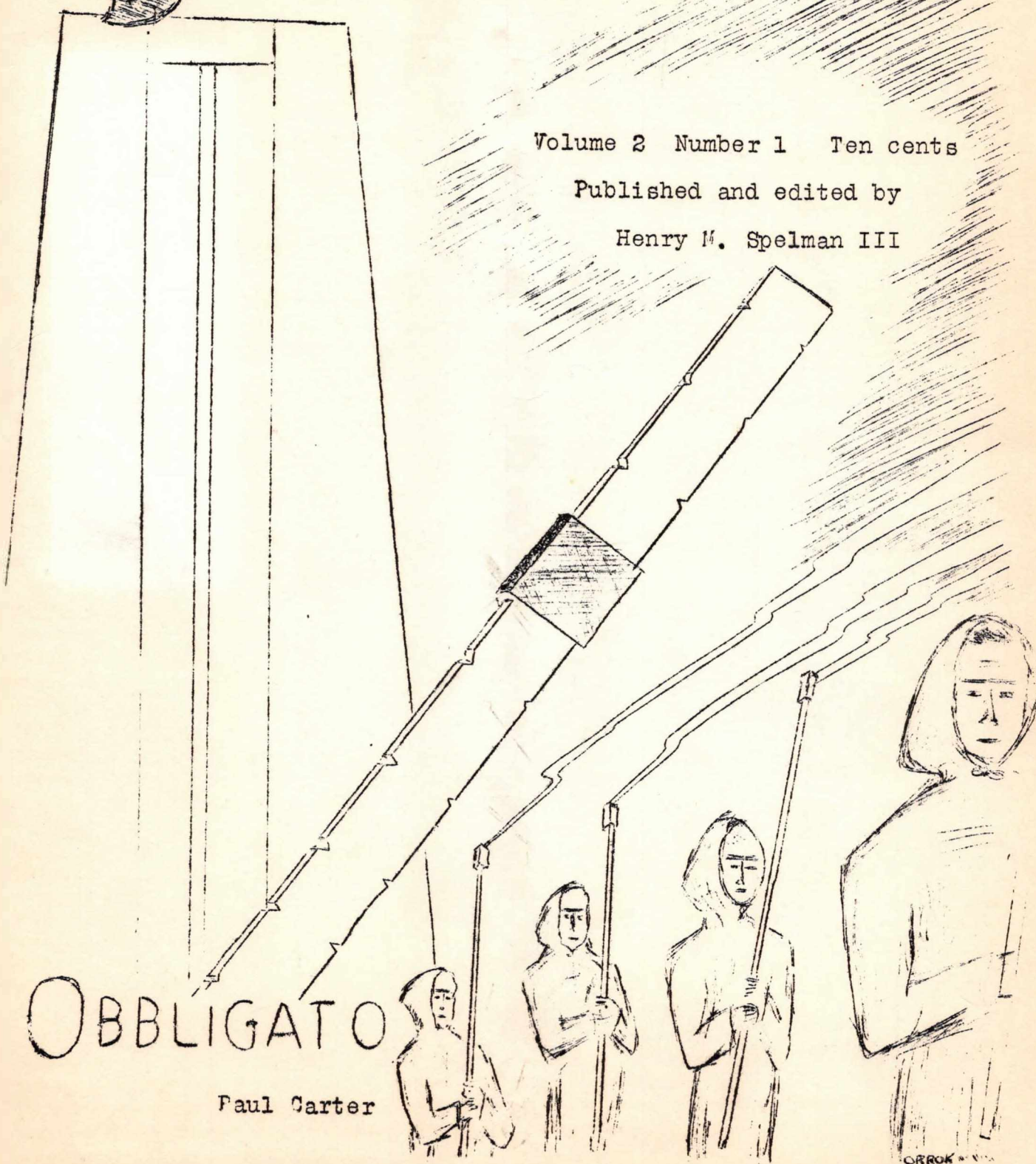


SPARX

Volume 2 Number 1 Ten cents

Published and edited by

Henry M. Spelman III



OBBLIGATO

Paul Carter

s p a r x

volume 2

number 1

1 9 4 8

j u n e

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sparx is published approximately quarterly by henry m. spelman 3d of 75 sparks street cambridge 38, mass., at a loss. this is volume two number one, whole number seven, dated fifteen june 1948. this issue is distributed through fapa, and by subscription. 10¢ per copy, and that's a real bargain. a check in this box means that my rather sketchy records show that your subscription has expired. please renew promptly.

s p a r x

Here goes another issue of SPARK. And it's bigger than ever before. Dunno now how many pages it will end up with. About 23-30, I guess. Hope that you think it as good as, or better than, the last.

In an attempt to improve, I have taken many suggestions that were made by many FAPANS and others. Milty Rothman said that more white space would improve looks. So done in the text. Joe Schaumburger suggested slip-sheeting. Done, if all goes well. Many asked that I use ink. A bit harder, but I may be able to comply. Some one said that he was tired of a) turning pages to find continuations, and b) being told to turn the page. On the whole, those suggestions are taken. To those who suggested improved contents, send in your stuff. To those who suggested I drop dead, I have to draw the line somewhere. So no have done.

I'm sorry that Paul Carter's little work is so far into the mag. It came in late, after many stencils had been cut. I think that it is one of the best things in the mag. For best results, listen to the second movement of Beethoven's Seventh before, and while reading.

If the author of the book review of the Hopkins Manuscript will get in touch with me, I will give proper recognition in the next ish. Coswal sent it to me from the NFFFFMssBureau. He said that he got it from Maddux. So I've credited it to A. N. O'Nymous. MssBur also sent me the Rotsler portrait.

I am in need of all sorts of material for the next issue of SPARK. The deadline will be 3 September, so you ought to have plenty of time to whip something up. I can use fiction, articles, book reviews, poetry, and art. Just send it to me, and I'll probably be able to use it.

NOTE MY NEW ADDRESS!!! I am now back home, after graduating from Harvard. (It was all a big mistake...I got my degree on a misprint, I think.) So please address me at 75 Sparks Street, Cambridge 38, Mass.

I have just accepted the post of chairman of the NFFF Nominations Committee. Which means that I have to lead a group responsible for the getting of nominees for all the offices for the forthcoming elections. This winter, I believe. I need help. Right now I need members for the Committee. If you are willing to put in some time writing letters to fen, begging them to accept nomination, then get ahold of me. I'm particularly interested in help from such areas as LA, NY, Phila, and the like.

Glad to see that the Fanzine Reviewer for Startling is so careful in his reading of mags. See the review of SPARK in the July SS. Real fascinating.

'Tis with great sadness that we of the Boston area see Art Widner, long a mainstay of local fandom, depart for the west coast. Our loss will be their gain, out there.

I hope that some one will answer the ads that appear in this ish. You see, Dave Thomas took an ad in the last ish. And got exactly 0 replies. If this goes on, I'll have to stop taking ads. And either cut down the size of the circulation of SPARK. It's up to you. Please help me out.

RECALL

II

The elevator hummed quietly, and the floor fell away from Reilley with a feeling akin to that of a rocket with jets dying away after a prolonged acceleration. For a moment free fall seemed to exist; but then the mechanism decelerated sharply, and Venus-Normal gravitation was reestablished.

The doors slid noiselessly aside, and the old man stepped out into the metallic corridors of the New City of Johnsport. Across from the shaft there was an alcove where warm sunlight seemed to pour through a bay window, to trace a field of warm light on the mosaic floor of the corridor. There was even a gently twining vine, green and living, which grew in through a partly open casement, and strayed almost glowing across the shining metal. It was a wonderful illusion, as graphic a representation of Earth as anything to be found outside the Heaviside Layer. He passed by, went on to the left, down the corridor...

A middle aged man peered out of an open door as Reilley approached. He was round faced and sported a black fringe of a moustache. "Hello, Phillip," he said pleasantly.

"Hi, Jake. Everybody here already?"

