, or the unplumbed depths of outer space, and succeeds in transferring the authenticity of each setting on to paper. So the reader who wishes to be whisked away to scenes of colourful imagery and movement need seek no better guide than the author of this volume, within whose pages is a tour that is neither circumscribed nor monotonous.

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Worms & Whiskies

THE MASTER OF THE MACABRE, by Russell Thorndike. Rich and Cowan, London. 8/6.

Reviewed by **Alan Devereux**

Nothing to do with Lovecraft, this concerns an overworked writer who is lured by ghosts to an old abbey which is very thoroughly haunted. In residence is the Master, a wealthy occult investigator attended by a Crichton of a manservant who is quite incredible. In the intervals of unravelling the psychic mysteries of the place, the Master recounts some of his cases to the author, who acts as his Boswell-cum-Dr. Watson and so gives us the benefit of his harrowing narratives. At least, that is the intention.

But although the individual stories are well told (in spite of the conventional set-up), the references to graveyard worms and putrefying corpses failed, in this case, to produce any

chills; they merely induced a slight feeling of disgust. We are much more responsive to the tales of such masters of the macabre as Poe, Machen, Blackwood and Lovecraft, who prefer to hint darkly of such things and leave the details to our imagination. The settings and characters, too, are not the sort that we can believe in.

We can't, for instance, believe in a man who can knock back two whole tumblers of neat whisky without turning a hair. We once saw a man swallow a single tumblerful for a bet, and he passed out at once very neatly. And the lavish quantities of food and drink with which his household was stocked seemed to indicate in the Master a familiarity with the Black Market even transcending his knowledge of the Black Arts. In these days of austerity, such reading is hard on the rations, notwithstanding the disappointing effects of rotting cadavers. Yet the book made a railway journey pass the more quickly.

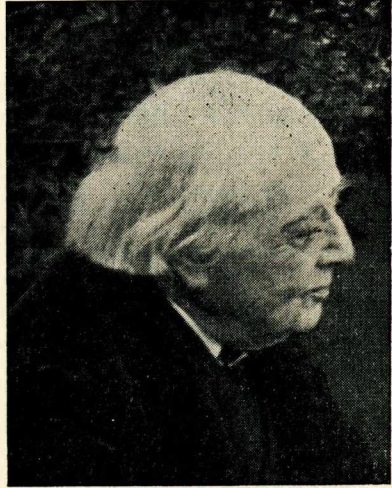
ARTHUR MACHEN, MASTER OF WEIRD FANTASY, INSPIRED LOVECRAFT

"Of living creators of cosmic fear raised to its most artistic pitch, few if any can hope to equal the versatile Arthur Machen, author of some dozen tales long and short, in which the elements of hidden horror and brooding fright attain an almost incomparable substance and realistic acuteness . . . his powerful horror-material of the nineties and early nineteen hundreds stands alone in its class, and marks a distinct epoch in the history of this literary form."

Thus H. P. Lovecraft, unappreciated in his time, writing in his "Supernatural Horror in Literature" of a British master of weird fantasy, no longer living, whose work received little of general acclaim but is accepted by the critics as of genuine worth to English letters and strongly influenced other writers in the genre. A prominent figure in London's literary circle of earlier days, he had been living in obscurity of recent years and died in a nursing home at Beaconsfield, Bucks., at the age of 84.

Son of a cleric, Arthur Llewellyn Jones-Machen was born in the tiny Monmouthshire village of Caerleon-on-Usk and spent his boyhood exploring the wild woods and hills which formed the setting for his fantasies. Educated at Hereford, he went to London as a youth of 17, in the days of gas-lamps and hansoms, and worked in publishers' offices and as a private tutor. Living in a garret in Notting Hill, he knew the pain of real poverty early in his writing career. He began by cataloguing occult books, publishing his own poetry, and translating French classics.

His first original work was "The Anatomy of Tobacco" (1884). His occult novels and short stories were mostly written between 1890 and 1900, during a period of financial independence. The first of these, "The Great God Pan" (reprinted in the current anthology, "Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural," published here only a few days before his death), appeared in '94. "The Hill of Dreams," considered less sensational than the rest, was written in '97 but not published until ten years later. Other works of this period, including "The White People,"



[Courtesy Penguin Books]

"The Inmost Light" and "The Three Impostors," were collected in "The House of Souls" (1906). Later came "The Great Return" ('15), "The Terror" ('17), "The Shining Pyramid" ('24), "The Children of the Pool" ('36), and other books of reminiscence.

