

SUCH AND SUCH 4



JS

MAILING COMMENTS

THE SOUTHERNER (Joe Staten) I wasn't going to mention this; I'm a terrible speller and an even worse typist. . .but here my name is spelled "Luttrel" three times. It does have two l's on the end there.

Gosh--a waiting list--fantastic--I wonder if this is a reflexion of an interest in SFPA alone, or merely another indication of the increasing interest in apas in general. Apa45 has a waiting list, a fact which will shock some people. (well, yes, it is only one person, but still . .)

KAMBUMPO (Dian Pelz) I wouldn't have even known who Jack Douglas was until a few days ago. I noticed one of his books on a friend's book shelf, and thumbed through it. Read a few of the shorter things; some of them were quite funny. Some of them, however, seemed like they were something especially written for television. In other words, quite unfunny and uninspired. Hackwork. I suppose it's hard to put together a book of altogether brillently funny stories. Just remembered the title, NEVER TRUST A NAKED BUSDRIVER.

Just judging from "Rack and Ruin," I'd say, yes, there is something sadistic in you.

I've been wanting to buy and read some of Thorne Smith's fantasy for some time, but I never seemed to get around to it.. Perhaps your article will get me moving in that direction.

UTGARD#4 (Dave Hulan) As with regards to our lack of active fans here in Missouri--we seem to be finding a few more every once in a while. Or at least we've found some people who might become active fans. . .but why do we have so few to start with? I was at a book fair recently (a book fair, people, is a big tent where in thousands of donated books are sold to an eager public for anywhere between 10¢ to 75¢, and a little more for the things the people in charge think are rare. Anyway, all profits go towards various Good Causes.) . .where was I? Oh yes, I was at this book fair and I saw at least two other people lugging away huge piles of fantasy and science fiction. A clerk assured me that it had been selling well, and that the main question asked him was to the effect, "Why can't you people put all the sf in one place, like you do the mystery?" Other friends who work where books are sold tell me that science fiction sells like nothing else. We have readers like crazy, it seems, but no fans.

After the furious (double meaning?) rash of one shots we've been having these last few months, I'm wondering if either you, Dave, or Larry thinks THE FAN OF BRONZE is still funny.

Well, I do, and I hope it is continued.

CLARGES (Lon Atkins) If I had reproduction troubles like you do I think I'd be quite satisfied with the whole thing. I guess as long as it's already this good, however, you can afford to be a perfectionist.

Avalon isn't really the worst science fiction being published in the world today. A company in England, Badger, and the American reprinter, Vega, take that title hands down. The thing that bothers me about the Avalon and Arcadia titles is that the St. Louis County Library seems to think that they are the major--perhaps only--publisher of science fiction. It is depressing.

-- Avalon still has its place in the development of new fans. You've all heard how we need new, brash magazine, the like of THRILLING WONDER and PLANET, to serve as a step between SUPERMAN comics and the most recent issue of FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. Magazines have been replaced by paperbacks, the young brash magazines couldn't make a profit these days. So--our young fans can go to the library and read Avalon.

More about Badger and Co. in STARLING #7, I think.

INVADER #6 (Joe Staten) Well--I'm glad you saw fit to run off the Les Simple article again--I certainly wasn't able to read it the first time. I don't think it really had anything new to say, but it was rather good all the same.

They don't kill people in comic books anymore because of censors. Perhaps this is good; maybe it was a bad influence on all the little kiddies, reading about people getting shot all full holes and such, that's not the point. Take a look at "Johnny Quest" some time. Man, they really kill 'um in that one. With some of the other violent programs on TV, the censor can tell you that they weren't ment to be children's programs, anyway. But nobody is going to tell me "Johnny Quest" is a program for adults.



THE HORROR SCOPE No. 2

You may remember some time ago when I "looked" at THE MAGAZINE OF HORROR AND STRANGE STORIES #1-4 "issue by issue." May I bring that look up to date?

Vol. #1, #5, dated September 1965

"Cassius" by Henry S. Whitehead is the lead novelette, and a good one, reprinted from STRANGE TALES in 1931. You've met the plot before; a "thing" is born part of one of the character's body. In this case the thing is a degenerate twin brother, connected to the other at birth. It is severed from the host's body, and comes back to cause him trouble.