"Just about." Jake Fern stood aside, then followed Reilley into the room. It was large, even imposing, and looked out over another Earth landscape through a well proportioned picture window. The walls were a subtle blue in color, complemented by greens of equal value in the furnishings. Eight people sat around a long conference table, talking earnestly. They looked up as Reilley entered.

"Good morning, Mr. Reilley." "Good morning, sir." "Nice to see you again, Phil."

Reilley bowed slightly, and acknowledged the greetings with a wave of his hand. He sat down in a chair at the head of the table; Jake Fern seated himself at the foot. A tall, rough cut old man, with grey hair and a precise delivery read a few lines of the minutes of the last meeting before Reilley quelled them, remembering perfectly what had happened, and seeing no reason to undergo the inherent boredom of minute reading. After a few more false starts Fern brought forth the main business of the meeting.

"Phil, you remember Kurt Falkner, don't you?"

"Sure. He had a lab in the lot next to mine a few days back.

It's generally accepted that he met a quick and painless demise while working on some repulsor tube circuits... Damned peculiar, though. You remember the story?" A few shook their heads.

"He was a Research Center man. I think he was working on anti-gravity, but I don't know. Whatever it was, he turned the apparatus on one day, and everything vanished---the lab, and a sphere about four hundred meters radius including land, air, water, and Kurt Falkner. As I said, it seems pretty likely that he's dead. I think so, anyway. It was too bad. A brilliant man." The nine looked at each other. Reilley looked at them.

"What's the pitch?"

Fern coughed, and tugged valiantly at the left extremity of his moustache. "Research Center would very much like to know what he was doing and how he did it. They hired him, of course, and they put him to work on repulsor tubes. Beyond that, he never sent them a single note on his progress. Even when they supplied him with a lab out where it was very unlikely that he'd get any interference of note from repulsor levitators and the like. When they discovered that you had been his next door neighbor---you, Phillip Reilley, expert on repulsors and the like---they naturally made an effort to get in touch with you, to learn if you had any idea of what he had been doing in that lab of his. They've offered us an extravagant sum in the way of shared patents for getting you to recover as much as possible of Falkner's data. And that, as you so neatly put it, is the pitch. Can you help us?"

Reilley sat still and stared across the length of the table, eyes open and interested. "I wish I could. I did have quite a little acquaintance with him, but he never said anything vital. He was very conscious of the fact that I was from a rival corporation. We did discuss a little detail work, but nothing of importance."

"That is too bad." Fern sat glumly still. Up and down the table there settled a polite air of disbelief. Reilley was still for a minute or two, then deigned to recognise it.

"You don't believe me?" There was no immediate response.

He shrugged. "Very good. Then let me change my stand a little. I cannot give you the information because of certain reasons which must, for the moment, remain secret. I would have preferred that you believe completely ignorant of Falkner's work, because I know your weaknesses in the way of bullying me, or trying to..."

"Don't you think that you should at least tell us why?"

"I said that I did not think so. Come on now, let's skip it. You know and I know that there have been very few occasions in the past when my judgement has not been satisfactory. You can take it. You won't suffer if we lack a few patent rights which Research Center has sole right to now."

"Look, Phil..." A young man, dark haired and very earnest---
"I expect that you know this, but it ought to be said out in the
open, right now. The techs, at least, are sure that Falkner dev-
eloped a crude and uncontrollable form of interstellar drive---that
is, a mechanism by which speeds effectively greater than that of
light can be attained without excessive power loss. Certainly the
mass of the lab, and the rest, wasn't atomically disrupted, for
there wasn't any sign of violence, aside from the implosion where
the lab suddenly wasn't. If the sphere had gone outside the atmos-
phere normally it would have been detected by the standard space-
ship detectors around Venus---the sphere's mass was much greater
than that of most space-ships, so there would have been no trouble
with that. If, and we even considered this possibility, it had
sunken into Venus, it should have made a larger and more character-
istic bump on the seismographs at Sector Three Station than it did--
it registered as a perfectly normal surface disturbance. So...it
did something else. It is quite easy to imagine that it might have
done something adaptable to an interstellar drive mechanism...
You're as interested in that as we are, I know."

"I'm sorry, Tad. My objections include, and go beyond, that.
Is there any more business to be discussed?"

Fern sighed, his round face mournful. His moustache seemed
to droop a little, silly little thing that it was. There was no-
thing he would have liked better than to put this bargain through
with Research Center. "Okay, Phil... We'll ship it... There isn't
much else." The meeting broke up. There was some informal dis-
cussion, but soon Reilley left to return home.

#

The day passed slowly...The mists gathered high into clouds,
leaving clear weather for as much as a kilometer below...Reilley
worked in his garden, and lay in the sunshine...Noon passed, and,
as the day declined, the heat increased, then began to fade...The
mists concentrated, the clouds lowered, and sudden storms began...
Nightfall came, with the furious winds that blew in from the cold
side of the planet, and fierce storms when the clouds precipitated...
After darkness fell, the clouds yielded heat for some time, but
finally snow fell in ever increasing abundance, and ice formed.
By midnight, the sky was clear, the wind still, and the stars and
planets glimmered down upon the lonely hillside with fierce inten-
sity...It was minus fifty centigrade at Reilley's front door.

#

A telivisor in Jake Fern's office hummed. The round faced
man swiveled in his chair to behold an incomprehensible pattern;
he adjusted the coding filters in his receiver until the screen
resolved the face of Phillip Reilley.

"Hello," said Reilley pleasantly. "Nice to see you again,
Jake."

"Hello, Phil. Is your evening at home beginning to wear on

you?"

"Oh no. At least the weather has broken, which is more than it does in the New City. You know it's nice to see the stars once in a while."

"It is. How deep is the snow?"

"Fourteen odd feet. The robots keep it pretty clear around the house, though. Anyway it stopped drifting a few Earth Normal days past...It should be stone quiet until about seven EN before dawn."

"We don't have that sort of weather in Johnsport."

"Stick-in-the-mud. I like it."

"Crank up the old facsimile receiver. I've got a diagram to send over. Use the special coder." Fern turned on the mechanism and flipped the decoding keys to a prearranged position. Only Reilley had coders built in precisely this fashion, to insure privacy. Soon the cylinder began to turn, and a six sheet series covered with diagrams and issued into the receiving tray. Fern picked them up, glanced at the first page, suddenly looked up at the 'visor screen.

"But Phil! This looks like..."

"It is. Falkner's notebook on that last piece of apparatus."

"But..."

"I'm not going to explain my actions now, Jake. Take it or leave it."

"All right. I hope you haven't begun to crack, or anything."

"I haven't."

"I'm very glad that you sent this in, anyway. Thanks."

"Very welcome. See you." They signed off, and the 'visor screen blanked. Fern looked through the sheets with some interest until he ran into a raft of symbols he didn't know. He shrugged his shoulders, and called Research Center.

#

Phillip Reilley stood before a window in his darkened home and looked out at the white and luminous landscape of a snow covered Venus under the soft light of the stars. Behind him, on the workbench, sat a transparent cube, about three feet on a side; within it were poised five brilliant flecks of white light. On either side of the cube were tall cabinets, black crackle finished, which were defined in the dim light only by vague contour and their

ADULTS & SLEN ONLY

DANGER

THE LETTER STARTLING WAS AFRAID TO PRINT

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dave Thomas wrote a letter to the letter column of Startling Stories. He mailed it to them. It was returned to him with a note attached. Unfortunately the note burst into flame as soon as Dave read it. But Dave, being a slan, more or less memorized it. So here is the approximate text:

"Standard Magazines, Inc., thanks you very much for your contribution, and regrets that it is unable to use it at the present time.

"Please keep in touch with the type of material we print, and rest assured that anything you submit to us will receive a prompt and thorough reading.

"Standard Magazines, Inc."

Dave also says that he thinks that, as he opened the envelope, he heard a BEM roar with glee. I think that maybe he was exaggerating a bit. The text of the letter follows.

March 18, 1948
31 Linnaean St.
Cambridge 38,
Mass.

Dear Editor:

I have just finished reading Henry Kuttner's "The Mask of Circe", in the May issue of Startling, and I have some comment to make on the experience.

