

THE
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*H. C. KOENIG
2 East End Ave.
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*THIS ISSUE IS
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO
WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON
1875 - 1918*

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON
MASTER OF THE WEIRD AND FANTASTIC

by
H.C. Koenig

In 1931 *Faber and Faber* published an anthology of ghost stories under the title "*They Walk Again.*" The tales were selected by *Colin de la Mare*. Most of the stories included in this splendid anthology were by well-known writers such as *Blackwood*, *Dunsany* and *Bierce*. Many of them were familiar to the inveterate reader of ghost stories -- "*The Monkey's Paw*", "*Green Tea*", and "*The Ghost Ship.*" However, one new story was included in the book; one comparatively new name was included in the list of authors. The story was "*The Voice in the Night*", a horrifying and yet pathetic tale of human beings turned into fungoid growths; the author was *William Hope Hodgson*.

Who was *William Hope Hodgson*? I had a vague recollection of some short stories in old pulp magazines. I dimly remembered a book of short stories about a ghost detective. That was all. But, it was sufficient to start me on the trail of one of the great masters of the weird story. Letters to various readers and collectors of fantasy in this country produced negligible results. Except for one or two of the older readers of weird stories, the name of *Hodgson* meant nothing.

I consulted *Edith Birkhead's* excellent study of the growth of supernatural fiction in English literature "*The Tale of Terror*" (1921) in an effort to get some information about *Hodgson* and his writings. I found references to *Pain*, *Jacobs*, *Le Fanu*, *Stoker*, *Marsh*, *Rohmer* and a host of other writers of weird tales -- but no mention of *Hodgson*. I searched through *H. P. Lovecraft's* informative essay "*Supernatural Horror in Literature*" (in its original form)* without success. Hundreds of titles were covered. Among them I found "*Seaton's Aunt*", "*The Smoking Leg*", "*The Dark Chamber*", "*A Visitor from Down Under*" and many other tales -- familiar and unfamiliar. But not a single one of *Hodgson's* stories was discussed -- or even mentioned. I paged through numerous anthologies -- by *Bohyn Lynch*, *Dashiell Hammett*, *Dorothy Sayers*, *Montague Summers*, *T. Everett Harre* and *Harrison Dale* -- but the name of *Hodgson* was conspicuous by its absence. Then followed a period of time during which I traced him through innumerable book stores in England. *Percy Muir* of *Elkin Matthews*, London, took an interest in my search and obtained several of *Hodgson's* first editions for me. He also put me in touch with *Dennis Wheatley*, the writer of English thrillers and an admirer and collector of *Hodgson*. As a result of these contacts, I learned that *Hodgson* had written a number of stories which compared very favorably with any of our modern weird stories; tales which ranked high in the fantasy field and which deserved far more popularity and publicity than they had ever received.

Hodgson was the son of an *Essex* clergyman. He left home as a youngster and spent eight years at sea. During that time he voyaged around the world three times, visiting all sorts of places. Incidentally, he received the

*First appeared in *W. P. Cook's* magazine *The Recluse* (1927). After having *Hodgson's* novels called to his attention, *Lovecraft* revised the essay. The article, in its final form may be found in the *Arkham House* book "*The Outsider*".

Royal Humane Society's medal for saving a life at sea. For some time before the World War he and his wife lived in the south of France. When war broke out he returned to England (at the age of 40) and was granted a commission in the 171st Brigade of Royal Field Artillery. Two years later, in 1917 he went to France with his battery and was soon in the thick of the fight; his Brigade doing splendid work at Ypres. At the time the Germans made their great attack, in April, 1918, he with a few other brother officers and non-commissioned officers successfully stemmed the rush of an overwhelming number of the enemy. Shortly thereafter, Hodgson volunteered for the dangerous duty of observation officer of the Brigade. On his first mission, he was killed by a shell. And thus, a most promising literary career came to an abrupt ending.

