



No 6

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 Cover---Jack Riggs Back Cover---Joseph Krucher

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Editorial

We promised the reader of Lethe that there would be a letter section; but this issue took up too much space and something had to go. You could take "Len's" and P.J.Rasch's stuff as letters though, they aren't written exactly like our conception of an article. Redd Boggs is the boy for that. Various jokers, jerks, and jinns wrote us letters and cards (thanx) including Art levine, Bob bloch, Robert smith, wilimczyk, Don hutchison, sneary, Pat bowling, Evard noble, rotsler, and some guy in L.A. named Burpe or something like that, perhaps it was spelt burbee.

Received a postcard with a grand total of 2½d in stamps. Came from a Leon Stone, Elgin St., Gordon, N.S.W., Australia and he saw a review of Lethe in the Fantasy Advertiser. Here is what he has to say; "Bear Fanzine Editors. Would you be so good as to place my name on your regular mailing list of your fanzine LETHE so that I
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A Market for Fan Fiction

by Redd Boggs

So you have been writing fan fiction. Some of it was pretty good, too. Remember "Slave Ships of Time"? -- Gus McFann of No-people, Nev., thought it was the best fan-yarn since "The Ice King", and Joe Goodfan, who published the thing in his fanzine "Stuffiction", wrote that he thought it was "Superb!" The best fan fiction of the year." So, it was good. Edmond Hamilton never hacked out anything so good -- only he gets paid for his potboilers. Maybe one cent, maybe two or three cents a word.

That's a little item for speculation. In fact, after a week or two of speculation, the thing becomes an obsession. Then, the next time you sit down at the typewriter, that ubiquitous tagline carried by most of the fanmags begins to parade across your mind: "This magazine is amateur and non-profit; therefore, no payment can be made for accepted material." No payment? That idea is pure poison now. Wealth glows before your eyes. Four thousand words at one cent a word...heck, that's \$40.00. What can't a fan do with forty bucks? There's that complete set of Unknowns, for instance. You start writing, dreaming of that \$40.00 and that set of Unks, remembering that this yarn you're hacking out just gotta hit four thousand words, or else.

So maybe, by stretching the plot a bit here and there -- maybe it does hit 4,000. Maybe it hits 5,000 words -- that's \$50.00 cold. (You can buy some old Wonders, too.) Then you type the story up, even inserting a new ribbon in your typer, just to make the script look professional. Finally, you toss the manuscript into an envelope and address the thing to Thrilling Wonder Stories (you'd like to hit Campbell with it, but maybe it wasn't quite good enough).

Standard Magazines, Inc., has a very neat little rejection slip about 3 x 5 inches, printed on yellow paper. It starts out in a regretful vein: "We are very sorry that we are unable to use your contribution, which we are returning herewith..." You can almost hear the third associate editor blowing his nose and wiping his optics as he shoves your valuable MS into the return envelope and tosses it into a mail chute.

Let's face it: the pros aren't easy to crack. Much as you deplore TMS or AMZ and the kind of trips they publish, they have their special requirements, their unbending taboos that make them difficult targets for the amateur fictioneer. Campbell isn't the only exacting editor that wields a blue pencil in the fantasy field. In

fact, if you like his mag and read it religiously, the canny JWC should be easier for you to sell to than any other editor.

However, if the step from fanzines to TWS and WT is too steep for many a fan-writer to make, that is not the whole story. We are looking now at the writing game from the hobby angle. If you're thinking of hacking for a living, you should be reading Writer's Digest instead of this fanmag, for that's beyond the scope of this article. You should be convinced of that point when we bring up the subject of the "little magazines."

Somebody called them "Earth's fragile children", and so they are. Like a Follies girl, they are scantily-clad and each believes its name will be spoken by every tongue. Most of them specialize in poetry, and some of it is even good poetry. Many of them use articles and fillers, book reviews and philosophical treatises. A few of them use short stories, and one or two specialize in fantasy stories. These latter are the ones we're interested in, and we are particularly concerned with the magazine called Different.