"The House of the Worm" by Merle Prout seems to be a rather obscure Weird Tales story from 1933 written by an equally obscure author. Editor Lowndes feels it possesses the "charnel odor" of horror one reader mentioned earlier in the letter column. It does, and it quite effective.

"The Ghostly Rental" by Henry James is also quite effective. I must shamefaced admit that I've had very little contact with the other fantasies of James. If the story is any indication of their merit, they aren't to be overlooked.

There are three new stories, which vary in quality; Walt Liebscher's "The Morning the Birds Forgot to Sing" is a very good story about Death personified, and the best original effort, "Five Year Contract" by J. Vernon Shea is a fair contract-with-the-devil thing, J. L. Muller's "Love at First Sight" concerns Love Potions, and fails completely, while "A Stranger Came To Reap" by Stephen Dentinger is a mood piece which falls very short of its mark.

The rest of the reprints include H. G. Wells and Don Wolheim, with stories you might not have read. I certainly hadn't.

Vol. 1, #6, dated November 64

With this issue, Lowndes adds the words, ". . .and Science Fiction." to the cover, and proves it with borderline sf, "Caverns of Horror" by Laurence Manning (reprinted from Gernsback's WONDER STORIES in 1934) and "The Door to Saturn" by Clark Ashton Smith (from STRANGE TALES, 1932)

The Manning story isn't the best longer story to appear in MoH; basically it is a fantastic journey type story, which tries to awe one by allowing short glimpses of various "unknowns." It is somewhat hampered by an old fashioned style.

The more you read of Clark Ashton Smith, the more you can like it. If "The Door to Saturn" is your first contact with him, it may not impress you. The plot is Nothing, as is the characterization. Look at the language, the colors, the poetry in the settings--the imagination. These are Smith's strengths.

The new stories included "Prodigy" by Walt Liebscher, which tries to tell the most disgusting-horrible murder story it possibly can, and does so effectively. How much you like this will depend upon how much you approve of his purpose. "The Life After Death of Mr. Thaddeus" by Robert Barbour Johnson is pretty fair if you haven't read the plot too many hundreds of times before. . . a corpse takes revenge on its murderer. David Grinnell gives us a third fair original story, "The Feminine Fratricide."

Robert W. Chambers, H. G. Wells, and August Derleth have little heard of reprints, along with the often reprinted "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

This issue has the first more or less pictorial cover, a clawed hand lifted out of a pool of blood. I don't really think it attracted many readers, but perhaps it is an improvement over just a shortened contents page on the cover.

Vol 2, #1 (whole number 7) dated January 1965

This issue has the same cover as the last, with a different color arrangement. This time the blood is green, instead of red, as before.

I feel that this issue is the worst yet published. It is the only one so far in which the lead novel has been really poor. And while the rest of the issue is reasonably good, this one story was just more than I could swallow without some protest.

"The Thing From---Outside" by George Allan England (from, I think, an old Munsey magazine, although it was later published in the 1926 Gernsback Amazing Stories) is the offender. In this one, something like Manning's "Caverns of Horror," the author tries to awe one with vaguely glimpsed horrors. In this one, however, the horror is "cosmic," and "beyond man's understanding or power to contemplate." A story which tries to tell me this always has two strikes against it already, and here, England skillfully combines his theme with a nothing plot, stick figure characters, writing that was bad even for the time at which it was written, and a Monster which is not straight out of Hollywood only because the author keeps it off stage as far as descriptions are concerned, so it will be "vaguely glimpsed," and more horrible, of course. Somebody tell me why it was reprinted.

The best of the two new stories is Joseph Payne Brennan's "Black Thing at Midnight." "A Way With Kids" by Ed. M. Clinton was poor science fiction.

"The Shunned House" by H.P. Lovecraft and August Derleth was pretty good. Those of you who are Lovecraft fans are aware of this story, I hardly need to introduce you to it. I doubt that you think the same thing about it that I do, however. You must remember that I'm only an occasional reader of Lovecraft, and hardly a real fan. I thought it was a great deal more tightly written than most Lovecraft

and the main character was much real er.

