



On page 1 is the first story "They Called Me a "Human Clam" But I Changed Almost Overnight". This earliest example of the were-clam story in science fiction magazines sounds fascinating. Most were-animals seem to be able to change with fair rapidity from their human into their animal forms and vice-versa. But not the hero of this story. Possibly he had trouble visualizing his life as Clam-Man. It's too bad comic books hadn't come along to Broaden His Mental Horizons. But I don't have the concluding instalment of this gripping story. At the bottom of page 1 you are advised on how to find out the conclusion by writing to the North American Institute, 3601 Michigan Avenue, Dept. 9384, Chicago, Illinois (no zip code) saying "Please send me FREE and without obligation my copy of your famous book, How To Work Wonders With Words." It's really nice of the North American Institute to do this for all those who wanted to continue the story. But seeing as how my letter came back I'll never find out unless I can someday find a copy. I'm also curious as to why the conclusion has a separate title but perhaps I'll find out when I read it.

On page 2 is the contents page. This is much useful information to be gleaned from its yellowing surface. (Thus we see that Amazing anticipated Analog in having yellow paper by thirty-seven years. Perhaps why Amazing has been called "First In Science Fiction". At any rate twill do until a better (and plausible) explanation comes along.) For those who had been wondering what immortals looked like there is a reproduction at the top of the contents page which may satisfy some's curiosity but not mine. Somehow I'm not convinced that this is a likeness of an immortal (but perhaps I'm expecting too much). After all, it is captioned "Jules Verne's Tombstone At Amiens Portrayin' (sic) His Immortality". Perhaps the original conveys more immortality. It's sad to think that Verne didn't live to see his story published. (There is a copyright acknowledgment lower down for the year 1911 for Verne's "Off on a Comet" so perhaps it was an earlier work and he was not too disheartened.) Verne also rates mention in the contents listing where it is announced that "Off on a Comet -- or Hector Servadac" starts on page 4. Verne is twice mentioned in the column "In Our Next Issue:" where he is presented as having "A Trip to the Center of the Earth" (the story is billed as "comparatively little known", "one of the most important of Verne's works" "is by far the greatest work on this topic-- namely the exploration of the earth's center-- that has ever appeared". Evidently the radio sets mentioned in the ads were incapable or else not ever tuned to the Gridley Wave or there would have been some protest from Abner Perry or David Innes. It's also possible that the newsstands in Pellucidar didn't stock Amazing. All of us have had enough trouble with newsstands that don't stock our favorite science fiction. But this provides an additional motive for watching the letter column closely to see if there is any protest over the matter.) Also announced is the conclusion of "Off On A Comet". So this gives Verne the dubious honor of being the first science fiction author to have his name mentioned five times on page 2 of the Apr 26 Amazing and the first author to have two stories in one issue of Amazing. (If I keep this I'll begin sounding like Sam Moskowitz.)

The next story to be mentioned on the contents listing is "The New Accelerator" by H. G. Wells. There is no copyright acknowledgment so presumably it is an original story, being reprinted from Twelve Stories and a Dream which appeared about 1903. Not having bothered to look it up in Geoffrey Wells' bibliography I don't what the other original magazine appearance was.

The third story mentioned is "The Man From the Atom" by G. Peyton Wertenbaker. This was reprinted from the Aug 23 Science and Invention without credit.

The fourth story was "The Thing From -- Outside" by George Allen England which had previously appeared in the Apr 23 Science and Invention and may have been reprinted from some other magazine.

The fifth listed story is "The Man Who Saved the Earth" by Austin Hall from the 13 Dec 1919 All-Story

The sixth story is "The Facts in the Case of Mr. Valdemar" by Edgar Allen Poe" -- another apparent original.

Omitted somehow from the contents page is the page 1 opus "They Called Me a "Human Clam" But I Changed Almost Overnight". Perhaps a notice of omission will be in the next issue.