At the age of 48, following several years as a Shakespearean actor, Machen became a reporter on the London **Evening News**, where he earned a reputation as a descriptive writer. His famous short story, "The Bowmen," first appeared in this paper in 1914 and gave rise to the legend of the Angels of Mons. Relating how hard-pressed British troops on the Marne were rallied by a ghostly company of medieval archers, the tale was accepted as truth and led to many soldiers claiming to have actually witnessed phantom warriors on the battlefield.

A collection of Machen's later work recently appeared in the Penguin series, entitled "Holy Terrors." An omnibus of his best tales of horror, selected by Philip Van Doren Stern, is due to appear in the U.S. "The Green Round" will also be published for the first time in America by Arkham House later this year.

Through many of Machen's stories runs the theme, familiar to readers of weird fiction, that a strange race of creatures, as real as ourselves but of terribly different origin, lurks beneath Earth's surface. Like Lovecraft, he consistently conveyed in his writings the idea that man was preceded on this planet by other forms of life, which retreated into its hidden caverns eons ago, and still survive in expectation of coming into their own again when conditions favour them. This notion, which is found in ancient Jewish and Arabic folklore, was the basis of Love-

craft's Cthulthu Mythos, in the construction of which he derived much from Machen and other writers who had dwelt on the theme. According to his biographer, August Derleth, Machen's story of "The White People" influenced him particularly in forming his conception of "The Ancient Ones"; and it was this tale Lovecraft listed with "The Novel of the White Powder" and "The Novel of the Black Seal" (featured of late in American anthologies and **Famous Fantastic Mysteries**), as among the finest pieces of their kind ever written.

Geoffrey Giles writes

ABOUT BOOKS

We promised to pay due attention, this issue, to books forthcoming from what we'd call the Other Side if it didn't sound so ethereal; and American publishers' productions are very substantial compared with some of our slim volumes. There's another of their big anthologies which may appeal to you: "Man into Beast: Strange Tales of Transformation," selected and edited by A. C. Spector (Doubleday, \$3.75). This presents ten stories on the theme of metamorphosis from human to animal form, which has haunted Mr. Spector from childhood, apparently. Among them are Ben Hecht's "Professor Emmett," who turned into a termite, John Collier's familiar "Green Thoughts," and Stephen Vincent Benet's horrifying piece about the man who became "King of the Cats."

A first novel by Wade Moore, "Greener Than You Think" (Sloane Associates, \$3.50), is a fantasy about a fertiliser, christened "the Metamorphiser" for commercial purposes, which enables plants to mutate to suit any environment; but instead of helping the wheat crop it makes grass thrive until it smothers the world and threatens man's supremacy. A new variant on the menace theme . . . "Mr. Thurtle's Trolley," by Theodore Pratt (Duell, \$2.50), is a whimsical tale of a tramcar that takes to the air; "Romance of Boston Bay" (Tudor, \$3.50), a collection of ghosts, sea serpents and other excitements originating in Lovecraft's New England. Only a few current examples, these, of "The American Imagination at Work," which is another big assembly

of folklore and weird fantasy edited by Ben C. Clough and published by Knopf at \$6.00.

THE LOVECRAFT LETTERS

The '48 catalogue of Arkham House brings word of two additions to what is now termed "Lovecraftiana." "Something About Cats and Other Pieces" will consist chiefly of collected writings by H.P.L. on the animals of which he was so passionately fond, with several stories revised by him including one by his wife. This will be available shortly; and later in the year will come the "Selected Letters," for the preparation of which August Derleth and Donald Wandrei collected 30 volumes of close-typewritten pages, only part of the voluminous correspondence which the Sage of Providence conducted with his fellow writers, his aunts and others. They make an intriguing commentary upon various topics, as well as being full of reminiscence, advice to the struggling authors he tutored, and accounts of the weird dreams which so often inspired his tales.

A third collection of Clark Ashton Smith's work, "The Genius Loci and Other Stories," and a new novel of Wandrei's, "The Web of Easter Island," described by Lovecraft himself as "poetically cosmic," are also scheduled for this summer. And, having ghoulishly devoured "The Sleeping and the Dead," we are looking forward to "Strange Ports of Call: 20 Masterpieces of Science Fiction," which will probably (though we hope not) complete the series of anthologies Mr. Derleth has given us. It will comprise short stories

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which are seldom seen these days, with others which have never before been between hard covers, by authors including Keller, Kuttner, Schuyler Miller, Sturgeon, Bond and Heinlein; plus the rare Lovecraft **Astounding** item, “At the Mountains of Madness.”