Other reprints included Seabury Quinn's very good "The Phantom Farmhouse," Mary Wilkins-Freeman, Edgar Allan Poe's "The Oblong Box", and a curious Victorian story by a E. B. Marriott-Watson. All were very worthwhile if you hadn't read them before, and the Poe story was the only with any recent wide spread publication, and even that was in an expensive hard bound edition.

Vol 2, #2 (whole number 8) dated April 1965

This issue has a black, red, and white cover, better than the first, and rather good for all its simplicity---just a man and a woman staring out at you.

I don't think good ol' Ray Cummings has many devoted fans nowadays. He did at one time--a fact that I find hard to believe. The "early" Cummings was always the best remembered--and also, it was amazingly bad. (Or at least what I've read of it--perhaps I'm not being fair.) In this early period, he wasn't interested in telling stories, or drawing characters, or anything else generally associated with fiction writing. He liked to tell us about science. It might be argued that this was the goal of most very early science fiction, which is certainly true. But, still, most of the writers at least made some attempt to cover up the teaching with a plot of some type. Cummings, in this early period, didn't really care. (See the STAR-LING in this mailing for more about this.)

Fortunately, the story here, "The Dead Who Walk" was written in the "Hack" Cummings era. It seems that he found that stories sold better than his lectures, so he tried his hand at them. The best results were entertainingly, as is this story. He still isn't too great, but he is readable--much more so than England.

I'm not sure about the narrative poem, "The Hand of Glory" by R. H. D. Barnham. If he was trying to be funny--it is certainly a very clever piece at points, though perhaps sometimes over-done. But if it was intended to be half serious. . . well, I suppose it would still be very amusing. Rereading it, I'm positive it was ment to be funny. . . I think.

David Grinnell and John Brunner both have new stories which fall short of standards set by earlier issues. Reynold Junker and Cliver Taylor have stories which handle recognizable plots well.

William J. Makin, Robert W. Chambers, and Washington Irving have little known reprints, all quite good.

Vol. 2, # 3, (whole number 8) Dated June 1965

This most recent issue has the best cover to date--the first one which really illustrates a scene. I may not have been intended to, but it illusrtates, more or less, one of the stories; "The Night Wire," a short story from a 1926 Weird Tales. The story itself.

thought short, is worth a cover.

"The Whistling Room" by William Hope Hodgson is one of the best of MoH's longer stories. It is one of Hodgson's stories about Carnacki, the "Ghost Finder." Editor Lowndes mentions that some of the devices used in the Carnacki stories--telling the stories in the form of conversation, many references to obscure occultist lore, etc.--might well grow tedious. However, here we were presented only one of these tales, and over use doesn't blunt the effect. I wasn't expecting the ending, which was quite interesting.

Robert E. Howard's Solomon Kane story, "Skulls in the Stars" is good in a vulgar sort of way. In particular, I liked the title and the line in the story in which it was used: "Death! Death! There are skulls in the stars!"

"The Photographs" by Richard Marsh is one of those stories in which everyone goes around acting stupid. You know the type--the heroes are given fact after fact--of a nature impossible for them not to believe. But they don't believe it for a while, until they are forced to, at any rate. Finally--as in most stories of this type, a cop moves in and refuses to believe the thing all over again. The story is redeemed by competent writing, and a fair--dispite the stupidity--plot.

Wallace West's "Sacrilege" is an original story, but written some time ago, as it was accepted by Farnsworth Wright, and then rejected when new editors took over. It reads like it was--well--written some time ago. It lacks much of the professional polish more common today. It does have, however, a good deal of excitement, and a plot variation which I hadn't run into before.

"All the Stain of Long Delight" by a Jerome Clark is original, I guess, and is all of 200 words long. It also doesn't make any sense. "Garantee Period" by William M. Danner, also new, is insignificant, but readable.

Other reprints are "The Distortion out of Space" by Francis Flagg, "The Door in the Wall" by H. G. Wells, and "The Three Low Masses" by Alphonse Daudet.

This is Such and Such #4, from Hank Luttrell, Route 13, 2936 Barrett Station Road, Kirkwood, Missouri 63122. Cover by Joe Staton.

