

MARCH 1941 L I G H T

LIGHT FLASHES

by THE EDITOR

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Leslie A. Croutch,
Box 121,
Parry Sound,
Ontario, Canada.

STAFF

Bob Gibson (art).
Sam W. McGee (contributing).
Norman V. Lamb (contributing).

Light is published whenever the mood inspires. Restricted mailing list and issuance through the Fantasy Amateur Press Association. 10¢ per copy, cash or swap, to all others. No subscriptions accepted. This is a non-profit publication and no payment can be made for material used, beyond a free copy of the issue in which it appears. Unsolicited material not desired. 120 copies, only, per issue.

FLOOGLE'S GALLERY

You are receiving this copy because you fall in one of the following categories Yours is marked.

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Contribution | <input type="checkbox"/> | Exchange | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Club Copy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sample | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Charged to | <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| swap acct | <input type="checkbox"/> | Complimentary | <input type="checkbox"/> |

YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE ANOTHER NUMBER UNLESS YOU WRITE IN REQUESTING A SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL. (STAFF MEMBERS EXEMPT.)

LIGHT-- GENESIS-- SEPT. 1941

NOTE

Let's get tough about this. If I don't hear from YOU by the time #41 is out, then you do NOT get #41! No if's and and's or but's about this. Charging your copy to your swap account does NOT exempt you from writing.

Norman Lamb is happy because I gave a sort of forecast of coming things in the last issue. To follow up, watch for the following items-- "Mouse In A Stocking", by L. A. Croutch; next issue Part 2 of "Mineo Ink In My Veins" by L. A. Croutch; "I Meet The Income Tax Inspector" by It's-Impossible-To-Get-Away-With-Anything Croutch; "The Propositioner" by L. A. Croutch. If you thought "The Victorious Bride" sort of daring, I think you'll like "The Propositioner" even more. During forthcoming months, there will be at least one item by Yours Truly in each issue, sometimes more. If you get fed up, then holler. A. D. Jamieson has an idea I've asked him to clarify, which I think should fit in the now and vitaminized LIGHT very nicely.

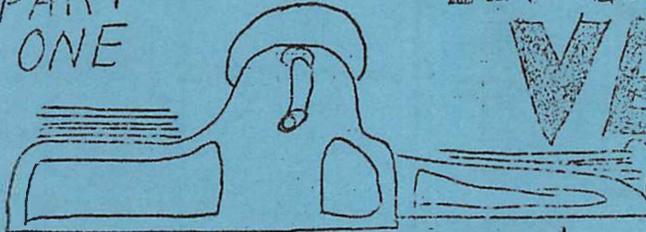
LIGHT is changing its policy slightly. Henceforth, I am after articles and stories on any subject at all, by amateurs or professionals. Though consideration will be given to amateur writers of any country, Canadians will be given preference. Dry as dust material not wanted. I think if I tell you I am going to take a whack at making LIGHT the Esquire of Fandom, the Poor Fan's Bedroom Companion, it will tell you better than anything else just what I going to try to do. Though I from now on unsolicited material, I will consider it. I prefer, though, to have you write me and discuss with me a proposed article or story. Anything dolving in personalities NOT wanted. If you must attack somebody use some other magazine. Otherwise anything that passes the post office is O.K. Just read the contents this month and judge for yourself. I am NOT interested in straight fan articles. There's enough magazines already catering to that.

(TURN TO PAGE 11 IF YOU WANT MORE)

IN
FOUR
PARTS
PART
ONE

MIMEO INK

IN MY
VEINS



BY Leslie A. Crockett

I have always been interested in publishing. When I was in my early teens and still in public school, though far enough "gone" to be looking forward to High, I tinkered, there is no better term, with a small magazine. It was, comparing it to LIGHT, a rather sorry little thing. Having the terrifically huge circulation of 2-- the original which I kept, and the copy which was given to a friend, it was a very unoriginal affair. But it was a beginning. It marked the days of buying toy typewriters and printing sets consisting of rubber type and overly juicy ink pads.

