

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

No. 9: July 1982

ISSN 0157-5430

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, a quarterly for inquiry and reflection on science fiction, is produced for free distribution by Graham Stone, GPO Box 4440, Sydney 2001, Australia.

== 69 == THE SCIENTIFUNCTION LIBRARY

Amazing Stories ran a full-page advertisement in its July and August 1930 issues, p. 374 and 480 respectively, and it also ran on the back cover of Amazing Stories Quarterly, Summer 1930. It presents us with a mystery. "The Scientifunction Library, complete in 6 pocket-size volumes, a gift from Amazing Stories." They were being given away with subscriptions, eleven-month subscriptions (what kind of sense did that make, will someone explain to me?)

Gernsback's opposition magazines had been offering the first and second batches of six each in the Science Fiction Series, previously discussed here (Topic 9, Addenda 39, 49, 66) -- and was yet to issue another six, though they were never demoted to being a premium for subscriptions -- so it is not hard to see the inspiration for this Amazing project. As Dr. Sloane was fond of saying, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." But the question is, just what was he giving away here?

The six booklets offered comprised two each by Poe, Verne and Wells, and their contents are listed as follows:

Poe. Tales of Imaginative Science (contains A Descent into the Maelstrom; The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade; Mellonta Tauta)

--- Tales Psychological and Gruesome (William Wilson; The Man of the Crowd; Berenice)

Verne. A Voyage to the Moon.

--- Five Weeks in a Balloon.

Wells. The Obliterated Man and Other Stories.

--- The Empire of the Ants and Other Stories. (Between them these contained the title stories and The Cone; The Remarkable Case of Davidson's Eyes; The Plattner Story; The Red Room; and A Vision of Judgment)

"...we have had these greatest stories of Wells, Poe and Jules Verne compactly printed in 6 convenient pocket volumes..." This seems to claim them as

+++++++ IN THIS ISSUE +++++++

- 69. The Scientifunction Library (No such thing as a free gift?) .. p. 53
- 70. Not, however, in the Next Issue (Best-laid plans, missing stories) .. 54
- 71. The Science Fiction Critic (A trailblazer in the early movement) .. 57
- 72. Ah, the Simple Life (What do you mean, Adventure?) .. 59
- 73. Siegel and Schuster (Not SF: but of associational interest ... 59
- 74. William Lawrence Hamling (Civil rights are never secure) .. 60
- 75. The Lost Arsenal Plot (Its origin, rather than its meaning) .. 60
- 76. Phosphor, by J. Filmore Sherry (Addenda) .. 61
- 77. Edgar Rice Burroughs (Addenda: The Conquest of the Moon) .. 61
- 78. --- (Addenda: For an example of larger Barsoomian fauna...) .. 61
- 79. Jack Vance (Addenda) .. 62

The Scientifiction Library contd.

a newly printed series. But elsewhere on the page we read: "These 6 books have been especially chosen by *Amazing Stories*' editors..." which is not as precise as it might be; and: "We have ordered only a limited number of these remarkable gift sets and cannot guarantee them to subscribers whose orders arrive late."

Well, now, what in fact were these books? We can be sure that they were not newly printed editions for several reasons. In that case they would have meant a considerable editorial effort. Instead of the tried and true tales we see here, it would have been logical to offer new stories not available anywhere else, as Gernsback had done with *Stellar's Science Fiction Series*. Then, too, the expense involved would have most likely been enough that they would have been put on sale first, not given away. And if they had to be printed anew even a modest estimate of the demand would have called for a print run that would last more than two months. *Stellar's Series* may not have sold well, but they were advertised for over five years and presumably sold enough to make that worth while; and small stocks of some titles remained for *Thrilling Wonder* to offer again and sell out in 1940.