I never could understand why his work was so little known to the general public. It was curious and unfortunate that he had become so engulfed in oblivion. And so, I started my campaign to obtain recognition for Hodgson in this country. For over ten years I have preached the gospel of William Hope Hodgson; by word of mouth, by letters and in articles. For years I have circulated my little collection of Hodgson's first editions all over the country. California to Rhode Island, Oregon to Florida, Wisconsin to South Carolina. To readers and writers and editors. Year after year I have kept up the campaign. Slowly but surely I began to get results. Hodgson's name began to appear in the amateur fantasy magazines. Requests for Hodgson's stories began to creep into the readers columns of the professional magazines. And, requests for a loan of Hodgson books began to multiply. Then came the break for which I was waiting patiently. An appeal for Hodgson's stories came from Miss Gnaedinger of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*. A copy of "The Ghost Pirates" and several short stories were soon in her hands. Then followed months of anxious waiting. Copyrights had to be settled. Mrs. Hodgson had to be located, a far from easy matter. A splendid cover, illustrating one of Hodgson's novels, and painted by Lawrence was being held, pending the settlement of copyrights. Unfortunately, due to the long period of delay, this illustration was never used in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*.* I had just about given up hope when Mrs. Hodgson was located and the copyright obstacles were removed. Then, in the December, 1943 issue of *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, Miss Gnaedinger published Hodgson's short story "The Derlict." This was followed by the novel "The Ghost Pirates" (cut by about 10,000 words) in the March, 1944 number.

I am extremely grateful to Miss Gnaedinger and her associates for taking the lead in reprinting some of Hodgson's stories. But, I am not so easily satisfied. I will not rest content until I have seen every one of his books reprinted in some book or magazine in this country. Until that time comes, however, we will have to be content with those of his books which we are able to locate in the second-hand book shops. (It is not an easy matter.) A complete list of Hodgson's books may be of some assistance to the weird fan. For the benefit of the collector I am also giving the name of the publisher and the date of publication.

1. "The Boats of the Glen Carrig", a novel
published by Chapman & Hall, 1907.
2. "The House on the Borderland", a novel
published by Chapman & Hall, 1908.
3. "The Ghost Pirates", a novel
published by Stanley Paul, 1909

*The illustration by Lawrence eventually appeared on the cover of the April 1943 issue of 10-Story Mystery Magazine.

4. "*The Nightland*", a novel
published by Everley Nash, 1912
5. "*Carnacki, The Ghost Finder*", short stories,
published by Everley Nash, 1913
6. "*Men of the Deep Waters*", short stories,
copyrighted in U.S.A. 1906, first English
edition published by Everley Nash, 1914
7. "*The Luck of the Strong*", short stories,
copyrighted in U.S.A. 1912, first published
by Everley Nash in England, 1916
8. "*Captain Gault*", short stories, copyrighted
in U.S.A. 1914, first English edition
published by Everley Nash, 1917
9. "*The Voice of the Ocean*", poems,
published by Selwyn Blount, 1921
10. "*The Calling of the Sea*", poems,
published by Selwyn Blount, no date

As indicated earlier in this article, one of his short stories, "*A Voice in the Night*" will be found in Colin De la Mare's collection of ghost stories "*They Walk Again*" published by Faber and Faber in 1931. And, Dennis Wheatley included three of Hodgson's short stories in his splendid collection of horror tales "*A Century of Horror Stories*" published by Hutchinson & Co. The titles were "*The Island of the Ud*" from "*The Luck of the Strong*"; "*The Whistling Room*" from "*Carnacki, The Ghost Finder*"; and "*The Derelict*" from "*Men of Deep Waters*."

The first three books listed above in the short bibliography form (in Hodgson's words) "What perhaps may be termed a trilogy; for though very different in scope, each of the three books deals with certain conceptions that have an elemental kinship." A few chapter headings will give some idea of the treat in store for fantasy fans fortunate enough to locate these books---"*The Thing that Made Search*," "*The Island in the Weed*," "*The Noise in the Valley*," "*The Weed Men*," "*The Thing in the Pit*," "*The Swine Things*," etc.

"*The Night Land*" is one of the longest fantastic romances ever written, running close to six hundred pages. It is a story of the world in the future when the sun has died and the "*Last Millions*" are living in a large redoubt, a huge pyramid of gray metal nearly eight miles high and five miles around the base. Beyond the pyramid were mighty races of terrible creatures, half-beast and half-man, night hounds, monstrous slugs and other horrible monsters. As a protection against all these evils a great electric circle was put about the pyramid and lit from the Earth Current. It bounded the pyramid for a mile on each side and none of the monsters were able to cross it due to a subtle vibration which affected their brains.