Different, edited and published by Lilith Lorraine at Rogers, Ark., isn't appreciably different from many of its competitors such as Hearth Songs Journal, as far as appearance goes, but in content it is one of the better magazines in the "tiny market" field. It is printed on slick paper, size 8½ x 11, and boasts a neat, even distinguished format that is enough to make a pulp editor jealous. About 32 pages thick, the mag runs three columns per page in easy-to-read type. Different costs 35¢ per copy, or \$2.00 a year.

The magazine is official organ of the Avalon National Poetry Shrine, a poets' league founded by Miss Lorraine, and contains news of the activities of the many local chapters, as well as 10 to 12 pages of poetry, much of it excellent fantasy, mostly from Avalon members. Then there is the fiction.

What kind of fiction does Different use? Let's look at the contents page of the mag, under the heading "Manuscript Requirements." As the radio announcers say, I quote: "We want short stories of from 2500 to 3000 words that are really 'different' as to style and subject matter. We especially need distinctive love stories, fantasy stories and animal stories in which the author escapes from regimented plots and from imitative styles...." Incidentally, Stanton A. Coblenz, well-known writer, is listed on the masthead as "fantasy story editor."

For an example of the fantasy used by Different, refer to the Nov.-Dec. (1946) issue, which contains three shorts, two of them fantasy. (The third tale is a murder story.)

"Winged Driftwood" by Manfred A. Carter combines the atom bomb and Atlantis themes. Ye scientific genius, who has discovered a new way to extract uranium from the sea, is struck by a strange malady

that turns his arm chalky white and completely numb at the rate of an inch a day. He receives a note: "Stop experimenting or you will bleach one inch a day till you die." Signed--ATLANTIS. Following further orders, he casts his secret formula into the ocean -- but he keeps a carbon copy of it. Thereupon he dies.

The other fantasy is "Filby's Minute" by James MacGregor. Filby, a Fuller brush man, gives a lift to a strange hitch-hiker who claims to be a prophet by profession. The hitcher repays Filby by causing him to delay one minute, thereby missing a horrible death, which the "prophet" had foreseen.

So maybe you can write a better story, huh? Okay. Heck, I'm convinced now, but Editor Lorraine isn't. She'll want to see your script before she passes judgment.

If she accepts your yarn, she will mail you a check for \$5.00. Aw right, chicken-feed, perhaps, but it beats by five bucks what I'm receiving for this article. You wanted to get paid for your stuff, like Ed Hamilton is, and you didn't get even five bucks for "Slave Ships of Time" in Stuffiction, did you? Payment from Different is on acceptance.

A word about Different's poetry. Quoting again from "MS. Requirements": "Poems must be idealistic, technically sound, highly original in style and thought content, dynamically simple, and sincerely written, with no involved sentence structure, and of strong yet restrained emotional appeal. No escapism, Pollyannism, preaching, atheism, or incoherent experimentalism. Limit 20 lines." Eciled down, that means send your best damn poem, make it short, and it had better not be in free verse. Even then, those requirements sound as difficult to crack as an Arisian thought-barrier. They are not rally that bad, however, for this fan recently had a poem in Different, right along with Stanton Coblentz, Dorothy Quick, and Leah Bodine Drake.

As for fiction, hmmm. Let's pass that by. No, I haven't rung the bell at Different yet with a story. My latest effort did receive a "tentative" acceptance, and perhaps when I revise it and shoot it back, the thing will stick. And maybe you don't think I can use that five dollars. (Hey, Ackerman, save me "The Passionate Astronomer" by Alan Griffiths! Five bucks on the way.)

Yes, Different is a "tiny market", but if it is not as good as the pulps, it is better than the fanzines. You might try it, next time you dash off a fantastic yarn. If I can almost make it you can make it, for if you don't think you're a better writer than I am, you're nutty. Nutty as nine tons of pecans.

the end

Possibility Nil

by riggs



Seated on the tall comfortable stool, glass in hand, Paul Martin surveyed the "U-Bar". It was a typical Martian bar. Glowing lucite walls furnished the dim illumination; a fat, stolid bartender polishing a glass; televox player; three customers quietly talking over their drinks and one drunk trying to butt in on them.