The novel, I would say, is the poorest that the "new" Kuttner has turned out (i.e.--since he found out how easy it was to imitate Merritt's style). "The Dark World" wasn't bad; it was tremendously imitative of Merritt's "Dwellers in the Mirage", but it had points that raise it above the level of any other novel published recently in SS. With

"Lands of the Earthquake" a falling off in plot became obvious--since Kuttner had to think up a plot for himself in that one. Ever since, with TWS items like "I am Eden" and "The Power and the Glory", Kuttner's stories have become more and more conventionalized, repetitious, and downright poor.

I don't like his derivative style; but, neglecting that, his work just doesn't ring the bell. "The Mask of Circe" had everything necessary for a terrific fantasy--setting, writing, opening paragraphs. But as soon as Kuttner started dragging in a schizophreniac for a hero and mechanistic explanations for items that should have been left unexplained (for example, the Fleece) I knew that the novel would just become another typical representative of his school. He can't leave gods as gods, he has to make them mutants. He can't accept fantastic occurrences, he has to explain them away with alternate time streams and pseudo-scientific double talk. I think L. Sprague de Camp could have written a classic around the basic structure of "The Mask of Circe". At first, I hoped and believed Kuttner had. Maybe, someday, he'll fulfill his undeniable promise and turn out a really great science-fiction or fantasy story.

But it will have to be one or the other. Kuttner just can't successfully mix scientific elements into a fantastic setting and make it come off.

The rest of the mag wasn't too bad.

Sincerely yours,

Dave Thomas

Dave Thomas

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THENEWKUTTNER? WRITE ME ABOUT IT AND I MAY USE IT IN THE NEXT.

EDITORIAL (CONT)

If you like the crossword puzzle that appears in this issue, I'll try to get similar features for future issues.

I'm starting to feel that I'll never catch up with the current output of stf and fantasy books. Every time I turn around I find that there are a couple of dozen new books that I want to buy. And that leaves me totally and permanently broke. What we need is some Fantasy Book Crop Coordinator, who would plow under excess books, and slaughter extra authors. (Two bits I get slaughtered for that suggestion) Seriously, though, it does bother me that there are so many limited editions of books coming out now. Sure as fate there'll be a slack period in a while. If only we could have, at
((More on a later page, I don't know which))

THIS IS THE VAMPIRE BERNOULLI KUILT

BY

DERFLA GREBSIEW

This is the story of a small boy. Not just any small boy he, but a very unusual lad educated far beyond his years, and, as you shall presently bear witness, educated far beyond his age. This is also the story of a feudal lord, his father, who, indeed, was hardly above the norm for his time, and was as vicious as an animal toward any member of his class who departed from that norm. And, finally, this is the story of a vampire whom we have cast in the role of the antagonist.

Good Reader, have you ever dwelt upon the meaning, nature, and purpose of the pseudo-historical stories which fill our periodicals to overflowing with their "theeing" and "thouing," "forsoothing" and "gadzooking" in a vain hope that their mediocre plots will be excused; nay lifted unto heights of excellence by the atmosphere imparted by these words and phrases, the medieval titled figures (romantic, to be sure, to the drab reader), and the inevitable full color illustration of a buxom décolleted women? These writers, and I use the word with tongue in cheek, these barren writers seek to substitute local language and color for the original thoughts and lessons which never appear in thier works. True greatness, dear Reader, makes itself felt irregardless of its setting, irregardless of its atmosphere, as proven in our time by the eminently successful bare stage and modern-day dress production of Our Town, the tragedies of Shakespeare, and the great drama of the Greek poets. So, with all modesty, and believing that I have a moral lesson to impart, I shall relate my tale with a minimum of the local color of that old Transylvanian manor, Barusheekalava, in which the story unfolds itself.

For many weeks prior to the commencement of our tale a vampire, whom we shall call George, had been terrorizing the populace of our hero's birthplace, in a manner common to all vampires. Candles were lighted, talismans worn, and many boastful and vengeful words uttered, but, alas, all to no avail, for George continued his nocturnal collations unabated, and, to be truthful, totally unmindful of all these pusillanimous precautions. At length the situation became quite serious, and it became quite serious, and it became necessary for our hero's father to proclaim a state of emergency, and to press all able-bodied men between the ages of 18 and 35 into service cutting stakes, mapping cross-roads, and studying anatomy; while a very special group was set to whispering it about the countryside that new and terrible secret weapons were being dev-

eloped. This, I might add, he did half with the hope of so cowing George, by a show of military might, that he would hasten to leave and find a new abode. But the cold war continued, and finally our hero's father was forced to call all his sons about him and make ready for the fast approaching hunt. The phrase "all his sons" requires some qualification, as it is not exactly accurate; rather I should have said all his sons but our hero, whom he did not like, nay whom he actually, and here I fear of shocking you, gentle Reader, detested and despised.

I see you puzzled, and you have every right to be, for it is hardly natural for these feelings to come between the father and a son so young as our hero; but come they did, and right well did they flourish. For, as I have said before, our hero was educated far beyond his years and was prone to endless reading in a never-ceasing quest for knowledge to help humanity, whereas his brothers, under the watchful and approving eye of the lord, spent their time much more profitably practicing the gentlemanly art of killing their fellow men. This failure on the part of our hero to show his proper breeding and to differentiate between the good and bad in the world, led to greater antipathy between him and his sire, so on the night of the council of war he was not invited.

The meeting proceeded rapidly as there was little time for lengthy and learned discussion and, in truth, none present was capable of learned utterance or, for that matter, sustained utterance. First it was decided that George, whom you will remember was the vampire, must be tracked to his lair and disposed of, then the line of march was ordered, the chain of command was forged, and the battle strategy of Caesar reviewed. Finally, as the council was about to disband, there came a knock at the door, and our hero stepped in with the announcement that he too would join the hunt.

Consternation reigned supreme. Could it be that the council had heard aright these words from the lips of the sniveling reader of books, from the boy that shamefacedly preferred to read---often-times books by Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians, foreigners all---to the manly art of killing? But yes, it was true, for he calmly repeated his intention in a cold and even voice. His brothers heaped abuse upon him, they called him...but I blush to even think of the names, and cannot bring myself to put them on paper; I shall spare you the embarrassment, gentle Reader, and leave these epithets to conjecture.

"But this must be a joke" said one, and, indeed, every one agreed with him; they laughed and went off to bed not realizing the strength of character possessed by our hero. The next morning, however, they discovered it, for, as they were preparing for the hunt, there he appeared, reaffirming his intention to accompany them, with a steadfast look of confidence and determination. The lord, in an angry mood, strode toward him, and mockingly demanded an inspection of his arms and weapons, whereupon our hero lifted a small penknife, scarcely capable of wounding a chicken, and a small leather-bound book. The lord snatched the book, read the title "Alchemists' Abstracts, vol XXVI," and the author of the

principal paper, Bernoulli; then through the book to the ground, uttering "damn foreigner!", while preparing to lay his son low; but an evil thought came to him and he held his hand. Thought he "perhaps I shall be rid of this ingrate by some fortunate (sic) incident on the march, yes," and he turned to his son and said aloud "pick up your weapons and let us be off."

For many days and over many miles did the army travel, never espying George, but nevertheless losing one of their number each night to the service of his rather warped metabolism. At length, however, they had traced him to his lair deep in a forest and were closing in, at least those who yet remained, for the final battle. They deployed themselves about the clearing they reasoned to be George's abode, and, as they peered forward in the hazy dusk, thru the overhanging lichen in the trees, a dim form was seen resting on the ground---yes, you are right, it was George. To a man they rushed forward to drive the spike through his heart; falling and sprawling, slipping and sliding, they clambered over one another in a mad dash to reach George before he awakened, but, alas, good fortune was not on their side, and George awoke and began to slash throats right and left, sucking men bloodless at an unbelievable rate. Terror reigned unabatable. The army disintegrated until the clearing was left barren---barren save for our hero who stood unflinching and erect in the very center in a modified Andalousse stance with Bernoulli's book in one hand and his open penknife in the other. George spotted him and right aileroned to the attack. It is an academic question whether George would have attacked had it been lighter, and could he have seen the weak gleam in our hero's eye, but we are here to report the happenings, and not to pose unanswerable questions. The vampire swooped down; our hero did not move a muscle, so tense did he stand. George was coming in low and drawing back his fangs to strike.