In those days my main connection with the "press" was as editor on the form paper. It came out once, consisted of about 24 pages, and represented the outpourings of juvenilia. Of course, I am really no judge now. From the pinnacle of adulthood one has a tendency to sneer loftily at the attempts of youth. But I do recall we were all mighty proud of that paper. I think, perhaps, I was the proudest of all. After all, wasn't I the editor? Didn't I have the responsibility of nagging at my classmates to do something-- anything-- for it?

Even then, the joys of the stencil duplicator was unknown-- to me. And when I say "unknown", I mean it to the fullest extent of the word. From rather extensive reading, I knew of the regular printing presses, and the typewriter. But of the other means of duplicating the written word I was a complete ignoramus. I do

recall seeing exam sheets turned out in a terrible purple, but I don't remember thinking much about the process. It was likely the hektograph.

In high school I did learn about the rotary stencil duplicator. It resided, in all its filthy inkiness, in the science room. It hulked darkly on a shaky table and seemed to me, judging from hasty glances in its direction as I passed in and out for classes in physics, physical geography, and spares taken during biology for the fifth formers, to be a lousy-looking contraption. The rest of my knowledge was derived from the sloppily turned out exam papers. All the students muttered obscenely when we were handed the messy, smeared, creased typographically-errored horrors the teacher brought in in a huge armful. That and the scenes consisting of muttering teachers struggling with that behemoth as they tried to coerce it into responding halfway decently near each term's end.

But my own days of publishing were still in the dim future. There they remained all through my school days and for some years thereafter. Frankly, I don't recall just when it did begin. I have saved copies of my outpourings only as far back as September 24, 1940. No doubt, among my readers, there are some who still have hidden somewhere, copies of the typed CROCKETT MAGAZINE MART NEWS.

I don't call that publishing. I may have then, but not now. For my product

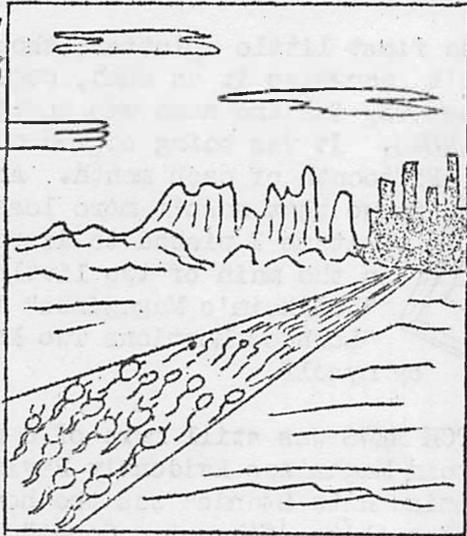
AN ANNIVERSARY ARTICLE

LIGHT

SEPT. 1941
NUMBER 108

IN THIS ISSUE

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



consisted entirely of typed-- with a few carbons-- of swap lists, which were then mailed to a very few correspondents. As this story is concerned only with LIGHT and what led up to it, and what has come of it, I am passing only briefly over those early days.

Beofre, as I write this, is a file copy of that issue of CROUCH MAGAZINE MART NEWS. It is numbered 86A, and is dated September 24, 1940. It consists of 2 pages and is taken up with items I had for swap, and a few newsy notes gleaned from various sources.

CROUCH MAGAZINE MART NEWS #87, October 1, 1940, boasted the huge circulation of 7:

By now I was reading a few fan magazines, foremost among them Harry Warner's SPACEMANS. It also, I believe,

marked the beginning of my fall into fandom, and into publishing. For this issue of the NEWS featured a story of mine, written during class hours some years before, which I called "The Black Castle". I thought it pretty hot stuff then but now I wonder. It's a souvenir and this is about all. The idea wasn't even original as it was patterned after a movie I had seen and liked very much, "Dracula", featuring one Bela Lugosi.

The magazine in #90, November 15, 1940, branched out a trifle more with short articles-- by me, of course!-- on Henry Kuttner, John Russell Fearn, with whom I was then corresponding. There was a short item called "Editor's Notes". John Hollis Mason, Toronto fan and aspiring young author, had sold his first story to Canada's UNCANNY TALES. Ted White was in England with his medical unit. This issue ran 6 pages, but the circulation was still 7-- the limit of carbons I could get from the typewriter.