Obviously, *Amazing* had merely bought a supply of some existing booklets, and most probably they were in the Little Blue Book series printed in vast numbers by the Haldeman-Julius Company and sold by mail at five cents. "Each book contains 64 pages and cover, and one long novel or a number of short stories of 11,000 words or more!" Little Blue Books were occasionally more or less but mostly ran to 64 pages, and their standard length was 15,000 words, hardly a long novel length. But can we identify these titles in the Little Blue Book output? No, unfortunately, since no full catalog is available and the usual bibliographic sources did not list them regularly. The Library of Congress catalogued *Five Weeks in a Balloon* and *A Voyage to the Moon*, nos. 482 and 485 of the series, dated 1923, but I could not find the rest.* Does a comprehensive list of the Haldeman-Julius titles exist? A difficult task for the bibliographer, particularly as books that sold poorly were often retitled. Anyone willing to search for and check Haldeman-Julius advertisements in the press of the 1920's for these books is welcome to try.

As it happens, I own a few Little Blue Books among which is no. 482, *Five Weeks in a Balloon*. Clearly called "an abridged translation of Jules Verne's stirring romance by Charles J. Finger," it is a 5" booklet, text approximately 15,000 words on p. 5-57, ads filling 58-64, in an unadorned paper cover now faded to a light grey.

One thing that is obvious is that this gesture by *Amazing* failed to make any impression on the science fiction world. However, I wonder if they went to the trouble to have the name of *Amazing Stories*, or *Scientifiction Library*, imprinted or even rubber stamped. If so, some identifiable copies may exist in older collections.

== 70 == NOT, HOWEVER, IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Plugs for the next issue are always useful as fillers, but from time to time a story thus dangled as bait fails to materialise there. Most often this is because the next issue itself fails to materialise. It is a rare event indeed for a magazine to admit that it is folding up, but it often happens that publication has to end regardless. Stories announced in such final issues will usually resurface elsewhere, but sometimes they do not, at least under the same title.

* A Catalog of books represented by Library of Congress printed cards issued to July 31, 1942. Pageant Books, N.Y., 1958/60. vol. 156

Not, however, in the Next Issue contd.

Lester Anderson and Don Thompson, in an article in ERB-dom in 1973* drew attention to the numerous stories that have been announced in this way and heard of no more, giving the only comprehensive list I have seen. Often of course the story would be recovered by its author and sooner or later sold elsewhere, though not necessarily under the same title. Many on their list are satisfactorily accounted for, others can at least be reasonably identified with later published stories. But some do seem to have disappeared. I have therefore made the following list of stories whose fate is, to me at least, uncertain. Perhaps we can get some answers. Some of the authors are familiar names, and the problem is to identify the title later used since the story most likely did see print eventually. Others are themselves obscure.

Bartel, Philip Jacques. The Jester of Xenonia (announced in Wonder Stories, Apr 1936). Clearly another in the connected group including The Elixir of Progress and One Hundred Generations, the background of which included cities named for the inert gases. Bartel's only later appearance was The Infinite Eye in Future Fiction, Nov 1939, for which it would not be a sensible title. Circumstantial evidence -- Charles D. Hornig was editing Wonder to accept the original story, much of his period of Science Fiction and Future Fiction reads very much as if written a few years earlier with Wonder in mind -- is here deceptive. Bartel himself is a puzzling figure. He wrote under at least one other alias, Philip Barshovsky, but in real life he seems to have been Maurice M. Kaplan. What more is known of him, anyone?

Binder, Eando. Beyond the Limit (announced in Wonder, Apr 1936). Let's see...aha! Well, one thing we can't see in the April 1936 Wonder Stories is any mention of forthcoming stories. The advert that Anderson and Thompson referred to is in the February issue, taking up more than half of p. 877! It mentions twelve stories in all, some with brief comments. Four of these are found in the April issue. The others we'll deal with in alphabetical order. But my first thought on Beyond the Limit was that it might be Binder's Where Eternity Ends, which used the concept of the universe having a distinct boundary, where normal space faded out and natural phenomena changed as order merged into chaos. But evidently not, for under Beyond the Limit we read: "The famed writer of Dawn to Dusk and Enslaved Brains returns with a tale of a weird experiment in the laboratory of a scientific genius..." That could describe many stories. Binder, I think, would have placed this story somewhere, he was popular enough to sell some worthless pieces and in the boom period of 1938-41 there were plenty of competing magazines hungry for material. But which is it?