Martin took a swig of the slightly bitter local brew and looked into the mirror behind the bar. He noticed the drunk had given up trying to ingratiate himself with the trio and was lurching towards him. He groaned inwardly. Why did all the drunks bother him? Did he have a sympathetic face or something? Maybe if he grunted instead of talking, the old sot would totter off somewhere and leave him alone.

"Say frien'," the voice burst in on his reverie, "ever been on the Jovian run?"

"Umph!" said Paul

"Well I was marooned on a asteroid out that way not long ago. Stranges' thing that ever happened, too. My name's Joe Wright, uranium prospector. My friends think I'm a right joe too. Meh." He cackled at the horrible pun.

"Say frien'. I'm a little short of cash right now. Could you buy me a drink? Pay you back next Wen'sday fer sure."

"Well----." Paul squirmed and thought of leaving, but his drink was unfinished.

"Lost my ship an' everything. Run into a streak of tough luck. I'll tell you about it. Seems that while prospectin' around the out-

er edge of the Asteroid Belt my auto-detector went ka-flooney an' I didn' know it. A big rock came twirlin' by about the same time an I lost the last half of my ship. Can't do much without motor or jets, so I climbed into my space-suit an' bailed out. Bailed out 'cause another rock might hit the section I was in. Y'see I was rocketin' across the Asteroid Belt then, an' it was very likely to happen."

Paul took another sip of the cold brew and noted the hungry look on the bum's face and almost weakened, but then the old boy gulped twice and went on.

"So there I was floatin' in a rock-filled void. Using my flare gun I blasted down to an asteroid that was driftin' by about then. I sat down to think about how I was gonna get myself rescued. A regular mail rocket to Titan was due in a couple a hours an' I wondered how I was gonna signal to it. I was kinda mad an' disgusted an' I flamed a funny lookin' outcroppin' with my flare gun, without thinkin', y'know.

"So help me as I sit here, if the darn thing didn't start to burn! Then it spread across the rock to where I sat on a lump a some kinda stuff. I reached down an' fingered the ground an' it was powdery-like. Soon I was surrounded by flames; an' then the whole asteroid was on fire as far as I could see. Only thing I can think of was that the whole thing was nothin' but a big ball of vegetation but how, I dunno.

"Anyway the flames didn' hurt me none 'cause in space the heat jus' radiated off, but fast. An' before I knew it; I was floatin' all alone in space. The whole darn thing had jus' burned out from unner me!

"I was rescued by the mail rocket. They'd seen the fire for over a millyun miles an' slowed down to see what it was and there I was; all alone. No ship, no nuthin', jus' me." He sniffed. "I lost everything out there." He said, waving an arm vaguely.

Paul sat there with his mouth open. Then he snapped his finger at the bar-keep who was still polishing the glasses. "By Satan!" Paul exclaimed to the glass-polisher. "I don't like talkative drunks who try to put the arm on me for a drink, but....goddarn! Anyone who can spin a yarn like that deserves a drink!" Paul slapped a big bill down on the bar. "Fill up the old rum-pot with the best you have." Paul got up, slapped the man on the back and walked out into the sunshine, shaking his head very slowly.

the end

The Future of Science Fiction

P. J. Rasch

In the second edition of *LETHE* James Kepner raises several interesting questions as to the future of S-F. Only a determinist or a mystic should venture predictions in answer to such questions, but it seems to the writer there are straws in the wind which may give some clues as to the probable future of such literature.

It is obvious that science has definitely caught up with imagination in the field of physics--so much so that we are told certain government agencies viewed the more plausible authors with grave alarm during the war. The atomic bomb is here; the Army has publicly stated they expect to send a rocket to the moon within eighteen months; ((according to one officer who was reprimanded by his superiors--ed)) there is reason to believe short range death rays may be an actuality; respected scientists talk of some kind of a force screen as the only protection against the atomic bomb. These have composed the faithful old standbys of most science fiction writers. Now that reality has caught up with their most vivid imaginings, can they hope to blaze this trail deeper into the unknown? Personally the writer doubts it. He feels that science fiction in the physical field has very nearly reached the end of the road and that future authors will have to turn to other fields. This, of course, is not the opinion of Baring-Gould. In his article "Little Superman, What Now" in *HARPERS* for September, 1946, he argues that applied science has caught up with laboratory science because of the war and science fiction can again widen the gap as soon as the authors have had time to take stock of the situation.