"*Carnacki, The Ghost Finder*" is a series of six short ghost stories in which Carnacki investigates ghostly phenomena in various homes. One or two of the tales are somewhat weakened by a natural explanation of the ghosts, but each of the stories is well worth reading.

Hodgson's tales may well have served as source books for many of the stories now being read in our present day pulp magazines. The whole range of weird and fantastic plots appears to have been covered in his books -- pig-men, elementals, human trees, ghosts, sea of weeds, thought-transference, intelligent slugs, and in "The Night Land" the men are equipped with a hand weapon called a Diskos. This consists of a disk of gray metal which spins in the end of a metal rod, is charged from earth currents and capable of cutting people in two.

To me, Hodgson will always be remembered as one of the great masters of the weird and fantastic. And I, for one, will always be grateful for the slim list of books he left behind him.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The above article was based to some extent on two shorter articles which appeared in "*The Fantasy Fan*" (December 1934) and "*The Phantagraph*" (January 1937) respectively.

The following essays by H.P. Lovecraft and C.A. Smith were written about seven years ago. The Lovecraft review of Hodgson's books originally appeared in H.C. Koenig's column "*On The Trail of the Weird and Fantastic*" in the February 1937 issue of "*The Phantagraph*". Smith's article was first published (in somewhat abbreviated form) in the same column in the March-April, 1937 number of "*The Phantagraph*".

THE WEIRD WORK OF WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON

by
H. P. Lovecraft

Master of the Macabre. Author of fifty or more tales of fantasy and terror - chiefly in *Weird Tales* magazine. Represented in the anthologies "Creeps by Night", "Beware after Dark", "Not at Night". Author of brilliant essay on "Supernatural Horror in Literature". Complete works may be found in the two volumes "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" and "The Outsider" published by Arkham House.

Mr. H. C. Koenig has conferred a great service on American "fandom" by calling attention to the remarkable work of an author relatively unknown in this country, yet actually forming one of the few who have captured the elusive inmost essence of the weird. Among connoisseurs of fantasy fiction *William Hope Hodgson* deserves a high and permanent rank; for, triumphing over a sadly uneven stylistic quality, he now and then equals the best masters in his vague suggestions of lurking worlds and beings behind the ordinary surface of life.

Despite a tendency toward conventionally sentimental conceptions of the universe and of man's relation to it and to his fellows, Mr. *Hodgson* is perhaps second only to *Algernon Blackwood* in his serious treatment of unreality. Few can equal him in adumbrating the nearness of nameless forces and monstrous besieging entities through casual hints and significant details, or in conveying feelings of the spectral and the abnormal in connection with regions or buildings.

In *The Boats of the Glen Carrig* (1907) we are shown a variety of malign marvels and accursed unknown lands as encountered by the survivors of a sunken ship. The brooding menace in the earlier parts of the book is impossible to surpass, though a let down in the direction of ordinary romance and adventure occurs toward the end. An inaccurate and pseudo-romantic attempt to reproduce eighteenth-century prose detracts from the general effect, but the really profound nautical erudition everywhere displayed is a compensating factor.

The House on the Borderland (1908) --- perhaps the greatest of all Mr. *Hodgson's* works --- tells of a lonely and evilly regarded house in Ireland which forms a focus for hideous other-world forces and sustains a siege by blasphemous hybrid anomalies from a hidden abyss below. The wanderings of the narrator's spirit through limitless light-years of cosmic space and kalpas of eternity, and its witnessing of the solar system's final destruction, constitute something almost unique in standard literature. And everywhere there is manifest the author's power to suggest vague, ambushed horrors in natural scenery. But for a few touches of commonplace sentimentality this book would be a classic of the first water.

The Ghost Pirates (1909) --- regarded by Mr. *Hodgson* as rounding out a trilogy with the two previously mentioned works, is a powerful account of a doomed and haunted ship on its last voyage, and of the terrible sea-devils (of quasi-human aspect, and perhaps the spirits of bygone buccaneers) that besiege it and finally drag it down to an unknown fate. With its command of

maritime knowledge, and its clever selection of hints and incidents suggestive of latent horrors in nature, this book at times reaches enviable peaks of power.