Burke, John F. Before the Flood. (announced in Tales of Wonder no. 16, Spring 1942). This would have been his first publication, and I cannot fit the title to any of his later shorts. As it was over a decade before he did see print, I guess that this early effort was discarded.

Chapple, Paul K. Black World (announced in Wonder Stories, Feb 1936). • Chapple is recorded otherwise only with one story, The Growth Promoter, in Wonder Nov 1934, so unless he used another name this one is lost. Is anything known about him?

Coblentz, Stanton A. The Sixth Sense (announced in Marvel Tales, Summer 1935). I can't identify this with any later Coblentz short.

Derleth, August, and Schorer, Mark. Countries in the Sea (announced in Marvel Tales, Mch/April 1935). Again, would this team have failed to recover a story and place it? I think not. They appeared a number of times after this date in Weird Tales and Strange Stories, and the stories were mostly collected in Colonel Markesan and Less Pleasant People (Arkham, 1966).

* Lost Tales of the S-F Magazines, in ERB-dom 69, Apr 1973, p. (15-17)

Not, however, in the Next Issue contd.

Geier, Chester S. City, City. (announced in Comet, July 1941). The two obvious candidates are Enigma of the City in Amazing, Apr 1943, and Environment, in Astounding May 1944. This would have been Geier's first publication in science fiction, though he had appeared in Campbell's Unknown.

Keller, David B. The Feminine World (announced in Wonder Stories, Feb 1936). The title does not seem to suit any of Keller's stories first printed after this date.

Keller, Orris M. Jr. Being Human (announced in Marvel Tales, Mch/Apr 1935). Here we have not only a lost story but an otherwise un-heard-of author. Is anything known of him? The story's theme was the end of life on Earth.

Kostkos, Henry J. The Kiss of Death (announced in Comet, July 1941). This would have been the last of Kostkos' thirteen recorded stories, so it leaves us twelve. Do we know if he wrote under other names or in other spheres?

Lewis, Richard O. The Imaginative Genius (announced in Comet, July 1941). Lewis is known for fourteen stories, mostly in Amazing or Fantastic Adventures. Six were printed later than this and do not seem good candidates. Was Lewis a real person or not?

Manning, Laurence. Maze of Creation (announced in Wonder Stories, Feb 1936). This was a sequel to World of the Mist, in wonder Sept-Oct 1935, and has never been published. Manning is an author who should be revived -- I would presume he is no longer living though he may well be flourishing at 83, but I mean his work should be reprinted -- and this manuscript if it exists would add interest to a collected edition. The Man who Awoke series was collected a few years ago in paperback, but the Stranger Club stories have not been to my knowledge, and there are others of more or less appeal.

Miller, P. Schuyler, and McDermott, Paul. The Bell Moon (announced in Marvel Tales, Mch/Apr 1935). A continuation of the series featuring the space pirate Lem Gulliver, this was never published.

Passingham, W. J. The Marsupial People (Announced in Fantasy no. 3, 1939). Passingham had some stories later in the excellent British juvenile weekly Modern Wonder, a more successful venture than most to mix fact and fiction. But whether this was one of them I cannot say. Is there a list of its contents? It ran for about a year at the beginning of the war, changing the title to Modern World after a while.

Raymond, Hugh and Kent, Mallory (pseuds. of John B. Michel and Robert W. Lowndes respectively). The Enemy (announced in Stirring Science and Fantasy, Mch 1942). I cannot place this and would suppose it lost.

Reynolds, Quentin. The Man Without a Soul (announced in Fantasy no. 3, 1939). The name is not known otherwise. At least, it hardly seems likely that this could be the journalist and broadcaster who was a popular personality during the war and later wrote a not much admired book on the Street & Smith firm.* Neither is the story known otherwise.