The present writer believes they will be forced to turn to other fields, possibly ones in the realm of psychology and philosophy. Heredity and genetics should offer much for fictional exploitation. Scientists are today discussing the possible mutations which may result from the use of atomic energy and tales along this line should find a receptive public. The subject is not new, of course. Some noteworthy work has already been done, A.E. van Vogt's "Slan" being probably the best known example, but the surface has only been scratched. It is almost inevitable, also, that we shall have many more stories on the end of the world resulting from atomic experiments.

Kepner comments that dictator stories are timely now but that socialism, capitalism and numerous other forms of government should be explored. He is right, of course, in urging writers to strike out into varied aspects of politics, but the theoretical probability is that the field they are now tilling is the really productive one.

According to the charts of Spengler, we are now entering the era of the formation of Caesarism, with a tendency of the part of nations to decline into formless populations, with dictatorships following. The industrialism of our culture is reaching the end of its creative cycle; the political power (dictatorship) will rise over financial power. Gold has lost its place; we mine it only to again bury it. The foremen's unions may well be the first step toward the masses of labor being represented on the boards of management and with that the entrepreneur abdicates his last privilege. The mobs that cried "Bread and Circus" as the Classical Culture neared its dissolution in Imperial Rome have their counterparts on a world wide scale today. It took Europe twelve centuries to reach a total population of 180,000,000. From 1800 to 1914 it increased to 460,000,000! India's population increased 50,000,000 between 1930 and 1940. The blunt facts are the masses are not prepared for or capable of taking on the responsibilities of intelligent government. Individual groups strive for power; those inconvenienced by their strivings clamor for a strong man to repress the disturbers--witness our own strike situation. The S-F writer might do well to consider the problems the increase of population makes by its very mass and how they are to be solved. We may be sure a people will get no better government than it deserves. The last few chapters of the presently popular "Mistress Masham's Repose" by T. H. White contain some bitingly ironical observations on this question. However, the best story that has yet appeared along these lines is "Renaissance" by Raymond F. Jones, which ran in ASTOUNDING SCIENCE-FICTION during 1944. If you are interested in the shape of things that may be and have not read this work, by all means look it up. It should be borne in mind that the dictators of the future are more likely to be scientists than the traditional war lords.

Kepner inquires whither progress is actually being made by civilization and whither it may be followed by an ebb. With all due respect, or lack thereof, to certain authors, to both questions the answer appears to be in the affirmative. Each culture has risen a little higher than the one preceding; if our own follows the pattern of all preceding ones and collapses, that which builds upon its ruins may grasp the things for which we strive in vain. The writer might state at this point that he takes no stock in the fancies advanced by some writers as to the high culture evolved in fabled Atlantis. It is evident from the claims of Donnelly, Lewis, Churchward et. al. that if this continent ever existed its culture could not have been higher than that attained by the Mayas, Egypt or ancient Greece, that is, stone age. According to Spengler's theories our own civilization should crash about 2200 A.D. The writer would suggest that more imaginative scenes might be laid about 500 years from now than the thousands of years in the future so popular with H.G.Wells and others. What will come in the next millenary is anyone's guess; the inevitable end of all that is contained within the second law of thermodynamics is scientific foresight than science fiction.

The question of the turn which will be taken by evolution is also brought up by Kepner. Judging by the discussion of this subject in Howell's "Mankind So Far" we should not look for any startling changes. He (Howell) seems to think the quality of the brain will improve, wisdom teeth will disappear, the little toe may be lost, and baldness will possibly become universal in the white race. This is a far cry from the top heavy brains and spindly bodies foreseen by some writers.