Let us leave our hero for a brief moment to consider an argument that some of you may have raised to my contention that true literary genius requires nothing of its setting and is equally great in any scene. There are those of you who will point out, and rightly so, that a common fault of our present day historians is their continual interpretation of events of the past in terms of present day personalities, conditions, and degree of civilization, and you may further charge that I am doing little else in my tale by abandoning the local color of Barusheekaslava. To you I say poo.

Butt to return to our story: As George bared his fangs our hero tensed and, in the split second that it took the vampire to strike, our hero twisted his pæviously rigid body so that the fangs penetrated not his jugular vein, but his cheek. Then quickly he commenced to whistle God Save The King. The flow of air, as he had rightly calculated it would, sucked the blood from without the vampire, who promptly lay down and died.

YUP THAT'S ALL DER FLADIDITIT. AS ALL HIS IDEADOM 'TBLA BME FOR IT LIKE IT FOLKS??

GOING TO THE TORCON??

SCIENTIFAN CROSSWORD (Cont)

CORRECTIONS TO NEXT PAGE:

- Horizontal
- 4. Creatures found on prozine covers
 - 7. Mutant fan
 - 11. The Dero Digest...
 - 12. All fans hope to become number one _____
 - 13 When Sneary will...

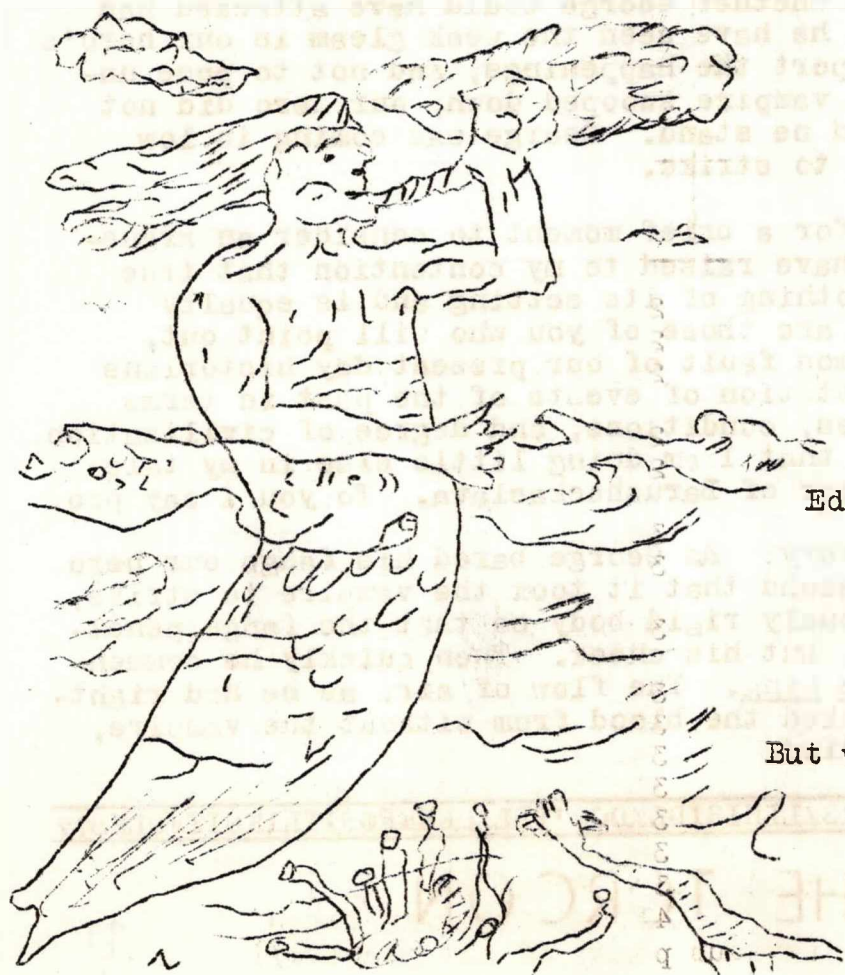
NOW ONWARDS:

- Horizontal (cont)
- 42. Nuts! (slang)
 - 43. What the chinese eat
 - 44. Oxygen (sym)

Vertical

- 1. The stf of life
- 2. That which FAPANS worry about, and which never happens
- 3. Whatyogists contemplate
- 4. Up in the sky! look! it's a _____, it's a plane, ktp.
- 5. In (french)
- 41½. Regal Insolence (abbr)

- 6. Martian Government (abbr)
- 7. Gnaedinger's eldest mag
- 8. Where Slan Shach was last
- 9. #1 fan (No, not you.)
- 10. With birds, it's OK; with women, tsk, tsk
- 11½. Sgt Saturn's guzzle
- 14. Moon of Jupiter
- 16. 1st World Stf convention
- 19. Mooian Police (abbr)
- 20. critical fan activity
- 21. FAPA publication
- 23. The institute for the investigation, care, and shelter of aberrant stfans (abbr)
- 26. Ghu Helping Hand Soc. (abbr)
- 27. Ghuish colour
- 29. Fan praise
- 30½. Abbr for what FooFoo is
- 33. What Lucifer is (abbr)
- 34. Scientific fiction
- 36. What FTL is in FAPA
- 37. Ever (poetic)
- 40. What TNEF is (abbr)
- 41½. Laney's middle initial
- 42½. You (abb



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Lubec, Maine

or to: Russell Woodman,
505 A Washington Ave.,
Portland, Maine.

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1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11			11½					12			
13							14			14½	
15						16				17	
18					19			20	21		
22				23				24			
25		26	27			27½		28			29
	30				30½			31			
	32						33				33½
34		35			36	37		38			38½
39	40		41				41½			41¾	
42		42½				43					44

SCIENTIFAN
WORD

by
JOE

SCHAUMBURGER

HORIZONTAL

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Fankind | 23. Spacehounds of _____ |
| 4. Creatures found on prozine | 24. Battering _____s of space |
| 7 covers | 25. A character reputed to be a louse |
| 11. Mutant fan | 27½. Oxygen (abbr) |
| 12. The Dero Digest, or the Rosicrucians Home Companion | 23. Institute of Plutionian Atomic Engineers (abbr) |
| 14. I think, therefore _____ (contraction) | 30. 2nd world stf convention |
| 13. When sneary will buy Amazing | 31. Monsters always have slaver-ing ones |
| 15. Tendency | 32. Your humble and obedient servant (Widnerism) |
| 16. What she said when she slapped your face | 33. Thingz that mayk up weex |
| 17. And (French) | 33½. Optiphone (abbr) |
| 18. Glowing (poetic) | 34. Slan (abbr) |
| 19. Belonging to me | 35. One held in bondage. |
| 14½. King size (abbr) | 38. Nickel (sym) |
| 20. Crucial Fanpoll Results(abbr) | 38½. DBT's middle initial |
| 22. Himself (French) | 39. Towards |
| | 41. Ackermaniac lingo |
- ((Continued on the previous page, of all places!))

RECALL (Cont)

meters, round, dimly illumined, hanging like ghosts, without visible support. Reilley turned around, watched the cube thoughtfully; as he did so, a spot of blue appeared, bright and slow moving, at one face, and travelled a gradual arc across the field. Reilley walked over, adjusted a few dials deftly; the five principal points swum together, to a smaller scale, and four others appeared from the edges. As he stood there, the blue spot circled up to the furthest of these and paused.

Reilley clicked his tongue and lifted his eyes to the beam over his head where a metal plaque with a few dim engravings hung. It was very old indeed. Jarvis Dore, the famous excavator of Mars had found it in one of the few ruins that had been discovered. Ruins of a dead civilization, had they said?