Latest arrivals from Fantasy Press are A. E. van Vogt's “The Book of Ptath” and Stanley G. Weinbaum's “The Black Flame,” which also reprints “The Dawn of Flame” from the now priceless Memorial Volume in unexpurgated form. Coming from this house in the near future are “A Martian Odyssey and Others,” comprising 11 of the great Weinbaum's tales from **Wonder** and **Astounding**. Due in March is another E. E. Smith classic, “Triplanetary,” to which a great deal has been added in the rewriting of this first of the famous “Lensman” series. It will be followed in due course by “Skylark Three” and “The Skylark of Valeron”; and in addition to Eric Frank Russell's “Sinister Barrier,” which has also been lengthened for the occasion, Mr. Eshbach promises us book versions of Robert A. Heinlein's “Beyond This Horizon,” Jack

Williamson's “Darker Than You Think” and “The Cometeers,” and a volume comprising L. Sprague de Camp's “Divide and Rule” and “The Stolen Dormouse.” All memorable pieces from **Astounding** and **Unknown** which will rejoice the hearts of those who missed them or crave to read them again.

“SKYLARK” TWO

The promised second edition of Dr Smith's “Skylark of Space” (reviewed June-July '47 issue) has a much improved binding and a jacket and illustrations by a new artist, O. G. Estes, Jnr. This comes from Hadley, Rhode Island, who have added to their schedule for the near future the first book presentation of L. Ron Hubbard's **Astounding** serial, “Final Blackout,” which in the early days of the war set us to wondering how it would all end.

From Prime Press, Philadelphia, comes “The Torch,” by Jack Bechdolt, an **Argosy** classic of 1920 which was intended for reprinting in **Famous Fantastic Mysteries** before it changed hands. To follow it is the Lester del Rey collection of stories from **Unknown** and **Astounding** titled “. . . And Some

Were Human." Among a small library of time-honoured classics promised by Fantasy Publishing Co., Los Angeles, of which some have already been noted here, half-a-dozen **Unknown** tales by van Vogt and E. Mayne Hull have been collected under the title, "Out of the Unknown," and illustrated by the three **Fantasy Book** artists; while L. Ron Hubbard's "Death's Deputy" is in preparation from the same source. Also in embryo are "The Omnibus of Time," compiled from Ralph Milne Farley's time-travel tales in several magazines—17 of them in all—and the first of his noted series of novels concerning "The Radio Man" originally appearing in **Argosy**, which will be followed by the further exploits of Myles Cabot.

Looks like it will be a good year for fantasy! And if you're still interested in what has gone before, don't fail to equip yourself with "The Checklist of Fantastic Literature," just arrived from Shasta Publishers complete with handsome dust-jacket by Hannes Bok. Listing over 5,000 fantasy book titles (and incidentally revealing that no less than 3,000 writers have contributed to the medium), it will fit comfortably into your coat pocket every time you go book-hunting.

TERROR TOME

Of Britisher publisher's new offerings of interest to us, most notable is the 800-odd-paged "Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural" (Hammond, 18/-), which is a good augury for the future. Containing no less than 52 stories classified in two sections, it is a complete reprint of the bulky tome edited by Herbert A. Wise and Phyllis

Fraser, and published in the U.S. and Canada by Random House in '44. Much of the contents will be familiar to connoisseurs: it has Poe, Collins, James, Wells, Kipling, Machen, Blackwood and others of the oft-printed school; but there are several stories which come fresh to those who have not read too extensively, among which we can recommend especially Carl Stephenson's "Leiningen versus the Ants," Edward Lucas White's "Lukundoo," and (of course) the two pieces with which Lovecraft is now introduced to the great British public, "The Rats in the Walls" and "The Dunwich Horror." (We noticed an **Observer** reviewer's reaction that "he liked to make the grue thick and slab.")

"More Things in Heaven," by Walter Owen (Dakers, 10/6), is a new murder mystery with a black magic twist in the style of Charles Williams, whose "Place of the Lion" (Gollancz, 7/6) is now to be had in the Strange Fiction Library series. Aubrey Menen's "The Prevalence of Witches" (Chatto, 9/6), which has been about for some time, is a highly-praised tale of Indian witchcraft, with satirical overtones. And if the grue does get too sticky, turn to "How Now, Brown Cow?" by Ewart C. Jones (Home and Van Thal, 7/6), an amusing piece of metamorphosis about the village tart who becomes a bovine, well in the tradition of "Lady into Fox," which we commend to Mr. Spector'sky. Or, if you are in a Haggard mood, to "The Call of Peter Gaskell," latest in the World's Work line of science fiction "thrillers," which is by our old friend George C. Wallis and is yours for 5/- only.

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