It is, of course, an open question as to how much attention SF should pay to probabilities. The writer is certainly in no way bound by such considerations as have been pointed out above. However, it is generally true that fiction derives its reason for being from the fact it holds a picture of life before the reader. The further it gets from reality, present or possible, the less likely it is to be of any permanent value. Unquestionably, however, the greatest question confronting SF fans is not the problem of the authors' imagination but the question of the quality of their product. Shaver has set SF back a good fifteen years. Not only is his product in itself bad from the literary viewpoint, but it has opened the flood gates for hundreds of letters from crackpots who justify every nasty remark that has ever been made by critics of such writings. The development of the atom bomb was the biggest boost SF ever had; it is unfortunate if the recognition gained thereby is to be thrown away because a highly advertised writer turns out material which any reader of normal discrimination can only classify as trash.

the end

continued from page one;

--might receive issues for preservation in the Australian Library of Amateur Journalism, which features a section of Fanzines.

I will gladly acknowledge by postal and in my amateur magazine KOOLINDA.

I am keen to acquire all issues possible of fanzines so will appreciate it if you can oblige? Several Fanzine editors (Dunk, Wesson, Willmorth, Taylor) have obliged already and are forwarding me their publications. Any back nos. of your own or other fanzines you may care to spare would also be greatly appreciated. Cordially & Sincerely.

We think he sounds like a sincere chap and are complying with his request. How about the rest of you fanmag editors sending the boy a copy of yours?

We recently saw the Army films in color of the Bikini tests. They were the same ones that you might have seen in the newsreels; abounding with Admirals and brass of all sorts and of course the explosions and their effects. The fact they were in color was the only difference. We were supposed to see the Einstein group's film on control of Atomic Power that ends with the destruction of San Francisco by rocket-carried Atomic Bombs, but the man never showed up. One fellow suggested that perhaps the Republicans got him.

Hope you-all and we-all survive until next issue;

adios.

by Mrs. "bing"

I tell this story only after I have had a few stiff drinks. It doesn't even sound real to me until I have a couple of fifths under my belt....but it is true. True in the sense that all riddles yet unsolved by Science are true. And yet it breaks my heart to tell it. Oh, how the mighty are fallen.

One day I received a message from my friend, Ackland Hammerdung one of the world's leading scientists. The fact that most of his leading was astray never affected his standing in the eyes of his public. He was the research scientist for Astounding Stories; the genius who invented the flying brains, the dictographic dogs, the flame midgets and four dimensional masses of protoplasm that break into our consciousness via the pages of many of our most amazing magazines. I sensed from Hammerdung's message that his need was urgent. Donning my space suit (his Christmas present to me) I flew off to his office.

When I saw Ackland Hammerdung's face I knew something terrible had happened.

"Ackland, my friend, what is the matter?" I queried as I came in for a four point landing.

"Oh, Philopolus," he moaned, "It's horrible!"

"What's horrible, Hammerdung?" I asked, watching his face writhe in purple convulsions.

"I have just given birth." said Ackland, glowing ultra-violet.

"To what?" said I, familiar with his labor pains.

"To something...so...so superlatively unexpected....I am heart-broken. Oh...Philopolus..." he cried and fell to the floor sobbing.

I carried him into his laboratory carefully avoiding the Giant Octopus left over from an Amazing Sea Story and stepping gingerly over Hammerdung's private pet, a barking brain, which convoluted wildly about the room. I gave Hammerdung a whiff of his own Atomic Smelling Salts and pushing two dead Martians, victims of an interstellar conflagration, off the couch, sat down and waited for the details of Hammerdung's unfortunate discovery. Hammerdung groaned and regained consciousness.

"Philopolus, my friend..." he smiled wanly and a faint magenta flush crept over his lined features.

"What is it, Hammerdung?" I said, clutching the arm of my chair,

half-eaten away by Curiosity, the carnivorous crocodile he had invented for last week's episode of "The Crocodile Teeth."