"In Our Next Issue:" besides the previously mentioned works of Verne has two other stories listed. "The Crystal Egg" by H. G. Wells which had previously appeared in Tales of Space and Time, 1899 and I imagine in magazine form. Also listed are "The Runaway Skyscraper" by Murray Leinster from the 22 Feb 1919 Argosy which Leinster considers to be his first science fiction story despite Bill Evans' voting for "Atmosphere" in the 26 Jan 1918 Argosy; and "Whispering Ether" by Charles S. Wolfe. The latter is from the Mar 20 Electrical Experimenter. Thus the only original story is the one about the "Human Clam" and it may well be a reprint that I haven't discovered a source for.

I have it on a reliable authority that Amazing had not yet begun using house pseudonyms. And since there is some corroborative evidence in other sources I think it fair to assume that "Jules Verne" and "H. G. Wells" were not used as house names during this period. I realize that I'm not siding with all authorities who look upon the first appearance of a name in a science fiction magazine as good evidence that the name is a pseudonym for Henry Kuttner, Robert Silverberg and/or Randall Garrett, Ivor Jorgenson-Ivar Jorgensen or Kenneth Bulmer depending upon the credulity of the deductor and the period at which he points his finger.

The contents page contains other bits of vital information -- some of which has proven to be useless. My check was returned with a note that the Experimenter Publishing Co. was unknown at 53 Park Place, New York City (no state, no zip code). That's unfortunate because I had hopes of obtaining better condition copies of these issues than are found in second-hand stores. For inveterate readers of fine print the contents page of this issue presents some of the finest type in any magazine (possibly including Vorzimer's last opus).

Page 3 has something which has afflicted science fiction magazines to this day -- an editorial. Fortunately Gernsback, Campbell, Lowndes and a few others have found something to say -- which is more than can be said for the majority of editorials in other science fiction and mundane magazines.

An announcement of import was that Amazing had the reprint rights to ALL of Jules Verne's stories. And apparently Gernsback was serious about reprinting all of them for he printed such non-science fiction stories as The Adventures of Captain Hatteras (May-Jul 29) in its two components "The English at the North Pole" and "The Desert of Ice". But Gernsback did present a number of science fiction novels by Verne, the majority of which weren't easily obtainable then and now are available only in abridged editions or paperbacks or if you're lucky to find one in a used book store. One item of curiosity here is. The text in Amazing called "Off On a Comet" is a shorter version of "To the Sun?" to which "Off On A Comet" is a sequel. But since both works seem to have appeared originally as Hector Servadac it seems a disappointing un-stfnal title.

On page 56 is an announcement which would have curdled the blood of anyone reading it then who was gifted with precognition. By announcing a letter column Gernsback unwittingly unleashed faaaaaaandom upon the fans. At least he had good intentions and has done his best since then to counteract what has comeabout.

Coming to the bottom of page 66 we learn that "The Man From the Atom" is a serial as was "Off On a Comet". The latter wasn't directly announced as one though it was forecast for the next issue and had a notation that it would be concluded in the May issue on the bottom of the text of the story on page 56.

On page 92 we have the more usual title for Poe's tale, i.e. "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar". It is illustrated by H. Hynd 25, the other stories are either illustrated by Paul or the illustrations are unsigned (though most are in the style of Paul).

The bottom of page 96 carries an announcement that Gernsback has a large number of previously unpublished stories by Clement Fezandis in the Doctor Hackensaw's Secrets series and asks readers of Science and Invention whether or not they want to see more of them. "Doctor Hackensaw's Secrets" was longer than most serials, running from the May 21 Science and Invention through forty-three issues to Sep 25 and then for two more in the Jun and Jul 26 Amazing. As far as I know this must have set some sort of record for a series under one title. The longest serial (in terms of instalments) that I know of was Victor MacClure's "The Ark of the Covenant" which ran for fifteen issues of The Experimenter followed closely by fourteen instalments of "Tarrano the Conqueror" in Science and Invention. No other science fiction stories can make that claim.

To Be Continued

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Colliard #834 - Karen Anderson

Was Lessingham's first name ever given in any of the books by Eddison?

Armageddon #3 B.M. - John Kusske, Jr.

Perhaps the popularity of Witch World comes from people who prefer to build their own dreams onto the framework provided by the author, especially if the author does not do more than add some haphazard details without really working everything out. But Witch World's major faults lie in the poor quality of the writing and the lack of proper technique.