"Well" he mused, "they're getting out. Not a doubt of it." Ten VN days ago, when the first crude model of the apparatus had operated, the white spots, Sol and a few neighboring stars, had been interlaced with the movements, the traces of blue somethings... things that moved with careful avoidance of the planets of Sol and the space routes between them, things which paused, vanished, and reappeared near the other suns...What could one assume?

"Leaving the nearest stars to us," Reilley continued contemplatively. "Nice of them. But when we're ready to go beyond Sirius? What then?" He stared somewhat morosely at the blue speck of light. A patrol vessel, he supposed. "What then? Eh?" He shrugged his shoulders. "Hell. We'll find out when the time comes."

He turned on his heel and walked back to the window...He stared at the loveliness of the long expanse of snow on the ice of the Lincoln Sea, almost painful in its beauty...

Finis

~~seemtohaveforgottentomentionabovethatrecallisbytimothyorrokssorrytim~~

EDITORIAL (Cont from page eight)

the very least, a voluntary planned publisherhood movement...(Ouch)

If any suckers feel like advertising in SPARX, the rates are only \$1.50 per page. Dirt cheap, I think. Results, maybe.

Back issues.
I have a few copies of #1,2,3, and 4. Plenty of #5 and 6. Prices:
#1-4pp-20¢; #2-7pp-15¢; #3-9pp-10¢; #4-5pp-5¢; #5-13pp & cov-5¢;
#6-26pp-10¢. Prices effective until I change them. Or will trade for back issues of other fanzines.

Whic reminds me: I'd like to trade with any and/or all other fanzines. How about it?

Sorry
that I won't see you at the Torcon. My summer job will utterly preclude my attendance.

TRICKS OF THE

VINCENT WILLIAMS

PART TWO

TRADER

SYNOPSIS: Gregor Hillem, who is today one of the most important businessmen in the system, and his friend Iglor Hispedich Merfs, of Verkia, are on a tramp run, outbound, from Sol in their hyperspatial freighter. In the course of destroying a pirate they get blasted out of normal space. Iglor tells Hillem to go ahead, and get them out of trouble. He proceeds to start to get drunk on methyl ethyl ether. Hillem scowled at him.

"Do you believe that?" he asked.

Iglor was prying at the plug of the bottle. "Sure." Then he clamped the bottle against his side with arms 4, 5, and 6. He screwed a corkscrew into the stopper (it was a steel stopper, but the corkscrew was of impervium) and heaved violently with hands 1, 2, and 3. The plug gave, and the odor of the gas (for methyl ethyl ether boils at 6.4°C .) filled the room. Gregor started towards the door, and then turned around, indecisive.

"Why don't you go to your room to inhale that. You know I can't stand it, and I want to do some work here." Hispedich put one finger over the mouth of the bottle, and squinted at it with one of the tentacular gadgets that issued from the top of his body. They he sighed. "Okay," he said, and ran skipping down the corridor; it is a most amazing thing to see a Verkian skip.

Gregor began to make measurements, as a check on Merfs's apparently intuitive decision. Presumably there should be some way to produce proof either for or against the idea. There were stars, but, in general, they were not of spectral types he recognized. He wondered if perhaps they were actually different in composition from norm-space suns. It was quite possible, although an "over-the-hill" space, in "the next valley," as Iglor had put it, would presumably have the same energy level as the norm. Of course, and this was also a cheering thought, it might conceivably be contreterrene.

He found very little support for the idea that he was still in norm-space, and little more for the idea of being outside. As far as he could see, his scanning beams bounced off objects with the same alacrity, and the radiation was the same. He was in the process of measuring the few basic constants he could in the limited opportunity yielded by a freighter's shop when he first began to see spots of red; they swirled around the ship, disappeared neatly just before partitions and reappeared on the far sides. Occasionally they aggregated into clumps that remained moderately still and had a definite form. Hillem watched the manifestations

for a few minutes, checking the various physical causes which might be producing the spots subjectively, and then went up to Hispedich's room. He opened the door. Merfs had put aside the methyl ethyl ether for the moment, and was playing chess with a large red glob. The being took on real shape when it moved the pieces, but ordinarily didn't bother to look like anything at all. Iglor was slowly and methodically beating it.

Gregor opened his mouth to speak, and then closed it again. He was shaken to the core of his being. He just didn't believe in these things. Slowly, he forced himself to be logical. He coughed mildly, and Hispedich looked up.

"Greg, I'd like you to meet Y-22. Y-22, Gregor Hillem." He rose, and gestured. The glob seemed to flow and vanish from the chair, and to reappear before Gregor, facing him. It now had the form of a young man in the coveralls of a mechanic; the red toned down to flesh color for the flesh and hands, and metamorphosed into a startling purple for the clothed.

"Very glad to meet you, Mr. Hillem," said Y-22 in perfect English.

Hillem stammered somewhat, but replied in kind. Merfs was beaming.

"Do you know, Greg, he's a multi-dimensioned being! Didn't you say a 'distroid,' Y-22?" The being nodded. "He thinks he can get us back into norm-space without any trouble at all!"

"Swell!" Hillem enthused.

"After the game," grunted Y-22, and slid back into the chair. Even as it did so, it lost the brief semblance to human form which it had displayed. Gregor glanced hopelessly at Iglor, but that worthy was once more engrossed in the immediate problem of the chess match.

A few minutes afterwards, Y-22 materialized in the control room and took over the controls of the ship. Exactly three minutes afterwards, he yielded the seat to Hillem. The sun which was their destination was in plain sight, a quarter of a parsec away.

The distroid, Y-22, became a semi-permanent member of the crew. He was always present, from then on, whenever the "Cobbler" was scheduled for a hyperspatial journey of any length. He was very agreeable at all times, and was much less expensive than a Furbush Hyperspatial Strain Analyzer. Gregor and Hispedich, with this advantage, began to outrun their opponents in the trading business. By the time that it was necessary to expand the business beyond the scope which Y-22 cared to cover, Hillem-Merfs Enterprises was wealthy enough to buy the analyzers. And as for Y-22? He had fun doing research for a thesis on "three dimensional flats, 36570456364," and learned how to play chess really well.

WELL THAT'S ALL OF THAT I DON'T KNOW IF I COULD HAVE STOOD ANY MORE MUCH LESS YOU ALL

OBBLIGATO

BY

PAUL CARTER

(You are in a box at a vast auditorium, looking out over rows of rant music lovers to where a bushy-haired, black-tailed figure stands monarch over the chaos of music-stands, evening clothes, shining metal and dark wood which is a symphony orchestra. They are performing the Seventh Symphony of Beethoven; the first movement has just been completed. The conductor pauses. Programs rustle. The baton rises...)

There is a great, throbbing chord. Space splits, rolls slowly backward like an opening stage-curtain, melting and puffing into films of nothingness. A low, rough-hewn grotto appears, illuminated from spacious blue distances. Against this smokey blue backdrop is silhouetted the pendulum of a colossal metronome.

To muffled, bass, dead march tones stealing up from the darkness below the grotto, the pendulum begins to swing, slowly, darkly, back and forth against the smouldering blue light. From the unlighted distance to the left, a file of cowled figures enters the grotto, pacing in stately fashion to the unhurried rhythm. They swing censers in time to the pendulum, the tiny red flames swinging their little arcs as the shadowed pendulum swings its great one. They reach the other side of the grotto, far to your right. You know that they are priests, and that the diety they worship is Time.

A lone cello sings out against the gloomy bass harmony, in a cry that is the antithesis of that stolid rhythm, curling and twining about it like ivy on a square brick wall. "Time, cease thy flight," it wails, "Stay thy crushing hand from thy servant. the past is dead; the future is not yet; only the now is real and beautiful. But thou stridest on, unheeding, without malice and without compassion, and the reality and beauty are as though they never were." The dark pendulum sweeps back and forth, back and forth, never hurrying, never faltering, indifferent to the eloquence of the suppliant...