The Night Land (1912) --- is a long-extended (538pp) tale of the earth's infinitely remote future---billions of billions of years ahead, after the death of the sun. It is told in a rather clumsy fashion, as the dreams of a man in the seventeenth century, whose mind merges with its own future incarnation; and is seriously marred by painful verbosity, repetitiousness, artificial and nauseously sticky romantic sentimentality, and an attempt at archaic language even more grotesque and absurd than that in *Glen Carrig*.

Allowing for all its faults, it is yet one of the most potent pieces of macabre imagination ever written, and is said to have been the author's favorite among his works. The picture of a night-black, dead planet, with the remains of the human race concentrated in a stupendously vast metal pyramid and besieged by monstrous, hybrid, and altogether unknown forces of the darkness, is something that no reader can ever forget. Shapes and entities of an altogether non-human and inconceivable sort---the prowlers of the black, man-forsaken, and unexplored world outside the pyramid---are suggested and partly described with ineffable potency; whilst the night-bound landscape with its chasms and slopes and dying volcanism takes on an almost sentient terror beneath the author's touch.

Midway in the book the central figure ventures outside the pyramid on a quest through death-haunted realms untrod by man for millions of years---and in his slow, minutely described, day-by-day progress over unthinkable leagues of immemorial blackness there is a sense of cosmic alienage, breathless mystery, and terrified expectancy unrivalled in the whole range of literature. The last quarter of the book drags woefully, but fails to spoil the tremendous power of the whole.

Mr. Hodgson's later volume, *Carnacki, the Ghost-Finder*, consists of several longish short stories published many years before in magazines, in quality it falls conspicuously below the level of the other books. We here find a more or less conventional stock figure of the "infallible detective" type---the progeny of *H. Dupin* and *Sherlock Holmes*, and the close kin of *Algernon Blackwood's John Silence*---moving through scenes and events badly marred by an atmosphere of professional "occultism". A few of the episodes, however, are of undeniable power; and afford glimpses of the peculiar genius characteristic of the author.

Something of Mr. Hodgson's career---which included the sea, and which closed heroically with death on the battlefield in 1918 ---has been told in the article by Mr. Koenig. Here, certainly, is an author not to be ignored; and one may be confident that the years will win him a position close to the rank of fantasistes.

Note

Two of Lovecraft's stories, "*The Rats in the Wall*" and "*The Dunwich Horror*" appear in one of the best omnibus books published, "*Great Tales of Terror and The Supernatural*" edited by Herbert A. Wise and Phyllis Fraser and recently issued by Random House.

IN APPRECIATION OF WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON

by

Clark Ashton Smith

Writer par excellence of fantasy. Creator of the fabled land of *Averoigne*. Has contributed poetry and fiction to over fifty magazines including "The London Mercury," "Asia" and "The Yale Review". Author of "The Double Shadow and Other Fantasies". The best of his fantasies (selected by himself) appear in the Arkham House book "Out of Time and Space" (1942)

Among those fiction writers who have elected to deal with the shadowlands and borderlands of human existence, *William Hope Hodgson* surely merits a place with the very few that inform their treatment of such themes with a sense of authenticity. His writing itself, as *Mr. Lovecraft* justly says, is far from equal in stylistic merit: but it would be impossible to withhold the rank of master from an author who has achieved so authoritatively, in volume after volume, a quality that one might term the realism of the unreal. In some ways, *Hodgson's* work is no doubt most readily comparable to that of *Algernon Blackwood*. But I am not sure that even *Blackwood* has managed to intimate a feeling of such profound and pervasive familiarity with the occult as one finds in *The House on the Borderland*. Hideous phantoms and unknown monsters from the nightward gulf are adumbrated in all their terror, with no dispelling of their native mystery; and surely such things could be described only by a seer who has dwelt overlong on the perilous verges and has peered too deeply into the regions veiled by invisibility from normal sight.

However, "*The House on the Borderland*", though probably the most sustained and least faulty of *Hodgson's* volumes, is far from being his most unique achievement. In all literature, there are few works so sheerly remarkable, so purely creative, as "*The Night Land*". Whatever faults this book may possess, however inordinate its length may seem, it impresses the reader as being the ultimate saga of a perishing cosmos, the last epic of a world beleaguered by eternal night and by the unvisageable spawn of darkness. Only a great poet could have conceived and written this story; and it is perhaps not illegitimate to wonder how much of actual prophecy may have been mingled with the poesy.