But the signs were there for those who could read. I was playing with the idea of a magazine though I wasn't at all ambitious and didn't aspire to any heights to speak of.

Number 92 featured a cover, my first. Partially typed, partially hand drawn, it depended on carbons as did the rest of the magazine. Inside, there was a full page editorial, an original story by guess who, called "The Summons", some poetry, most of which was rather grim, a movie review by one George Aylesworth, all of which ran to a sumptuous total of 12 pages. Martin E. Alger appeared, and he is still with me as a reader and correspondent.

Why all this palaver? you may well ask. At first, when I considered this article, I intended writing a Chronological History of LIGHT. I thought of starting it with the first LIGHT, but then I started to think. Wasn't it important to show what led into the present magazine? Shouldn't I show where an apparent inconsistency comes in-- the numbering which ran LIGHT up into the 100, and then was suddenly dropped? Why the change? Where did the two numbering systems, so at variance, come in?

These were the formative
of my existence. I was
fanzines as a writer.
signs were
been lit.
And I

dis-
num-
CROUTCH
and
the first
catalog
consisted
entitled
Warner, and
No Pay Policy"

Number 94
a commercial
on Bi-Monthly
started serializing
a schooldays class-written
thing, "Aboard a Comet",
which was
more an elaborate plot
than a finished story.
I still consider it
a damned good
plot.

Number 95 had 6 pages,
with a circulation of 8.
I don't recall how I got
that extra copy-- maybe
I was using a thinner
paper or just thumping
the keys harder. I had
three stories this issue,
as well as a full page
of swaps. "Harry Warner's
Visitor", a sort of sequel
or rebuttal to SERCEYAY's
"Strango Avatar". Another
part of "Aboard a Comet",
the start of "The Radio
Mystery", all by yours
truly. I had no modesty
in those days. I saw
nothing wrong with
writing the whole issue
by myself. I wonder if
I could get away with
now?

Number 97 featured
"The Haunted Classroom",
by that master of the
keyboard, Crutch. There
were also articles of
varied types.

I can plainly see where
the days of the straight
swap list were over. I
was definitely trying to
print a little magazine,
though my means of
duplication were
definitely a hindrance.
But something was
coming up.

This was forecast with
Number 99 when I used
a hektograph for the
first time. The name of
the magazine was
duplicated in that
medium.

But Number 100, dated
April 15th, 1940, was
a washout. The hektog-
raph process didn't pan
out at all well. Even
my file copy, the first
off the jolly, is almost
impossible to read in
the main. But I count
this an important issue.
I used a means of
duplication that might,
I hoped, allow more
copies and better all
round results, once I
had mastered it.

And the name-- for the
first time I had one
that was fannish,
ELECTRON! There were
14 pages, with stories,
articles, decorations,
and little pictures.

Following issues showed
better hektog results
and I was starting to
feel rather proud of
my attempt.

Number 103, however,
blasted one fond hope,
and that was that the
name was an

issues. The bug was
nibbling away at the
very core not yet a
fan, though I had
appeared in certain
I hadn't started to
really publish, but
there. Something was
happening. The fuse
had The spark was
nearing the explosive
charge. was sitting
right on top of it!

The first little
splutter, though I
n't recognize it as
such, occurred with
ber 93, for the name
was shortened to
NEWS. It was being
copied out the First
Fifteenth of each
month. And this was
issue that wasn't
more loss just a
of items I wished
to dispose of. It
in the main of two
little articles
"Wollholm's
Magazines" by
Harry "Lowndes
Mentions Two
Magazines with
by myself.

of CROUTCH NEWS
was still more of a
magazine than
list. "Wollholm
Magazines Evidently
Paying-- Unknown
Basis-- Now
Magazine Hits
Scandals" was the
headliner. I
started serializing
a schooldays class-
written thing, "Aboard
a Comet", which
was more an elaborate
plot than a finished
story. I still
consider it a
damned good
plot.





this article tastefully decorated by Crutch



CROUCH NEWS back again. But for real game.

original. There was a letter published, from Arthur L. Widner, telling me Jack Spoor had had a postage-stamp sized magazine in the Papa, by the same name. As a result, Number 104 saw the name I'd had a taste of "fame" and was out

Number 108 saw the turn of the tide. The ship had come in to port.