St. Clair, Margaret. The Avatar (announced in Startling, Fall 1955). Not published under that title. Graeme Flanagan reports: "A story entitled Bannion's Cave was sold to Thrilling Wonder Stories just before that magazine ceased publication. Mrs St. Clair has no record of any subsequent publication of this story." ** It seems logical that it was moved to the last magazine of the group, Startling, and given another title but never reached print as Startling too failed.

* Reynolds, Quentin. The Fiction Factory, or From Pulp Row to Quality Street. Random House, N.Y. 1955.

** Flanagan, Graeme, Margaret St. Clair. A booklet produced by the author for private distribution. Canberra, nd (1982).

Not, however, in the Next Issue contd.

Stone, Leslie F. The Other Side (announced in Wonder Stories, Feb 1936). This was a sequel to her The Man with the Four Dimensional Eyes, and has not been published.

Temple, William F. Another Chance (announced in Wonder, Feb 1936). Presumably lost, since it cannot be identified with a later story, this would have been his first publication in science fiction.

Verrill, A. Hyatt. Out of the Past (announced in Marvel Tales, Apr/May 1935). Clearly not The Inner World, his only later published story.

Walsh, J. M. Bound for Ardos. (announced in Fantasy no. 3, 1939). "A stirring story of scientific mystery and adventure featuring the author's famous fictional creation, the Interplanetary Guard." This was never published.

There may well have been more stories disappearing in the same fashion as the various short-lived new ventures in science fiction in the 1970's bit the dust, but I have not as yet investigated them. Can anyone throw any light on any of the questions above?

== 71 == THE SCIENCE FICTION CRITIC (see also Topic 2 and Addenda 64)

Claire P. Beck's The Science Fiction Critic was "a definite landmark" in the opinion of Art Widner, who pointed out that I ought to have mentioned this title in my remarks on certain early amateur publications. Now that I have been able to acquire two issues I agree with enthusiasm.

The advocates of SF in the 1930's were willing and sincere, but in general they were rather naive, understanding their subject only superficially and with little discrimination. It is unusual to find someone writing in the early amateur SF press who shows much insight, sense of proportion, awareness of fundamental issues, recognition of what is good and bad in content or treatment in the literature they are promoting. What can we say of publicists who treated Stapledon, the two prominent Smiths, Weinbaum, Burroughs, Binder and Hamilton as equals, who welcomed such appalling trash as the Flash Gordon movie serials, who had no policy but more of the same? (To be sure, on reflection it appears that we have plenty of vocal supporters today who can be characterised in much the same terms relative to today's situation.) Those with something constructive to offer were not much in evidence.

Beck obviously saw this, and in The Science Fiction Critic he did something about it. Here we have a critical journal with an informed, positive stance, attempting to show what was right and wrong in the field of interest and point the way forward. The contrast to, say, Fantasy Magazine or Amateur Correspondent is impressive: these were creditable publications of value to their readers, but they reported on the scene with scarcely a hint of judgment, with no real appreciation of what was going on.

The two issues to hand are letterpress printed: Vol 1 no 4, Feb 1936 has 10 p, 8½", on newsprint; no 14, July 1938, which on the cover is the Special Surprise Anniversary Christmas Issue, Xmas 1938 (and it was quoted to me as October 1937, but who's perfect?) also 10 p, 8" on slick. Most of their content still reads very well. In Feb 1936, Beck editorialises on the correspondence pages of the three SF magazines of the time. "Few persons can honestly deny that they enjoy seeing their names in print...This is probably the most common reason for the letters in the readers' departments of the science fiction magazines today. These departments were introduced for the purpose of availing the reader of a means to place his views before other readers, in order for those other readers do disagree with or to add a constructive idea or two to the original opinion. This privilege has been largely abused in recent years... Once in a great while, a letter...helps to restore our hopes for an eventual reestablishment of sensible discussions or criticisms of stories, but these are all too few. Science fiction should be what its name implies, and letters praising unscientific or blood and thunder stories have done much to lower science fiction to its present status on the ladder of literature."

The Science Fiction Critic contd.