Completing a circuit of the grotto, the hooded priests raise to the low roof a powerful chant, never ceasing their slow, censer-swinging march. The mighty hymn throbs in triumph; but with it rises the lyrical plea, chorused by many more voices. On and on around the grotto the Priests of Time slowly march, while the pendulum swings back and forth, back and forth, in a relentless black arc against the dim infinite blue in the distance. The hymn crashes out anew, as though to drown the other prayerful melody. And gradually the outlines of the grotto fade and dissolve. Black abysses open beneath you; limitless heavens unfold themselves above. You hang in disembodied grandeur at the center of space, distances

stretching infinite in all directions, while around you, below you, above you, the flaming suns and wispy galaxies march proudly through endless space. And throbbing grandly through it all, the sad and triumphant Hymn to Time hurls its masses of sound upon you from every side, and you feel the knife-sweep of the pendulum. Forever the suns march and wheel, on and on throughout eternity, irresistible because their circles obey the laws of Time. Time...Time... the conqueror, the invincible, the destroyer of all...

Suddenly the Hymn stops, its relentless tones giving place to something warm and compassionate that radiates through all space. You realize that the incandescent stars are not alone in their senseless glory. Planets whirl around them, and here and there in Time's dark universe life appears, to live and love and know the meaning of happiness. Millions of worlds, some dark with terror, but of those the song does not tell; some radiating peace and content, and of those the song calls into the vastnesses. The hope-hymn rises, sinks...and the crescendo of the Hymn to Time climbs up out of the depths and rolls over the joyous worlds, crushing them in its path. The pendulum sweeps back and forth, back and forth, and with each sweep one of the inhabited worlds trails off and is gone. Life's moment on the cosmic stage is over. Only Time remains, and its Hymn shouts from zenith to nadir of the universe. On and on and on, Time, Time, TIME----

The suppliant prayer breathes its lament again, falters into silence. The pendulum swings, the suns whirl, life flares up and dies---ever and again, meaninglessly, Space performs its cycle of tricks for the amusement of Time. The Hymn crashes on, triumphant and meaningless---futility incarnate---futility, surging up into your being, and making you add your cry to the rest: "Why, why? Why goodness, and beauty, and love, and hope, and pleasure and pain? STOP, STOP, STOP, STOP, STOP..."

And the Voice speaks out of infinity, a mere whisper that cuts through the heedless music and speaks to your mind; a profoundly sad Voice, a profoundly majestic Voice; and It says:

"I dare not stop, little one. Without me, these suns and planets and living things could not be. They must eternally die that others of their kind may come into being. I cannot halt my own march; if I halt, all things halt. I must eternally create and destroy, for if I did not move, nothing would move, and if nothing moved, then nothing would BE..."

And the music dies away, clinging regretfully to the last chord, and it is as Time says---all is blank, idiotic nothingness...

isortofthinkthatthiswouldbebestreadafterorduringahearingofthemusic

SUBSCRIBE !!!

BOOK REVIEWS

The Hopkins Manuscript, by R. C. Sheriff. Victor Gollancz, Ltd., London, 1939. 351 pp. (out-of-print)

It is possible that in this novel, written in 1939, Mr. Sheriff was giving a veiled warning to a world that was conducting last-minute dress rehearsals for war. At any rate, he provided a very interesting story, with some overtones and implications if they're looked for.

The story is told by means of a manuscript written at approximately the present time, by an Englishman named Hopkins. This ms. is discovered hundreds of years hence by a scientific expedition exploring Britain, which is by then an unpopulated wilderness.

Hopkins is a fussy, middleaged, rather bigoted individual, who raises prize chickens, and is an amateur astronomer. At a meeting of the scientific society to which he belongs, he learns that astronomers have discovered that the moon has left its orbit, and is nearing the earth. Strict secrecy is maintained by all governments, to avoid panic. Underground shelters are built in Britain, and called bomb shelters. Finally, when the size of the moon cannot be hidden, news of the impending collision is published. Due to clever publicity, the danger is minimized, and the public, for the most part, takes the news calmly. This is one of the book's most exciting sections, with the suspense, as the moon grows larger and larger, and Hopkins's feelings, as one in the secret, depicted graphically.

Finally, on a May evening, the moon crashes, to the accompaniment of tidal waves and high winds. Here, in our opinion, occurs the weakest part of the story. The author has the moon land in the Atlantic ocean, overlapping a bit on Great Britain on the one side, and North America on the other. This seems just a bit too convenient. However, the author has a purpose in this.

Hopkins's home, on a high spot, is saved. After the storms have abated, he hunts for other survivors. He finds most of the local people dead, due to a cave-in of their shelter. Here and there, though, he does find a survivor. They set to work to rebuild the town. Gradually, communication with the outside world is restored. The moon, lying where the ocean had been, is apportioned among the world governments in strips of land running east and west. Britain, now cut off from the sea, is given a corridor to the south. The world seems headed for a better era when, like a bombshell, comes the report of an international expedition which has been exploring the moon's surface. When they say that it contains rare and precious metals, all hell breaks loose. All the nations want the richest regions. They unite against Britain's corridor, fearing that they'll be cut off from their territories. Britain regards it as a lifeline, and refuses to give it up. Then comes war, bloody and

bitter. A young friend of Hopkins's joins the army. Reports coming back from the battlefronts are confused. Later he hears that his friend is engaged in fighting and alien enemy. Living conditions in Britain revert to the primitive. Communications with other countries are practically cut off. Finally, Hopkins learns from a friend that, during the intra-European strife, a new Gengis Khan had appeared in the Middle East, rallied an army, and conquered the world. Hopkins, disappointed, and ready to die, writes his story and places it in a metal container. The light of western civilization burns feebly, and soon expires.

A. N. O'Nymous

Triplanetary, by Edward E. Smith, Ph. D. Fantasy Press, Reading, Pa., 1948. 287 pp.

I trust that it is unnecessary for me to introduce either the author or the basic story to this audience. At least the author. It may be that there are some of you who did not read the story when it came out, or subsequently. So I guess I'd better say a few words about the history of the book, with enough hints about the plot to interest the unknowing.

As originally written, Triplanetary was a totally isolated yarn. It did not fit into the Skylark series, and the Lensman series was as yet unborn. So it was just an isolated super-space-opera. You have all the odds and ends peculiar to a Smith epic... new weapons, rays, and enemies. The whole story is more or less of a trial run for the Lesman saga. Thus, when Lloyd Eshbach got around to Trip on his publication schedule, EES decided to fit the yarn into the Lensman series. Thus he wrote a hundred page introduction to Triplanetary which takes the reader up from the dim distant past to the time of the story, and introduces the idea of Arisia and Eddore. He further plans to write, or has written, another novel to fill the transition between Trip and Galactic Patrol. This will appear from Fantasy Press in the (I hope) not too far distant future.

It is the first hundred pages of the present volume that make it a must buy for all stf readers. Even those who own the original mags have not got the whole story. And these hundred pages are Smith at his best. His description of the next war is some of the best writing that he has turned out. In short, YA GOTTA BUT DEF BUY THE BOOK!

There is just one thing that impressed me unfavorably about the book. That was the first chapter heading in the book. The illustration, I mean. In it Donnell came altogether too close to Rogers to be coincidence. It impressed me as a rather close copy of some of the work in Children of the Lens. Aside from that, however, I have no complaints. The book is, technically, up to Fantasy Press's usual excellence. I wish that certain other publishers would do as well...

So, in conclusion, and to fill out the page, let me urge one and all, in the strongest of terms, to buy Triplanetary.

DISSECTIONS

Our first letter in this issue will be a very long one. I am publishing it intact because I feel that Ted's comments are of value to all up and coming authors; not only to those commented upon. So, with no further ado I turn you over to Ted Sturgeon:

Feb. 19, 1948

Dear Henry,

...

In atonement for my sweeping statement at the Stranger Club in re fan writing, I should like to take the liberty of reviewing the current SPARX.