LIGHT appeared on the cover, accompanied by a picture that has always caused controversy, as it showed little worm-like wigglers moving up a broad highway to

This first issue of LIGHT, under that name, had the following contributors, some of which have dropped from sight, other of which you will immediately recognize.

I think the table of contents will be of interest, so here it is, in detail:

LIGHT-- SEPT. 1941-- NUMBER 108

- Cover Crutch.
- From The Pages of the Writers Digest- Crutch.
- The Mail Bag-- Rosenblum, John Hollis Mason, Forrest J. Ackerman, Gordon L. Peck.
- Jottings-- John Hollis Mason.
- On The Moral Upbringing of Ghouls-- J. H. Mason.
- Lachosian Valodictory- Donald J. Doughty.
- Lexicon Blues-- Gordon L. Peck.
- British Fandom (letters)-- J. Michael Rosenblum, John Russell Fearn, Don. J. Doughty.
- Fan Notes-- Crutch.
- Dedication to Lac-- verse-- E. A. Godfrey.
- Editor Squeaks-- Crutch.
- Picture by Gordon L. Peck.

In the next issue I will tell how the name LIGHT was picked, than one had a finger in the pie and the story is interesting. had now joined the ranks of the true fanzines, even though the circulation was yet very small-- Number 109 had a circulation of 20. But from here on growth was certain. And the hokto goo going to last for long. The mimeograph was coming up-- but that next month's instalment.

TO BE CONTINUED

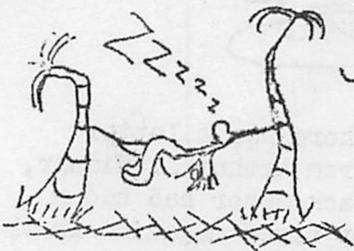
More LIGHT circulation wasn't is

STYLUS
NO. 36 2/3

WRITE THAT LETTER NOW. YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS UP. YOU HAVE TO RENEW. A CARD OR A LETTER SAYING YOU WANT TO CONTINUE RECEIVING "LIGHT" WILL DO IT. DO IT NOW!

ESSAYS ON THE MARVELS OF SCIENCE by

Prof.essor Thaddeus K. Wiffenpoof.
M.A.D., L.B.S.



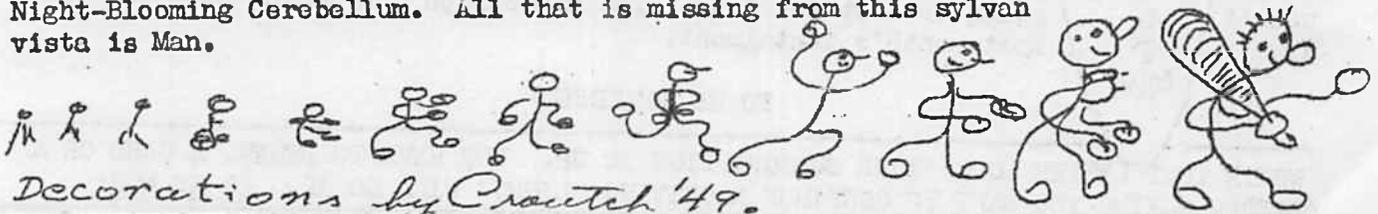
Section 83-- Number 4 Q 2-- "BEDS".