In his "Hammer and Tongs" column, Beck weighs John Russell Fearn and Joseph W. Skidmore and finds them decidedly wanting (not, to be sure, a difficult feat for anyone of ordinary intellect). "The amazing popularity of these writers goes far towards answering the question... 'Is science fiction juvenile?' in the affirmative. It is indeed distressing to anyone who reads science fiction with an appreciation of what it might be, that so much magazine space and so much discussion and moronic praise should be lavished upon such writers as these."

Of Fearn's *Mathematica*, in *Astounding* Feb 1936, he writes: "The lack of unity in the imaginative bases for the story is not so marked as is usual with him, but it is flagrant none the less. Does the story spring from Vulcan, from extraterrestrial visitation, from the idea of the planetary nature of atoms, from Christian Science, or from what? Who can say? Any one of these, adequately handled, could be made into a respectable novel (and has been before now), but boiled up together, with a minimum of literary seasoning and judgment, the result is what might well be expected -- a hobo stew and severe mental indigestion for the partaker thereof."

"Mr Fearn would do well to ask himself which is more suited to the aims of science fiction, the tall naked simplicity of a modern skyscraper or the tasteless pseudo-baroque which he apparently attempts to imitate in his writing. The literary purpose of science fiction must not be the crowding of as many more or less new, startling or gruesome conceptions into a composition, but the discovery of some one fundamentally novel idea, capable of being made scientifically plausible, and the explanation of ways in which the fulfilment of this idea would affect the lives and thoughts of people like you and me."

Next to be cut down to size is Skidmore's *A World Unseen*, in *Wonder* Feb-Apr 1936. "The author has succeeded moderately well in taming his conceptual imagination. The story concerns itself only with the question, 'What might one see if he were small enough to enter the human blood stream?' But oh, the answer! It amazes me beyond telling that any man, in this present 'scientific' age, should be able to reach his majority with such an idiotic jumble of stupid ideas of what goes on inside the human body. Red blood cells ballooned out with gaseous oxygen! Spirochetes with fangs! Spare me from giving more examples. Nor do I recommend that you look them up yourself -- it is too painful. That anyone should hope to sell such maanderings as science fiction is beyond understanding; that he should succeed in doing so is beyond belief."

"After all, this defect is fundamental in a science fiction story. To go beyond the realm of present-day science, or to postulate theories in opposition to what is merely hypothetical -- these are all right. But to boldly state as facts, inept imaginings which go against observation, is something else again... If it is not dishonesty it is intolerable stupidity. Whichever it may be, it must be stopped if contemporary science fiction is ever to become more than an amusement for schoolboys."

"I do not object to trifling with scientific theory. This science fiction must do to exist, and if the trifling is cleverly done, as in Van Kampen's *The Irrelevant*, it is an interesting and valuable mental exercise. But misstatement of scientific fact is very irritating to those who know what the author is talking about, and misleading to those who do not."

"To recapitulate: a science fiction story is the logical development of the effect upon human lives which would be wrought if some new and not un-plausible departure in scientific technique were to be brought to pass. The departure must be new, it must, more emphatically, be plausible, and above all, the interest in the story must be human."

Well, I won't go on quoting from this highly quotable source. The issue also has a short interview with J. Harvey Baggard, further comments on the current magazines and some news.

The second issue to hand offers a discussion in dialog form by D. R. Smith, on the place of characterisation in science fiction; a well reasoned and provoc-

The Science Fiction Critic contd.

ative essay by Robert W. Lowndes on Science Fiction and Ethics; a satirical piece on Forrest J. Ackerman, then very much a sitting duck; and a note on a then little known early work, The Moon Metal by Serviss (these by Willis Conover and L. B. Farsaci respectively).

Altogether, a landmark indeed. Between its level of maturity and the general amateur ambiance there was a yawning gulf, and it must have set a lot of young scientifictionists thinking. A highly desirable serial to collect today -- can anyone help me locate any more issues?