The books above mentioned are, in my opinion, *Mr. Hodgson's* masterpieces. However, the first portion of "*The Boats of The Glen Carrig*" maintains a comparable level of imaginative power; and one regrets that the lost mariners should have escaped so soon from the malign and mysterious dimension into which they were carried. One must also accord a more than formal praise to *The Ghost Pirates*, which is really one of the few successful long stories dealing with the phantasmal. Its rout of ghostly and persistent specters will follow the reader long after they have seized the haunted ship!

It is to be hoped that work of such unusual power will eventually win the attention and fame to which it is entitled. Beyond doubt, accident and fatality play a large part in such matters; and many meritorious books and works of art are still shadowed in obscurity. *Hodgson*, though little known, is in good company. How many, even among fantasy lovers, have heard of the great imaginative artist, *John Martin*, or the equally great and macabre imaginative poet, *Thomas Lovell Beddoes*?

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON
by
August Derleth

Guggenheim Fellow in 1938. Lecturer in American Regional Literature at University of Wisconsin. Author of twenty or more volumes of verse, detective novels and prose fiction. For many years a contributor to *Weird Tales* magazine. A collection of his best short weird tales were published under the title "Someone in the Dark", published in 1941 by Arkham House.

William Hope Hodgson is one of the most neglected men in the field of the mystic and weird. Certainly the *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* publication of *Hodgson* is a step in the right direction, even if the stories have been woefully cut in some cases. I think it is not far wrong if it is wrong at all to suggest that no one else has quite the same approach and effect as *Hodgson*, particularly in such novels as "*The Night Land*" and "*The House on the Borderland*". He manages to convey an extra-sensory perception to his readers, and that is no small accomplishment. I am hoping to see published soon in this country an omnibus of the important *Hodgson* novels; if *Arkham House* does not do it, perhaps some other, first-line publisher can be persuaded to take such a book on. He deserves to be far better known among the aficionados, but manifestly out-of-print books across the sea give no comfort to the would-be reader and collector. *Hodgson's* sense of other worlds (decidedly not in the science-fiction tradition), his feeling for horror of the soul or spirit as apart from grue, his sometimes commonplace but always insidious manner of writing -- all these aspects are distinctly his own, and it is all the more regrettable, this being so, that he has had no worthwhile publication in the U.S.

THE GHOST PIRATES

"Strange as the glimmer of
the ghostly light
That shines from some vast crest
of wave at night"

THE POETRY OF WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON

by
E. A. Edkins

Premier writer of the National Amateur Press Association. Has contributed essays, reviews and poetry to various journals since 1883. Editor and publisher of the incomparable *Causerie* and co-editor with Tim Thrift of the best of the amateur magazines, *The Aonian*.

William Hope Hodgson lacks the poetic gift, principally because he is technically unskilled in poetic forms. "*The Voice of the Ocean*" is of course largely derivative, and reveals pompous allegories that have been demodé since the time of *Keats* and *Shelley*. Some of the classic poets used this form as a medium for the expression of philosophic concepts, naively overlooking the fact that philosophy and poetry are strange bedfellows. In the metaphors and symbolism employed by *Hodgson*, one detects an aching sense of beauty, a longing to rationalize and synthesize the emotions of a sensitive mind with the inscrutable brutalities of nature, a yearning to understand the baffling mystery of existence, — but unfortunately, not the slightest glimmering of real vision. All of his reactions are the reactions of a bewildered thinker; and when he attempts a really bold flight, his effort to be tragic passes rapidly into melodrama and bathos. It is significant that *A. St. John Adcock*, who wrote the introduction to "*The Calling of the Sea*", is careful not to commit himself as to the merits of *Hodgson's* verse; in fact, he hardly refers to it at all. I am unacquainted with *Hodgson's* prose fiction, but it is probably vastly superior to his verse. He strikes me as one of those authors who depend a lot on "inspiration", write loosely and rapidly, and never revise their effusions. He probably has a fertile imagination and considerable fluency of expression, but little if any sense of style or of cumulative effect.