"My friend, Philopolus..." he started to speak again and I, I could see two iridescent tears forming like frost on his eyelids. "I am a failure." With these simple words his whole body began to sob. His thin old bones quivered and he looked like nothing so much as a crustacean being electrocuted. I endeavored to quiet him as best I could.

"But your past triumphs, Hammerdung...the "Beetle That Browbeat The World;" your imaginative contribution to the Atom Bomb...It mite never have been discovered if Einstein hadn't read your "Death Lays Eggs."

"Ah yes....but those triumphs are past, Philopolus," he said with a sigh, "This failure is now. I can hardly bear it."

"Tell me more", I said, straining my super-sensory ears to catch his words.

"Well," he whispered, "I've been commissioned by Super Amazing Magazine to invent...." he paused dramatically, "The Devil Tongue!"

"It sounds horrific." I said in a rising crescendo.

"It is." he agreed. "I have the plans here. They call for an enormous tongue, the size of the Empire State Building, to float through the air just lapping up people and houses. It's sort of an oral tidal wave. People are swallowed through a big hole into the fourth dimension which is presumed to be a giant's belly. According to specifications it is to be huge, red, and capable of coating when it is upset. In the end of the story it eats up the man who is writing a treatise on it....but throws up the treatise as it disagrees with it....and that is all that is left for future generations to find of the scourge of the 'Devil Tongue.8"

"But what is your difficulty, Hammerdung?" I asked, remembering his last successful monstrosity, a two-headed mutant known professionally as Jack and Edward G. Robinson. It had gone to Hollywood to star in a double feature horror movie, but sad to say, Hollywood went to both of its heads. The last Hammerdung had heard of it, it was wearing sunglasses on both pair of eyes and having formed a union composed solely of itself, was picketing Warner Brothers asking for twice the salary. But then I realized that Hammerdung was never happy with his last achievement. He had an artist's soul. He wanted to go on and create something even more horrible. If only he could create the "Devil Tongue" I ruminated, he could retire on a social security from the Vampire's and Werewolves Protective League. I spoke again, "This problem is far from simple, Hammerdung, it would be the crowning achievement of your declining years, tell me; why doesn't it work?"

I shall show you." said Hammerdung, rising like a re-commissioned corpse. "I shall show you how terribly I have failed."

We went down the electro-escalator until we reached Hammerdungs secret scientific quarters. In these subterranean depths, aided only by his research assistant, Joyce Jordan, girl ghoul, he conceived and gave birth to the misshapen monsters who leer so menacingly from the pages of all the better futurist-fiction magazines. We walked with hushed footsteps over to his Disturbo-Encalculator. It was in this gigantic mass of shining metal that he created his monstrosities. Converted, rather, since he made them from old odds and ends of Frankenstein movies, drippings of catacombs, and prehistoric parisodactyls from the La Brea Tar Pits.

"Now...I will show." Hammerdung said, and he proceeded to pour into the convertor tube, a mass of material even Henry Kaiser could have found no use for. He set the dials and the machine began to grind. The room was full of a foul smelling odor, and Hammerdung's face reflected the torment within his soul. "Now you will see what happens. My formula has failed." His voice rose like a wailing banshee. "I cannot produce the 'Devil Tongue'."

I watched the machine twisting and writhing. A veritable man-made volcano, it thundered and belched, the fubular tubes giving forth hissing noises like a chorus of frogs in hot water. The funnels rumbled and smoked and then the whole machine swelled with a mighty roar and there was a deafening silence. Then faintly I heard the scratching swosh of the finished product as it started to slide down the converseo-belt to the metal plate at the bottom. Fright overcame me. My mind almost ceased to function. I fully expected to see "The Devil Tongue", and imagining its horrible proportions and proclivities, I backed away into a corner of the room. I waited what seemed eons of time, my muscles turned to buttermilk and my goosepimples grew bumps. And then suddenly the trap on the Disturbo-Encalculator flew open and I was astonished to hear a small, almost inaudible, plop. It was followed by a long wail from Hammerdung.

"You see..you see.." He whimpered, "No 'Devil Tongue' at all!"

I moved closer to the machine.