== 72 == AH, THE SIMPLE LIFE

Bill Evans (Celephais, nd, FAPA 178) remembers a story "which appeared in a 1930 Amazing -- probably the November issue -- in which a modern day/near future couple were complaining about civilization and wishing for the primitive life, etc. A friend had invented a matter transmitter and offered to send them to Venus, the stone age Venus of the period. By the end of one day they were hysterical, and were only saved by being picked up by the transmitter again. Quite a debunking of the 'noble savage' idea."

Yes, in outline that's The Cosmic Express, by Jack Williamson, indeed in Amazing Nov 1930; reprinted in Amazing Dec 1931, also in Avon Science Fiction Reader 1, 1951; in The Early Williamson (Doubleday 1975), in The Pandora Effect (Ace 1969), and in Strange Signposts, ed. Elwood & Moskowitz (Holt 1966). I am surprised to find it left out of The Best of Jack Williamson (Del Rey 1978), which includes several I think quite inferior to it.

"The detailed science in the story", Williamson wrote in 1975, "read better than than now..." But the affectionate satire is as good as ever. The two victims are writers. He specialises in "thrilling action romances...of ages past, when men were men...His heroes were invariably strong, fearless, resourceful fellows, who could handle a club on equal terms with a cave-man, or call science to aid them in defending a beautiful mate from the terrors of a desolate wilderness." (Does this sound strangely familiar?) She writes "simple lyrics of the sea, of sunsets, of bird songs, of bright flowers and warm winds, of thrilling communion with nature, and growing things...Even though the whole world had grown up into a city, the birds were extinct, there were no wild flowers, and no one had time to bother about sunsets." Naturally a taste of the primeval life of Venus is too good an offer to pass up, but proves not at all what they expect. It's great fun -- go and read it, all of you.

== 73 == SIEGEL AND SCHUSTER

Jerome Siegel and Joseph Schuster were active supporters of science fiction in its early days and are generally credited with some of the first amateur publishing in the field though details are obscure. A few years later they broke into the then also new and developing field of comic books, originating Superman who needs no introduction. It seems however that others made millions out of the idea. Noting comments by various people with few facts and little unanimity, I tried the New York Times Index for clues and found this entry for 28 Dec 1980, p. 33 col. 3:

"Warner Communications Inc., following request by Joseph Schuster and Jerry Siegel, cartoonist and writer who created the Superman character, signs contract giving them each \$20,000 a year for the rest of their lives, and guarantees that their names will appear on all future Superman products. They comment." I will refrain .

== 74 == WILLIAM LAWRENCE HAMLING

Harry Warner Jr. writes (Horizons 43/3, May 1982, FAPA 179) "If anyone can find Bill Hamling, he might be the best source of information on Palmer's early years as Amazing editor. Last I heard, Hamling was in jail..." But, I thought, he can't still be there. While I was looking for Siegel and Schuster in the New York Times Index I also checked on Hamling's case. Hamling and others were victimised by your criminal president and his minions, and what did you do about it? It was a notable battle lost for freedom of the press in the endless contest. For the record, the crucial entry (abbreviations reconstituted) reads as follows:

"14 Oct 1974, p. 51, col. 3. Supreme Court on Oct 15 will hear arguments for rehearing on its June 24 opinion that upheld by 1 vote majority 4-year sentence and \$87,000 fines imposed on publisher William L. Hamling, who converted Presidential Commission's Report on Pornography into best seller in 1970 by adding questionable illustrations to condensed version of official text; Hamling has charged his prosecution was thinly disguised political move by Nixon administration to punish him for widely circulating Government report that white House had sought to suppress because of Nixon's anger over its findings and recommendations; publisher and 3 employees of his Greenleaf Classics Inc, and 2 affiliated distributing and mail order concerns, were convicted on 11 counts of pandering to prurience in mailing out 55,000 brochures in 1970 advertising Commission's report; book's editor Earl Kemp received 3-year prison sentence..." The Court voted against rehearing. Earlier references in the Times are: 1971, 6 Mch, p. 24, col. 3; 19 Dec p. 71, col. 5; 25 Dec p. 22, col. 5; 1974, 16 June p. 23, col. 1.