Dave Thomas's COLD WAR is properly chosen for a lead. It has that necessary quality of successful fiction, reader identification. You give a damn what happens to these people, as drawn in terms of the lead characters. This is a rare quality in the fan fiction I've seen. ...as to plot, there isn't too much. This is a sketch rather than a story; a page of history, with hinted beginnings and a guessable end, but nothing too definite at either end. Thomas's style shows the deft use of his materials. He knows how to use a semicolon-- at least, it sounds to me the way I think semicolons should sound. (I call punctuation inflection in print, and always read and write as if I were reading aloud.) Thomas also has freed himself from the "he said"'s and the "said he"'s which plague each and every paragraph of most non-pro (and too much pro) copy. "Business" is a good substitute for the "he-saids", Dave: for example,

"Neiland turned to the window. 'It's snowing.'
He heard his wife's footsteps, and her voice was gentle. 'Again?'

He nodded. 'The price we pay for an atmosphere.'
You can go on for pages like that, making the reader see the people and the room, characterizing as you go, keeping it perfectly clear who's talking, and never using "he said" or any of its little brothers and sisters. ...I'd like to see something of yours which is plotted, with a statement, a development, a crisis, a climax, and a denouement.

Jack Speer's PEOPLE ARE NO DAMN GOOD is the sort of high-wire work which I, personally, am trying to avoid these days. Not because it isn't good, and fun, and of value-- it's all of these. The compulsion to arrange and rearrange titles in an intellectual mosaic is drug-like. Let me throw you a proposition: What is basic is simple. What is basic is important. What is complicated is by definition not important. It can be beautiful, amusing, compelling, imposing, useful,

and many other things, but in its rococo forms it is not as important as the simple, solid blocks which hold it up.

Tim Orrok's RECALL is something that requires some intensive de-bugging. Let's see if, in consistence with the above, I can keep it simple. First, Tim has a fine gift for phrasing; one suspects, however, that he was frightened at an early age by some turn-of-the-century stylists-- the "An observer would have been surprised at the appearance of the dog with its three-inch fangs, and would, no doubt, have recoiled at the evil odor which emanated from it." That kind of copy is tough sledding for the modern reader, who, while doing his cooperative best to get into the scene, is diverted into consideration of a non-existent character called observer, who has nothing to do with the story. (For the same reason it is wise for the narrator to keep himself out of the story, and confine all quips, "picturesque speech", subjective philosophies, and the like to his characters. Never let your reader jump back at your intrusion and say, "Who let you in here?") Tim does not do either of these things, but his discursive style is rather like that of a lecturer with illustrative slides, droning on as the scenes shift. Few such lecturers can get their audiences out of the hall and into the pictures. ...as to plot, this ain't, and I don't think it's supposed to be anything more than one of several continuing fragments. It might be well to remember, tho', that serialized stuff requires a really significant happening to hang onto between issues; no reader can hang onto mood, as such.

TRICKS OF THE TRADER (good title, hey) is far too diffuse. It's easy to see what Williams is after; I think it's easy to see why he doesn't get it. In the first place, there is no "narrative hook"-- no beginning which puts the reader in the edge of his chair and gives him an adequate reason to read through the background material so that he can better partake of the bit of action he started with. Even slick magazine serial synopses are, in many cases, cast with a narrative hook. Take a look...further, there is no appreciable reason to worry about what happens to these guys. Readers are pretty cold-blooded; the danger that a character might get killed is not enough to worry them a bit. Hence reader-identification; if the reader can put himself in the character's place, he's damn well going to worry. ...the preoccupation with tentacles and strange sense-organs is now archaic in science-fiction. It's fun to play with; but if your reader is not familiar with stf, he'll want a much more complete and understandable description (and he'll want it all to matter to the plot) and if he is familiar with stf, practically all of this is old hat to him; he wants to skip it and get on to the story. Will Jenkins (Leinster) prides himself on never having described a character in a story-- yet his characterizations are extremely vivid and powerful. He does it all with action, dialect, and dialogue, and lets the reader do the job of visualization. Result: the reader does a perfect job of it, and likes the yarn because he helped make it. ...the stf

gimmick of the hyperspatial trap is unoriginal and diffuse. Keep 'em simple; state them first, so that the reader feels the danger of the trap all along, and get the protagonists in (or out) of the trap in some way that the reader didn't expect.

DEATH is another one that lacks sufficient reader identification. You see this guy suffering, and you are told why, but somehow it's not important. A pity, because this could be a really fine work, and eminently publishable-- a plot-from-character job of real power. I'd suggest that when you have an idea like this, you cast it carefully with some actor whose work you admire. John Carradine, with his genius for schooled understatement, would be my choice for the Martian here. Block in his background with enough credibility to ensure that the reader is interested in him personally-- "it could be me" is the thing to shoot at-- and then play that scene over and over again. Watch his face-- everything about it; the shadows under the jaw (what kind of light?) the tenseness of the cheek muscles, the pain in eyes suddenly drawn and slitted; the effort at control-- a lifetime of human associations and conditioned reflexes versus the cultural-psych gimmick (and a fine one it is). ...Somewhere in THE COLD WAR Thomas has injected a Russian-novel feeling of desolate inevitability. It's in the dialogue and in the description, and the action-line underlines it. Study the mechanics of it; you have here, in DEATH, a vehicle for an extraordinarily powerful sense of loss and hopeless grief.

THE FRUMPER... Tall and green. When I first heard it, it was a gloop-maker, second class, and I think I liked it better. This is good gag-copy, tho'. It's not too often self-conscious, but when it is, it goes the whole hog. The baby's (censored) quip is an example. On the other hand, the 120 day wonder biz, and even the diagged "innumerable tortures" was right cute. Most of all, the piece shows an even and articulate flow... The paragraph which begins "Those of you who are of a religious frame of mind..." has, incidentally, a venerable history. The lightly humorous discussion with the reader has been, for a long time, a lost art. (I don't mean the "observer" business as mentioned above; I mean the paragraph, or even chapter, interpolation where the author openly sets out to chat with the reader.) It is used with delightful effect in VANITY FAIR; and, I think best of all, in TOM JONES. It was with real joy that I found how well it can be done in a modern setting; grab Herman Louk's AURORA DAWN and have yourself a picnic with it.

The rest of the magazine is interesting; the layouts are clean. I'd like a little more ink on my copy here and there.

NOTE! All above opinions are to be considered of personal framing and origin, and subject to the aberrations thereof. Sturgeon has no private wire to Cosmic Truth.

...

Cordially,

T. H. Sturgeon

Thanks a lot for the comments, Ted. I hope that the material in the present issue has been improved by your comments. Next one of our authors (?) has a few comments to make. I give you (and hope you keep) Vince Williams:

c/o Glarsten Dribble

Dear Henry,

...

LETTERS: Vince W.: I made the crack about imitating EESmith before reading the last two installments of CHILENS. Better to retract it later than never.

Rick Sneary: Many thanks to this noble crittur for his favorable comments on the FLOWER. I am saddened that he missed the deep character portraiture and philosophical morals. Everybody seems to have. Still I'm happy that he liked it. Hope he'll bear up under FRICKS.

Leslie Hudson: Thanks to him, esp for his lovely comment that the "Little Flower was best thing in mag."

Stein: Fanfiction above average. Hrm. I'm sure that comrade Orrok and I appreciate that. Good taste in Mr. Stein.

Tom Jewett: So, the fiction didn't appeal to him, the creature! It was at least in better taste than certain of those monstrosities inserted in the otherwise fine Kay-Mar Trader (apart from the takeoff on the Arkham House ad, which I liked on first reading).

LIT: (1) TRICKS OF THE TRADER, by Yours Truly. (This is ammatter of habit, ignore it if you feel that way.)

(2) DEATH, by Norman Schlecter. Great leaping Kluggs, who is this guy? Martians was swell!

(3) PEOPLE ARE NO DAMN GOOD, by Jack Speer. If there was any inner significance in this piece besides the obvious one of moods, hope, null A, and/or math, I did not see it. I did like the piece in a pleasantly unaffected scrt of way.

(4) My English teacher tells me that Orrok's RECALL belongs in here, as a fairly successful, interesting, and no-doubt highly pregnant treatment of something. Unfortunately, there isn't enough action to really pull it through.