WHAT discovery or invention has provided mankind (*) with more comfort and satisfaction than that of the Bed? None! The bed-- what memories does it bring to mind-- possibly we had better veer from that train of thought and try another line. What would modern civilization be like without beds; and, for that matter, would there be any modern civilization? That is the question fraught, if not pregnant, with unanswerable imponderables. Every person-- from puling infant to senile doddor-- spends a third of his or her life there: but does anyone stop to consider the source of these ever useful articles? NO! Does anyone enquire about the genesis of other bed-like appurtenances such as couches, chesterfields, davenports, chaise-- pardon me-- chaise lounges-- to say nothing about camp cots, over-stuffed arm chairs and other aids to mankind's (*) pleasure and comfort? Once again the answering echo resounds throughout the land and o'er the sea-- NO! NO! Shall we investigate and search for the origin of these aids to repose? Well-- here it is--



Let us climb into the Chromo-coch and travel back to the Charcoalaceous or Lightly Grilled Age and begin our reconnoitering. The weather is fairly damp-- almost up to the standard of the Californian Mist of the Petrolaceous Age-- and we see the rains descending and the stem ascending. The luxuriant foliage is almost hidden from view by the vaporous atmosphere. However, the mists part at times and we see the pelting rain touching the hearts of the Cabbage Palms as they wave their ductile branches in the circumambient effluvium. The heat is somewhat oppressive and we see the Frigidaceous Oldtimeous-- the progenitor of Iceberg Lettuce-- fanning itself with its cartilaginous tendrils. We see the Fungi indulging in their ubiquitous custom of exploding audibly: but their contents, instead of

jetting out in a volcanic manner, are emerging like globs of discouraged blanchmango. The Carniverous Conifers can be heard snarling at the Lesser Widgeons-- Hystericus Fantasticus-- as both species drowsily browse amongst the Long-Living Anaciacs-- Kleptomania Vivatum. Ah! Nature in the raw is seldom mild! A gap in the aerial spume allows us a fleeting glimpse so of the Dinosaurs dining off the lush foliage of the Double-Flowering Euthanasia. We can also descry the Plesiosauri amulating the feats of the dainty Triceratops as both stroll along the comely branches of the Night-Blooming Cerebellum. All that is missing from this sylvan vista is Man.



Decorations by Craitch '49.

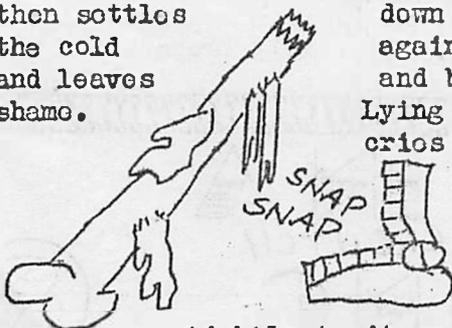
While we are busy scrutinizing the scene the cry of "Chloe!" resounds in our ears as we hearken to the sordine tremoloes of a Pterodactyl calling to its Young. Wait-- what is this creature-- his hirsute body bent in a Paeleolithic crouch? (No relation, we hope, to Leslie A. of that ilk.) Ha! We are now contemplating the Missing Link-- half Man, Half Ape. He appears to be the victim of an extreme case of Hyperpilosity and we pity him for his heated environment is anything but fitting for such a pelt as he displays.

CHLOE!!!
(WHERE ARE YE,
YA OLD *)?-?)



As we look our fill, we wonder if he can realize just what evolution is going to do to his descendants. As he plods along the humid, dank and muggy trail, little can he rock that man's spiritual heritage will prove the victor over his simian ancestry in this battle of evolution. It is not for him to know of the golden age when mankind will soar to the stars and be godlike. Likewise beyond his ken is the Atomic Age-- when one nation will be able to scare the nether garments off the balance of the world by threatening to use the Atom Bomb in great profusion and by so doing, sterilize the entire human race. Nor was he to suspect that if his apeish ancestors had conquered in the evolutionary race they would have done a far better job of running the world. Another hairy form follows him along the trail and we assume that this one must be a female for she is carrying their entire household on her shoulders. He must be a great hunter-- or perchance a scavenger-- for she is gaily disporting herself underneath her load which is the major portion of the roar haunch of a long-deceased Tyrannosaurus. No stopping in at the delicatessen for cold cuts for them-- they toted their food when they travelled. He waves his shaggy head from side to side; anxiously peering out of his deep set eyes and his nostrils quiver as he sniffs the air for the scent of dangerous animals. Finally he is satisfied and he grunts out an order and they cease their laborious trudging. His mate drags the Sunday roast to him as he squats. Needing no knife or fork-- or fire, for that matter-- he sinks his fangs into the succulent repast as she sprawls down and waits for him to finish. At least his stomach is so distended that it pains him to eat more, so he omits a combination belch and grant and she takes her place at the Piece de Resistance. Does she gorge herself and slobber all over the collation and drool the osculent juices down her hairy pelt as he had done? Certainly. Emily Post is still in the far-distant future. Finding a bunch of leaves he lies down and shortly the peacefulness of the Arboreous retreat is harshly disturbed by the stentorian snores coming from his prognathus physiognomy.