Many of us share George Martindale's idea of the Great Game of reading sf. Are the author's postulates legitimate? Has he worked out the logical consequences of these postulates? Does he have any idea of reality in the first place? Does his story reflect effort expended upon it? Does the story depend upon the background? Is it a story? Is it well-written? Is it interesting? Is it science fiction?

There isn't much being published today that passes the above tests.

Mainiac #26 - Ed Cox

Richard Powers has done better work outside of sf than he has done within it. I've seen some books he has illustrated which have good illustrations, approaching the artistic.

One artist I would have loved to have seen in sf was Joseph Clement Coll (and if he's still alive I wish he'd come out of retirement). His artwork was excellent, though his work would have lost a great deal on pulp paper. Drop in sometime and I'll show you what I mean.

And above and beyond friendship I'd like to see Roy Hunt at work in the magazines again. George Barr once said of a Hunt drawing that his highest praise was that he wished he'd drawn it and he did wish that he had. Unfortunately artists who don't get paid don't exert themselves in the marketplace. So Roy paints for his own amusement. He recently did a color painting of Sherlock Holmes which is at least on a level with Sidney Paget for giving the atmosphere of Sherlockian London and I consider it to be artistically superior.

I share your dislike for the Ballantine Tarzan covers (though not for the others). Ian Ballantine said they were trying to have Powers create a new image for Tarzan. They succeeded. Abnett has been redrawing the original dust jackets along with some "new" covers.

But the newsstand paperbacks that really have the appealing covers on Burroughs' works are not Ballantine or Pinnacle (or even Ace, good though they are) or Dell but Four Square. Edward Mortelmans has turned out some eye-catching, colorful covers for Tarzan and Roy Carnon has done the same for Barsoom and Amtor (except for a dud cover on The Gods of Mars). (I haven't yet received a copy of Synthetic Men of Mars from Four Square.)

SAPrise! #1 - Dave Van Arnam

I'm surprised to see you classifying Robert E. Howard as possessing "a rich prose style" in contrast to "concentrating more on narrative". Howard always impressed me as being strongest on narrative drive with his purple and/or colorful prose coming second. And I have never read Howard for his style as I have read Dunsany, Clark Ashton Smith and E. R. Eddison for their styles (all three often had strong plots with narrative drive in addition to their abilities as stylists -- though Eddison's prose is about equal in pleasure to his plots). I've often wondered (well, three or four times) what sort of science fiction writer Euclides da Cunha would have made. I think da Cunha would have made a Great Golden Age Author if Campbell could have persuaded him to write for Astounding.

My comments on twelve-year-old-mentalities adulating Burroughs was meant to apply to the majority of rabid Burroughs fans. There are those who seem to think Burroughs never did any wrong, never wrote anything but great stories. Their writings are in fanzines, faanzines, amateur papers, The Burroughs Bulletin, ERB--dom, The Gridley Wave, etc.. These are the ones who think that The Outlaw of Torn ranks with the best of Walter Scott (Lupoff seems to have confused it with Ivanhoe when bragging about it, so perhaps this is a natural mistake) or Alexander Dumas. Even Tom Gardner considered Burroughs' westerns to be good because they rank with Zane Grey and Charles Alden Seltzer. I don't know about Seltzer, never having read any of his novels (though I have enough of them in Argosy) but Zane Grey was certainly no standard. (Of excellence, that is -- Grey is a standard of mediocrity.) I do consider Tom Gardner's "ERB and the Sands of Time" the only article I've read which covered all known works of Burroughs and displayed perception and some sort of evaluative ability in the process. If it makes you feel any better I consider you and Moskowitz to have written the only other really good articles on Burroughs' stories. There have been some fine essays on the moods, attitudes or whatnot generated by Burroughs' stories and some others on specific issues in the stories. But I think we agree that most of Burroughs' stories are poor. But the characters I have in mind read and re-read them avidly, over and over and over and over again -- loudly proclaiming these stories to be the greatest ever written. For their sakes I hope their memories aren't retentive.

My next project is reading Burroughs' Handbook of African Anthropology. Stay tuned.