(5) THE COLD WAR probably belongs a few notches up the line. Dave Thomas has done a very creditable job on an old line. If he could have found either a shadow of hope, or a more defined edge of bitterness, it would have been superb. It didn't get sufficiently beyond the narrative stage, vaguely as Orrok never got into it at all. I want more and better from both.

(6) THE FRUMPER, it appears, has ended up on the bottom of things. It was a very nice story; I tried it on my

nephew Charles, and he nearly died laughing. Needless to say, I changed it a little. ((Otherwise he'd have died. Ed)) I think that it is better told than written, although Derfla Grebsiew the unspeakable (did I see him of Ktyl last millenium?) did about as well as could have been hoped. I think that you, dear editor, frumped it up with your damned parentheses. (And for the Lord's sake, remove the word if you want to, but don't put in any cracks about family magazines. Aunt Agatha got into one of my early mags, I've forgotten exactly what it was, and was, to speak roughly, petrified. She has since been immune to other-than-family mags---or were you thinking of her? ((No, I wasn't. Ed)))

I don't suppose I have to worry about SPARK 7 now, except in wondering how many will have the sense to reread the first onstallment before, after four months, starting in on part two of TRICKS FOR THE TRADER.

Luv'n kisses,

Vince Williams

Hmmm. Real pregnant, Vince. Now for the Sage of Bathgate:

3-10-43

Dear Hank,

...

I got SPARK #6, and I thought it was darn good. It was about the most legible mag in the FAPA bundle, and about the most interesting one, too.

The "Supreme Crystal Stencil" seemed to be a flop. And to think you're stuck with a quire of them, too. Tsk, tsk. ((No, they're OK. Just not enough ink used. How do you like this page, Joe? Still using 'em. For the whole ish, in fact. Ed))

SPARK might be improved somewhat if it was slipsheeted, but I hesitate to suggest it as I hear slipsheeting is rather expensive, and having lost fortunes on my mag / LOXYGEN/, I know how it feels.

Some comments on SPARK #6:

THE COLD WAR- great. I liked the way it ended. Happy little sadists that we are.
PEOPLE ARE NO DAMN GOOD- yawn. Speer has done much better than this. And anyway, I always thought that expression originated with Ron Christensen.
RECALL- marvelous. Orrok ought to turn pro.
TRICKS OF THE TRADLER- ugh. No more, please.
DEATH- ...and into the night walked Bulldog Drummond.
BOOK REVIEWS- competent.
THE FRUMPER- superb. Oh that ending!

EDITORIAL- interesting, tho slightly illegible. Above the average fanzine editorial, somewhat.

FROM THE READERS- letters are letters are letters are letters

Am enclosing a sample of my genius. A crossword puzzle, no less. While others mess around with A-bombs, rockets, relativity, other ways of wasting time, I make up crossword puzzles. What other slaw can make that statement?

...

Yours Ghuly

Joe Schaumburger

If youse is wondering about the puzzle, and ain't found it yet, it will appear in this ish, if I haven't lost it. Now on to another payroller, Dave Thomas:

Feb. 9, 1943

Dear Henry:

I read SPARK through at a sitting after getting down to my room Sunday night. An excellent ish (if I do say so myself). My comments are as follows...

PEOPLE ARE NO DAMN GOOD. Didn't understand it, but it sounded nice. See if you can get Speer to amplify the concepts contained therein, and I may be able to follow his lines of reasoning.

RECALL. As you said, the title was totally inapplicable. ((The title should have been: RECALL I. Chrysalis. Ed)) Well written job. It wasn't a story, since there was no plot, but as an introduction to a series it was certainly OK. My only objection would be that the character of Phillip Reilly isn't too believable. There was no explanation of his longevity, for example. Was he just exceptionally old, or a mutant, or what?

TRICKS OF THE TRADER shouldn't be criticised until all the installments are in.

You know my opinions on DEATH, THE COLD WAR, and THE FRUMPER. ((All unprintable, any way. Ed))

Items I liked:

" 'The Little Flower.' Good humor. Hehehe." (From Sneary's letter. The "Hehehe" amused me greatly, for some irrational reason.)

"well?nonodontcomeatme," etc.

~~Innumerable tortures~~ the finest training," etc.

"the ((censored)-end of a ship)."

And various others. ...

Seriously, I would like to see the fan mail that mentions my contributions. I admit it's part ego-boo, but I'm curious to know how the stuff went over. ...

...

Sincerely yours,

Dave

Thanks, Dave. Below is what one fan thinks I look like. What I don't understand is that I don't think that Hill has ever seen me...



Honest, I don't look like that in the mirror, I don't think. Oh, well, such is the price of fame. Next, we have a note from me to Dunk, and he to me. It might explain the Philcon Memory Book lack. I publish it as it stands. Maybe it will be out soon. I hope it will. You may see SPARK #4 yet!

16 April 1948

Dunk:

When, oh when, will that Philcon Memory Book be out?
I have almost given up hope of seeing it before the TORCON.

Hopefully,

Hank

And Slightly Later

As soon as we get enough money in and Daugherty finishes
stencilling it.

D.

So if any of you Angelenos want to see it, jump on Walt. And
any of you who owe money, send it to Dunkleberger. Noow back to
real DISSECTIONS: Friend Hudson has his say:

February 29, 1948

Dear Henry,

Glad to see SPARX again even tho it's missing a cover.
You know, I could send you one of my drawings---but, no,
even you don't deserve that.

Editorial was one of the most interesting things in the
mag. Nice write-up.

"The Cold War"--fair.

"People are no damn good"--I still don't understand it.
Maybe I'd better read it half a dozen more times.

"Tricks of the rader"--hope it will improve a little in
succeeding installments.

"Recall"--First installment was readable. Might prove
to be an interesting series.

"Death"--not bad!

Book reviews--short and to the point. I still don't
think I'll buy van Vogt's book.

"The Frumper"--I won't even mention it. Hardly deserves
mention anyway.

Can we expect 26 pages from now on? Hope you can keep it
up to that. Keep up the good work.

28

Sincerely, Leslie Hudson

FOR SALE

All items are in good to excellent condition; subject to prior sale; and postpaid.

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION		WEIRD TALES	
1946 Feb Fair	\$.20	1945 Sep Poor	\$.10
Jul	.25		
Oct	.25		
1947 Dec	.25	AMAZING STORIES	
		1945 Dec	.25
		1946 May	.25
		Sep	.25
		Dec	.25
		1947 Feb	.25
STARTLING STORIES			
1942 Nov	.35		
1946 Sum	.20		
1947 Jan	.15	SCIENCE FICTION STORIES	
Mar	.15	1943 Jul	.20
		Apr Fair	.15
PLANET STORIES			
1945 Win	.25	FANTASTIC ADVENTURES	
1946 Win	.20	1945 Dec No back cover	.15
1947 Win	.20	1946 Feb No back cover	.15
Spr	.20	May No back cover	.15
ASTONISHING STORIES		FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES	
1941 Apr Fair	.20	1939 Sep-Oct First issue	\$2.00
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		Dec Important page miss-	
		ing	.65
DYNAMIC SCIENCE STORIES		1940 Jan	.75
1939 Apr-May Fair	.25	Mar	.75
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THRILLING WONDER STORIES		1941 Aug	.50
1941 Mar	.35	1942 Feb	.50
Aug	.35	Jul Poor	.25
1942 Oct No front cover	.20	Apr	.50
Dec	.35	Aug	.50
1943 Feb No front cover	.20	1943 Mar No back cover	.25
Jun No front cover	.10	1945 Mar Fair	.20
Fal Fair	.25	Sep	.25
1945 Spr	.20	Dec	.25
1946 Spr	.15	1946 Apr	.25
Sum	.15	Jun	.25
1947 Feb	.15		
Apr	.15		
Dec	.15		
1939 Aug	.75		

If you do not want to buy, but would rather trade, I need certain issues of UNKNOWN, ASTOUNDING, FFM. I'll send a list on request.

FANTASTIC NOVELS	
1940 Jul First issue	\$2.00
Sep	.75
1941 Apr No front cover	.50

DAVE THOMAS
31 LINNAEAN STREET
CAMBRIDGE 38, MASS.