She, being more feminine, is restless and peers around the soggy beskage until her ophthalmic organs rest upon a litter of branches that the Early-World gale has left on the water-logged ground. It is nearly hidden from sight beneath a covering of gigantic leaves from the Rickenbackerus-- or Free-Wheeling-- tree. She clambers onto the semi-sodden mass and discovers it is much softer to lie on than the saturated earth. She grunts with pleasure and dances up and down to express her inoffable delight. She goes to the male, wakes him and shows him her discovery. Ug-- for such was his cognomen-- climbs upon it, gives a few tentative bounces, then settles the cold and leaves shame.



down to slumber on this novel resting place. Oog is left in again. Does she despair? Never! She gathers branches and builds an edifice that puts the natural-made bed to lying upon it she grunts and gurgles with pleasure. Her cries arouse the lord and master and he notices her enjoying her rest. The thought plows through his will-be brain that such goings on were not seemly and should not be. Being male, he ambles over to her shakedown -- or rather, build-up-- and tries to dispossess her of it. She resists violently and clings

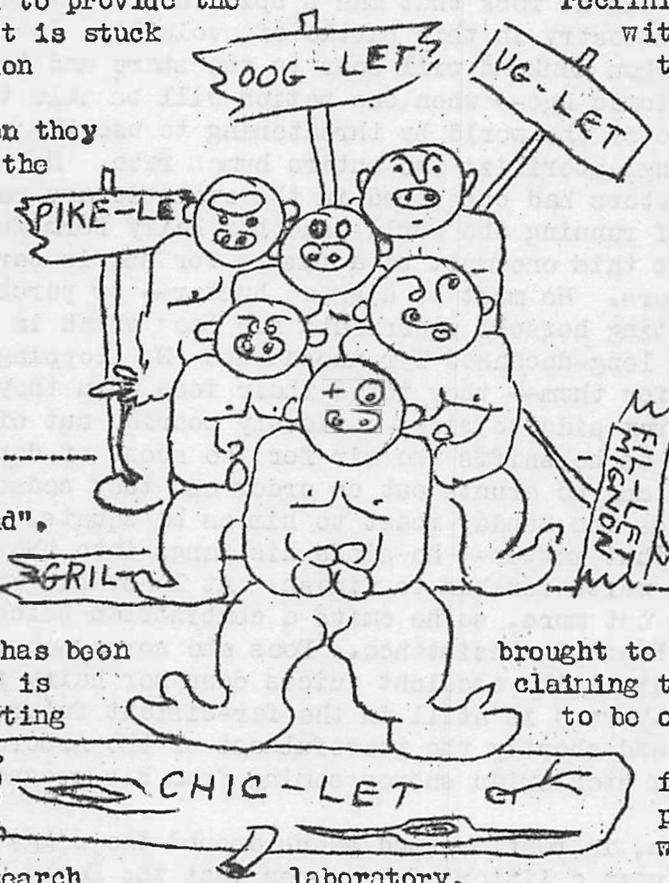
tightly to it as he tries to thrust her away. At last that are

both on top of the leafy resting place. There we will leave them-- Ug and Oog, the original discoverers of beds.