Fantasy was effectively used by *Edgar Poe*, both in his prose and verse, but not the fantasy of what I believe is termed "science fiction". So too with *Dunsany* and *Machen*. A fantasist is not necessarily a poet, but the *Lords of Poesy* are truly fantasists, living as *Beddoes* said, "in a world of furious fancies." *Hodgson's* "*Down the Long Coasts*" is one of his most appealing poems, and in "*Grey Seas Are Dreaming of My Death*" he almost becomes articulate. At its worst his work is pure doggerel, as in "*The Song of the Great Bull Whale*"; at its best, one senses intimations of high emprise, grandiloquent dreams, hopeless frustrations, the unavailing *sehnsucht* of a soul tormented by beauty sensed dimly through impenetrable veils.

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON AND THE DETECTIVE STORY*

by
Ellery Queen

Creator of one of the best known detectives in the history of fiction. Writer of a couple of dozen detective novels, editor of Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine and compiler of four fine detective anthologies, the latest of which is "The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes."

Too few people in America are familiar with the work of *William Hope Hodgson*; and even this fortunate minority, who know *Mr. Hodgson* as a writer of weird and supernatural stories, have to be reminded that he also wrote two books in the detective-crime field.

One is "*Captain Gault*"---ten short stories about a modern smuggler. The other is "*Carnacki The Ghost-Finder*"---six short stories about a ghost-breaker; a unique detective who investigates haunted houses and similar phenomena.

Readers, writers, and students of supernatural fiction deplore the fact that at the end of five of the *Carnacki* stories, *Carnacki* produces a tangible, real-life explanation for the ghostly manifestations. For example, *H. P. Lovecraft*, one of the great modern masters of weird fiction, once expressed the opinion that the *Carnacki* stories were "*weakened*" by the realistic solutions. Well, one man's meat is truly another man's poison. To your Editor the sane, of-this-world explanations *strengthen* rather than weaken the stories. These *natural* elucidations, frowned on by devotees of the weird, must be applauded by devotees of the detective story; they transform *Carnacki* from a mere dabbler into the unknown to a legitimate and authentic detective.

But let's not quarrel over *Carnacki*. He's a 24-carat "find" both for lovers of the "*invisible*" and addicts of the "*visible*". Let's rejoice that *BQMM* can bring you one of *Carnacki's* strange and fascinating adventures which, to the best of your Editor's knowledge, is here printed for the first time in the United States.

*In the near future, "*The House Among the Laurels*", a short story taken from "*Carnacki, The Ghost-Finder*" will be published in *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*. The above article will appear as a preface to this story.

11.

WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON
WRITER OF SUPERNATURAL HORROR

by
Fritz Leiber, Jr.

Creator of those loveable rogues Fafhrd and The Grey Mouser whose adventures with wizards and sorcerers in the lands of black magic and necromancy make a welcome addition to the bibliography of the weird tale. Contributor to numerous magazines devoted to fantasy. A recent motion picture, *Weird Woman*, was adapted from one of his stories.

William Hope Hodgson achieved his greatest success in a literary form which most masters of supernatural horror have avoided because of its exceptional difficulty---the weird story of book length. He did this without recourse to the stereotyped plot-elements of the Gothic novel (except for the love story which mars rather than embellishes "*The Night Land*") or to the adventure or detective settings that modern authors have used to provide sufficient action to space out an eerie concept over some 75,000 words.

Undoubtedly the chief reason for his success in this field is the extreme, even naive, seriousness with which he went to work. He never succumbed to, perhaps never felt, the temptation to add facetious or whimsical touches in order to assure adult readers that he "did not really believe this stuff." Nor did he, for similar reasons, provide alternate scientific explanations or sophisticated psychological analyses of the spectral events he narrated. His novels are presented in the guise of actual documents, "found by so-and-so" or "as told by so-and-so", and are written, at a white heat of inspiration, in the directest possible way. Note, for example, the abrupt opening of "*The boats of the Glen Carrig*"---"Now we had been five days in the boats, and in all this time made no discovery of land."---or of "*The Ghost Pirates*"---"He began without any circumlocution. 'I joined the *Mortzestus* in *Frisco*.'" This outstanding ability of *Hodgson*, to plunge into a dream world and stay there for a book-length sojourn, fits with his seriousness and lends to his tales a straightforward, desperate convincingness. He is never apologetic, never inclined to provide cushioning explanations, no matter how bizarre the concepts he introduces. (Such as those magnificent black landscapes looming with mountain-beast-idols---the "*Watchers*" of "*The Night Land*" and "*The House on the Borderland*." It would be interesting to know the imaginative antecedents of those landscapes---perhaps an early interest in *Egyptian* and *Babylonian*, or *Mayan*, or *Indian*, architecture.)