"Only this," he wailed again. I leaned closer to the metal plate, afraid, but curious. On it sat a small piece of something pinkish. My heart turned over with pity for my friend, but my psychiatrists mind forced me to admit....it was true. He had failed.

Ackland Hammerdung had labored mightily to make the Arch Horror of all Terrestrial Terror Tales..."The Devil Tongue" and he had produced, oh sad, supersonically sad day for the reader of science fiction, an ignoble piece of....Smoked Liverwurst.

But let me not leave my reader in suspense until the next edition. The tale has a relatively happy ending. Hammerdung, crushed by his failure, retired from scientific research; but all was not lost. Many solar years later, with the aid of Renshach and free association tests, I managed to rehabilitate him enough to face the world. He now runs a little delicatessen in Brooklyn. His specialty is Liverwurst.

end

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NEOPHYTE

24pp, two lithos, and crud by
Ackerman, Joe Kennedy, Gerald
FitzGerald, EEEvans, Tigrina,
Cy Condra, Redd Boggs, Van H.
Splawn, etc. 15¢ per, 2/25¢

William Rotsler
Rte #1, Box 338
Camarillo, Calif



SQUARE ROOT OF VALENTINE by Berry Fleming
Reviewed by Forest J. Ackerman



Published in 1932, by Norton & Co., New York, this wacky novel (282) pages commits the cardinal sin of any book; it is, I regret to report, boring.

The jacket compares the story with "Zuleika Dobson", "The Man Who Was Thursday", "Iolanthe", "South Wind" and Gilbert and Sullivan. I confidently approached the novel, expecting another "Fully Dressed and In His Right Mind" or something illogically logical (dans un mot, de Campian). I was fully distressed and convinced the author was out of his mind by the time I got thru reading "Valentine."

I could not tell you what this book is about. It has something to do with a guy who loses his watch, or it stands still, or time becomes static for him; and he splits in two and one of him meets up with a girl with shellacked legs and some statues that come to life a la Thorne Smith's "Night Life of the Gods" and an old fashioned (mid-Periclean, no less) Satyr who scruples at clothes on women (holding dresses on the fair sex to be indecent). ((Reviewer's Note: Holding dresses on girls should be nice work, if you can get the proper figure for it.))

There is a mad inventor with a Mechanical Listener. With this device attached and properly tuned, one can hear only personal news; or family news, including information and gossip about friends (provided one has friends); and so on up the scale. Or, one may, if one wishes, adjust the Mechanical Listener so as to exclude all sounds. The same inventor (one Reguspatoff) has also created a pair of glasses which are the color complementary to the rays of the full moon. Equipped with a pair of these neutralizing spectacles, a man making love by moonlight will not be deceived by the sublunary beauty of his sweetheart, but will see her as in broad daylight.

Some of the concepts, such as noted foregoing, are admittedly unique and interesting to contemplate, and it is therefore all the more irritating that the book is not more entertaining than it is.

In conclusion I might mention a rather interesting philosophy which the book develops for a couple of pages, whereby the author comes to the conclusion that iodine is the universal antiseptic of the antichrist, for it kills defenseless germs--bacteria which have as much right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as humans. Berry enlarges this theme and makes an analogy between bacteria in the bloodstream and criminals, lunatics, destitutes, etc., in society's life-stream. "Why cultivate them?" he asks. "Why preserve the poor, the weak, the lame, the halt, the blind? Christianity?--inanity!" Of course the abolition of Xianity might prove fatal to fanity.

Oh, yes, and at another point in the story it appears there is some possibility of 3 of the 10 Commandments actually being obeyed. A character named Halter is aghast. "It would mean economic panic...revolution...a social cataclysm! Think of it: No more theft, no more murder, no more adultery! I doubt if you realize the importance of adultery, not necessarily as an act, but as a hope. Why, the mere accomplishment of the 7th Commandment alone would drive millions to suicide!"

If I have inadvertently made this book sound interesting, I apologize.....#

Shall We Tell Them?

by "LEN"

Have you ever stopped a moment to observe the average science-fictioneer's attitude? What is he? What isn't she? And why do we form fan clubs?