Let us see if they continue to use beds: we set the Chronomech for a few years later and start our time travel. We are fortunate for the first people we meet are Ug and Oog-- still trudging along a poorly marked trail. It is quite apparent that they have used beds to good advantage for we see them being followed by many young he's and she's-- all resembling them. The parade comes to a straggling halt and Ug sits and orders the members of his household around with his expressive grunts. Ug-let and Oog-let prepare his first dish-- a mass of green herbs-- and Piko-let serves him. Fil-let removes the bones from the main course-- a tasty Archcopteryx-- and passes the meat to Gril-let who softens it in his mouth to make it soft and mushy. Papo is old now and requires his food to be semi-digested before he can masticate it. We notice that his dentures are conspicuous by their absence. All work to provide the reclining man with his feast--

even little Chiclet is stuck filled to completion of great slobbery. When all have eaten they scurry around for the begin making up few minutes tribe slumbering ancestors of all mont. We justified like horseless to stay.

with a job. When he is the rest begin and sounds fill the air. All, except Oog, necessary materials and their leafy beds. A later sees the entire away on the veritable modern resting equip- leave them with the assumption that beds-- carriages, are here



(*) In this embraces "womankind", applicable in the

essay, "Ranking" Particularly present article.

AUTHOR'S NOTE It has been S. Wilmer Midgeley is of articles purporting scientific is totally stole both the from the author janitor in the research

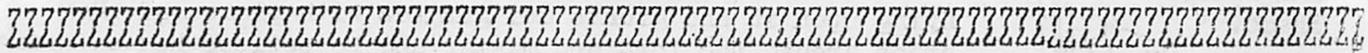
brought to my attention that one claiming to have written a series to be original essays on discoveries. This claim false. The fact is, he plots and the material whilst employed as a

laboratory.

At the present time the Institution's lawyers are instituting proceedings against him. They are charging him with theft, plagiarism, mole contondro and barratry.

Prpsoective readers should shun his inferior imitations and insist on the original Wiffenpoof essays. Always recall the slogan-- "Proof, not spooof, from Wiffenpoof!"

CONCLUSTON



Next Issue

MOUSE IN A STOCKING
BY LESLIE A. CROUCH



The Victorious Bride

written especially for LIGHT by

Leslie Alton

ELAINE ran her strong, long fingers down

over the naked ivoryness of her body and admired the reflection in the tall mirror. She guffacted sinuously, calculatingly. This is the night! Soon all she had schemed for would be her's. Her's by right of possession as laid down by the laws of man and the toneless words mumbled unfeelingly by the sour-faced minister.

She threw back her head and laughed. The sound startled her and she pressed her hand to her mouth.

Picking up the flame-colored gown from where it had hung over the back of the chair, she wrapped it tightly about her, revelling in the sense of warmth it gave her. It is chilly in here! Why isn't there more heat?

Outside the snow flakes drifted down over so softly. Carried through the thin, keen air, she could hear the distant bells from the carillon.

Silent Night. Holy Night. What a Christmas present I am giving myself. And you-- you, out there-- you thought you could keep him for yourself. Sleep tight, little sister. Sleep tight. I hope the worms don't bite.

The door from the hall opened. He was tall, dark, saturnine, with a strange womanish hint to his features. How handsome you are, she thought, gliding to meet him, hands outstretched.

What is he thinking? Now you are mine? What a Christmas present you are? For tomorrow you are twenty-one-- is he thinking of what that means-- of what goes with me?

Tingling little shivers ran up and down her body as she pressed quiveringly to him. How smooth your face is. You are always so velvetly, so closely shaven. How warm your lips are. Why don't you kiss me, my dear? But soon you will-- soon you'll know the difference between me and that cold, virginly little saint lying so coldly in her coffin.

She drew away from him and hintingly



turned toward the broad bed, satin-covered, soft-pillowed.

The dark eyes watched her unwinkingly. He made no move to follow and she turned to look at him, tiny twin lines appearing between her eyes.

Dropping on the edge of the bed, she patted the smooth covers.

"Come, my dear," she invited. "we are married, now. We needn't hide anymore, playing innocent before the others."

Instead, he went to the tall mirror. The tapering fingers, effeminate in their gracefulness, caressed the cravat, soothing the perfect folds, touching lovingly the glittering gem in the ornate stickpin.