Well, then, he must have been released in 1978 (and if that's your idea of justice you're welcome to it) but where is he now? Hamling was a friend of Palmer, contributor to the Ziff-Davis magazines and later on their staff, finally Managing Editor 1948-50 before again following Palmer in running Imagination. He would know more of what went on behind the scenes at Amazing and Fantastic Adventures in the war years than anyone else left. So can we locate him?

== 75 == THE LOST ARSENAL PLOT

Brian Earl Brown writes (Fapamentary 2, May 1982, FAPA 179) "...Read Farmer's The Cache recently. It's another lost pile of super-weapons story. Wollheim has published scads of them. Curious -- what was the first 'Lost Arsenal' story?"

There you have me. I cannot think of any early examples. There are stories that involve contact with some other world, dimension, lost city or what have you which has some advanced technology including a weapon or weapons available. The Moon Pool by Merritt -- or rather the sequel The Conquest of the Moon Pool -- first published in 1919, in All-Story Weekly 15 Feb - 22 Mch, is an example. But so is The Coming Race by Lord Lytton, first published 1871. But the modern cliché dating I think from some original close to 1960 has an abandoned stock of devastating engines of destruction ready to use, recalling the rhetorical analogy of giving a loaded gun to an idiot. No more than an elementary knowledge of psychoanalysis is needed to draw some conclusions about this which can be related to popular attitudes on various matters, but we'll let that go.

The earliest example I can think of in which a single usable weapon is discovered left behind by a vanished culture is The Weapon Too Dreadful to Use, by Isaac Asimov, in Amazing, May 1939 -- though I am probably overlooking others before that. If I remember it correctly there is a closer approach in Xandulu, by Jack Williamson, in Wonder, Mch-May 1934: in the great subterranean cave realm there are some ancient energy weapons stored by a venerably ancient nonhuman race which, after ages of peace and lofty philosophical development, they are mentally unable to use, and with difficulty consent to the human interloper using to fight the bad guys.

ADDENDA

== 76 == PHOSPHOR, by J. Filmore Sherry (see Topic 46)

Teresa Nielsen Heyden writes (Zed no. 3, May 1982, FAPA 179) "On page 42 you use the phrase 'hairy bit of crumpet.' I am much bemused. Can you explain that one?"

Ah, the problem of communication between two peoples who are under the impression that they speak the same language. Well, now. A bit of crumpet, a bit of crackling, a bit of stuff, a bit of talent...are some of the expressions used by them common people to refer to a female person considered as sex object. Also used by us intellectuals to show we keep the common touch. I wrote that in Phosphor "the visitor from the upper world has the usual experiences." In this class of stories where someone finds a race of human or other beings living in an enclave under the ground or sometimes the ocean, it is usual for a nubile local wench to provide what we used to call a romantic interest. In this instance since the cave folk are hybrids of man and ape (the actual word used being monkey) I hope I was not being racist as well as sexist in tagging her as hairy and cynically defining her role in the story. I only mentioned her at all because in these stories the place is very often destroyed in some natural disaster, or perhaps one brought about by rash tinkering, and in such a case the hero, besides looking after Number One and escaping back to the known world usually manages to save any wife, fiancée or mistress he may have. But in Phosphor this does not happen.

C. S. Youd, who later wrote mostly as John Christopher, neatly expressed this plot among other common elements of SF in early days in his poem The Golden Road (after James Elroy Flecker):

"Of palaces where the Atlantean kings
Have lived for ages till some silly clown,
Messing around with dynamite and things
Rescues a girl and leaves the rest to drown."

== 77 == PROBLEMS IN THE WORKS OF EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS (see Topic 57)

Dan McPhail (Phantasy Press 63, FAPA 176) mentions a 1928 announcement of a story, The Conquest of the Moon, to be featured by Modern Mechanics. Bill Evans (Celephais, nd, FAPA 178) suggests that this may have been "a reprinting of The Moon Maid/Moon Men/Red Hawk, as Science and Invention did for Merritt's Metal Emperor." This is correct. It was the first of the Moon Maid trilogy only, running in four parts in Modern Mechanics Nov 1928-Feb 1929.