Joe fan here says, "Hail, I only read this stuff because I like it." Emma over here says, "I just read it because it gives me new ideas." Horace from Boston answers, "I just read science-fiction as a catharsis, to aid me to think in new directions and to eliminate stuffy Euclidean and Aristotelian skeletons from my mental closet." Percy looks up from his bookkeeping and says, "Yes, I read science-fiction to escape from this boring humdrum everyday world and into other realms." We form fan clubs to get together and clarify our own thoughts and because we can find few human beings who think the way we science-fictioneers do.

Don't we all think in broad terms of science and its effects upon our society and vice-versa? We do, if only semi-consciously, because our literature is scattered throughout with problems and solutions, of possibilities and probabilities in sociological progress logical government and evolution engineering.

You may say, "Leave it up to the scientists." True, it should be in their hands; the world is quite a messy place at the present time. The scientists can clear this up in two ways. By scientific progress and the use of scientific methods toward human advancement, and human survival, or by the solution that wipes out all problems, destruction, the super solution. There are far too many scientists who do not think or try to extrapolate scientific ideas as do science-fictioneers. They confine themselves to their narrower specializations, and I am inclined to think that they do not take time in many instances, to see the effect that their work has in our everyday lives in the directions of ethics, sociology, and the legislative. (See, "Congressmen Are Too Busy" in the Sept. '46 Astounding.)

We science fictioneers say in effect, we know the solution to the Atom Bomb question; but do we? Does anybody? Our stories predicted atomic power at a time when many scientist in 1942 doubted it could be done. Our extrapolation was fairly correct, their doubt was quite wrong. We have the greatest crises of all human history now facing us. If our civilization can come through this period, we

have greater possibilities of accomplishments to look forward to in a new super age for mankind. What can we fans do to help?

We science-fictioneers have an attitude of grim humor toward the world mess. We do not assume "an everything happens for the best" attitude, because we know this is as phoney as a seven dollar bill. Our thinking is not stereotyped, we are constantly re-purifying and re-synthesizing our old concepts, by the addition of new factors that aid in clarifying our thoughts, and also in eliminating confusion in our mental behavior. But, this is all work, and for what? How many of us are ivory towerists? How many of us try to use this knowledge in our daily activities?

Campbell stated in an article that we have twentythree plus senses instead of the usual five. I don't know how anyone would class our sense of survival, but I don't think we are going to sit idly by while the world blows itself to bits. We know there must be a solution to reach the goal that science-fictioneers have dreamed of. It is up to us to find it, and it is up to us to do something about it in our small way.

You see, it is up to us to consolidate the gains of science and knowledge. Wholesale destruction will wipe out many of the gains that man has achieved; Penicillin, sulfas, cancer research, polio cures, television, atomic research for peace, radar, semantics, and many more. We would have to begin all over again. How long would that take us? Will it be too late when the Atomic War is over?

We do have a world of our own, we science-fictioneers. In it we have faced many problems of psychology, sociology, and human engineering, though inadequately at present. Yet we have attempted to face them and to look for solutions, while at all times realizing the possibility of human error. It is this factor that gives many of our stories that unhappy touch in the ending. A happy ending is possible if we use our ingenuity, think creatively and semantically. It is possible by doing this to overcome our major obstacles. If we overcome them, can we continue on to directions and progress far beyond our wildest dreams?

This is a plea to you who can see many of the problems, and to you who know some of the answers, and can, with a little effort discover many more solutions. The world we know is going through an era of confusion and needs guidance. It is not giving our egos a false boost to say that we know some of the paths toward the clarification and the methods of synthesis. We do know some of the directions and are held partly responsible to our society by that very knowledge. Shall we let them in on our world?

Cat-tails edge the dismal swamp, from which vapors
do arise,
and from the haunted house, candle-lit orbs leer....
'tis evil in disguise!
A wind sweeps the deserted spot, causing a gnarled
branch to beckon its finger...
To entice and spirit away some poor wand'ring soul,
For once he enters, ne'er will he emerge alive -
from this hell's hole.