The little fool! he said to himself. Well, I suppose I must get it over with. But not yet. Not until I have enjoyed this moment. Time enough then to let her find what a huge joke she has made of herself.

Somewhere, something dropped, tinklingly. Elaine jumped, pressed hand to her throat. Where was that? Not next door-- involuntarily she looked toward the door connecting her room with that of her sister's. The unwanted thought sneaked in-- to be pushed back angrily: She must



The Victorious Bride
BY LESLIE A. CROUTCH

have come upstairs: she was so careless: always dropping something. Suddenly, Elaine wanted to laugh: the room was empty. No more would anything be broken there-- the dead can't come back-- not after sleeping so many months.

A rap at her door snapped her back to the world of reality. Catching a tight hold of her nerves, Elaine, rose, looked questioningly at her husband. He smiled.

"I asked the butler to bring some wine, my dear. It will warm us. . .", he left the thought unfinished, but she thrilled to the picture conjured up.

Not for long. What a mood I am in tonight. After this long, why must I feel this way? Is it because it is Christmas Eve and she used to come in, bringing hot coffee, before we went to bed?

The red wine winked merrily in the long stemmed glass. The lights leaped off in high, cruel lights that seemed to hurt as they stabbed through her eyes into her brain. Suddenly she became conscious of a headache.

The glasses clicked musically. His eyes stared down into hers over the rim of his. She shook herself. This is all nonsense. I am starting to act like a little fool.

But when she raised the glass she couldn't see the elarot. It was blotted out by a white face, framed in ruffled blonde curls. Brown eyes looked accusingly into hers.

". . .Elaine. . .Elaine. . ." the voice was whispering, far, far off. . .
". . .oh, Elaine. Why? Why?"

The glass went crashing across the room to splinter redly against the connecting door.

Elaine went to the window, stared out into the gathering storm. Why do you have to come back now? You are dead, you hear?-- dead-- dead-- dead--

Her husband was waiting beside the little table, his glass filled again. Dark eyes stared unwinkingly into hers. A sardonic grin spread across the womanish features. Suddenly, she almost hated him.

But this is all wrong, she cried within. I have fought to get you. I have cheated-- killed-- I have even paid-- I will be victorious-- I will-- I WILL. . .

Again he only watched when she went toward the bed, beckoning with her smile.

He followed, taking little dainty steps, walking on his toes like a fencer. Halting before her, he began to disrobe, taking his time about it, while she watched with a certain fascination that she found somewhat frightening.

This is it! This is what I have killed for-- ever since the day her first came here-- my sister hanging on his arm, laughing, laughing-- how I hated her, then! Always she had everything-- my looks-- my birthday-- everything. . .

As he placed his outer clothes, neatly folded, on the chair with exasperating care, he talked.

"This is a great triumph for you, I suppose. I thought it was to be your sister who would be married this day. How you must have hated her-- to take from her the most beautiful thing in her life."

Elaine stared. This is strange talk-- well, you are no better than I am.

Throwing back her head, she laughed, a high brittle sound that was flung back from the lofty ceiling.

"You didn't have to marry me, you know." She smiled. "But you couldn't help it-- you know, when we met, that it was I you loved, not that little milk-sop with the puritan ideals and her cheap little charities."

His bare toes dug into the deep pile of the expensive rug. Clad in singlet and trousers he looked slim, somehow, not at all as masculine as that first time she had happened on them, swimming together in the pool. Then was when she had decided it was to be her's-- no matter what the means, or the cost.

Her golden hair flew as she gave her head a toss. Rising from the bed, letting the robe slip from her shoulders in a manner she considered bewitching, she slipped toward him, to press against him.

"Love me!" She crooned, her arms sliding about his neck. "Love me-- as I have never been loved before!"

Laughing amusedly, he slipped out of her embrace. "Are you sure you want me to?"

"Oh yes, yes. Why are you so cold-- you have never kissed me-- never held me in your arms--like you held her-- oh, I watched you. . ." she bit off the words.

Slowly he unzipped the trousers