This brings us to a more general question. We know that Gernsback's early radio and popular science magazines often printed fiction -- some of it quite ordinary in character though having some setting or action related to radio or whatever, but most of it definitely science fiction with emphasis on the invention of remarkable devices. Here we see a magazine not under Gernsback's control reflecting his influence by printing a sensational piece of imaginative fiction, because that was established as part of the range of a popular technical magazine. Has anyone listed the stories in other such publications? They are probably few, because no other publisher was as fond of fiction to liven up the magazine as Gernsback, and there are only rare special features later than the 20's. But during the 20's there must have been some more that have not been recorded.

== 78 == FOR AN EXAMPLE OF LARGER BARSOOMIAN FAUNA...

Russ Chauvenet reminisces (Detours 11, May 1982, FAPA 179) of Thuvia, for whom the fourth Martian novel of Burroughs is named,* as one his favorite Barsoomians "...because of her bold character and her way with a banth. (For those who have never read ERB, a banth was a 6 legged catlike Martian carnivore."

* Thuvia, Maid of Mars. in All-Story Cavalier, 8-22 Apr 1916; McClurg, 1920.

For an example of larger Barsoomian fauna... contd.

Feeling some dissatisfaction with the leg count, I found my copy of *The Gods of Mars*, knowing that a banth is described early in this first of the Martian novels I read, some forty-five years ago. Let's see. Ah yes, here we are, p. 31 of the Methuen edition and therefore my 31st page of Burroughs. Carter and Tars Tarkas have evaded the maneating Plant Men and Great White Apes that nosh on pilgrims arriving in the valley Dor, by scrambling up a tree and thence into a cave-mouth in the cliff which is an entrance to the Therns' underground city. So far they're not making much progress and are being heckled by unseen Therns:

"For a long period there was silence, then of a sudden a soft, stealthy sound behind me caused me to turn suddenly to behold a great, many-legged banth creeping sinuously upon me.

"The banth is a fierce beast of prey that roams the low hills surrounding the dead seas of ancient Mars. Like nearly all Martian animals it is almost hairless, having only a great, bristly mane about its thick neck.

"Its long, lithe body is supported by ten powerful legs," I thought six didn't seem the full quota! Though, on reflection, in the low gravity of Mars why does it need ten legs to hold it up? "Its enormous jaws are equipped, like those of the calot, or Martian hound, with several rows of long needle-like fangs; its mouth reaches to a point far back of its tiny ears, while its enormous, protruding eyes of green add the last touch of terror to its awful aspect.

"As it crept towards me it lashed its powerful tail against its yellow sides, and when it saw that it was discovered it emitted the terrifying roar which often freezes its prey into momentary paralysis in the instant that it makes its spring." There's a beast for you!

Burroughs' quirk of first characterising the banth as many-legged, then giving the right figure -- inventing the species as he wrote, I suspect -- may have been what made me more or less remember it.

== 79 == JACK VANCE, AND THE RUMOR THAT HE WAS HENRY KUTTNER (see Topic 17)

Dennis Lien writes: "I have heard (from whom I no longer recall) that the initial misidentification of Vance as Kuttner was made in *The Best Science Fiction Stories*, 1950, ed. by Bleiler and Dikty, both of whom should have known better. On p. 345 thereof, a biographical blurb on Kuttner states that he has "appeared in many markets, occasionally under the pen names of Lewis Padgett, Lawrence O'Donnell and Jack Vance." The first printing of this anthology is given as August 1950 which fits nicely in with Tucker having picked up the rumor in time for publication of the Dec. 1950 *Science Fiction News Letter* which you cite." Well, that seems to be that, unless someone can point to the misinformation in an earlier source. I wonder if it might originally have been a joke (Kuttner did use a lot of names) which someone interpreted as a fact.