Hodgson shows as much freedom from traditional patterns and editorial demands in his choice of subject-matter as in his plot-structure. He wrote before science-fiction had become a separate and widely-explored field, and, for example, did not hesitate to introduce into "*The House on the Borderland*" that chilling vision of *Earth's* future, made possible by time-acceleration, which anticipates the impressive vistas of *Olaf Stapledon*. To achieve the effects he desired, he combined supernatural terror, mystical speculations, and science-fiction, in a way peculiarly his own.

These various abilities enabled *Hodgson* to write such a novel as "*The Ghost Pirates*," which to my mind fulfills at book length all the canons of the spectral tale laid down by *Lovecraft*, *James*, and others. It is painstakingly realistic---consider the earthy, pungent conversations of the sailors---except when touching on the central supernatural phenomenon. That phenomenon is unified and handled with adequate impressiveness. There is no "scientific" explanation to let you down. Nor is the story itself marred by romantic concessions---there is a steady progress toward doom, in which the suspense builds with an almost unparalleled uninterruptedness. (Incidentally, *Sime's* frontispiece for the book is magnificent and---oh, rare virtue!---magnificently faithful.)

The Place of Storms

*"While, in the sea, far down between Storm's Knees,
I saw a bloated horror watching there -
A waiting shape, a shark; and deeper still,
A hideous, loathsome, writhing mass, that claimed
The Ocean's silent bed - a foul affront
To Nature's strange and wondrous handiwork,
Smirching the very deep with darker hue."*

AN APPRECIATION*

"It is written of some men that to know them is to love them". It is frequently written without sincerity, but it cannot be so written with regard to one who has just passed over. It was in September last that he wrote to me expressing the hope that at some future date we might meet and "find in each other kindred spirits." It was just like him to assume that an obscure person whose name he did not even know and who followed the same road, but far behind him, should be worthy of his friendship. He wrote: *"Eight years at sea, three times around the world, ten years an author, and now nearly two and a half years a soldier--for I left my little chalet on the French Riviera to join up--brings me to 1917, and if good fortune attends me I shall be in France this week-end"*. It was characteristic of his large hearted personality that he should have enclosed his photograph--and it is curious that never since that letter was received has it left my pocket. There are some letters like that--but how few from the hundreds are worth keeping and carrying for seven months. What he was as an author one is not competent to judge. His critics were all of one mind, and each new work as it appeared brought from the leading literary weeklies some new word of praise. On the only occasion we ever met he asked me *"Do you like imaginative stuff,"* and the next day's post brought me his wonderful romance, *"The Nightland."* What he was pleased to call pot-boilers were eagerly sought after by the leading London magazines but his heart lay in the bigger tasks. What it must have meant to a temperament like his to leave his quiet home and work for the big guns can be imagined. He did it cheerfully, as many others have done. To some it is worse than to others. To the sensitive, to the poet, to the writer, it is something different from what it can be to the ordinary person. They see further and they feel more acutely. No man *"left all"* in a more literal sense than did *Hope Hodgson*, and what it meant to him will never be known. He laughingly said once that it was *"good for local colour,"* but underlying the words there was a deeper meaning. He did not join up for *"local colour."* He joined from a great sense of duty, and now his duty done he is free from earthly things. In one of his last letters he wrote *"Shells bursting all around us, and yet one did not seem to care, hardly even noticed them. The moment was too intense, tremendous---looked forward to through weary months with hope and expectation and some wonder and perhaps dread lest one should fall short--and then in a moment the event was upon us...and that with gun-firing with two of us loading it, firing a round every three seconds, and even faster, I should say. The whole road where the Germans were coming round the end of a wood was simply one roar of dust and smoke where our shells were striking."* *"A dread lest one should fall short"*--there was no need for dread on his part. His work remains. A life work crowned not with fullness of years and praise of men, but with the sublimest heroism. The praise of men he had for all the work he did; not that he wanted it, but it was his due. In his wife he had a collaborator of like talent and sympathy. To her remain the best memories; to us an odd letter or two and his writings. *"There is no one who can fill his place in his home nor in his sphere of work."*

*This letter of appreciation originally appeared in a British newspaper.