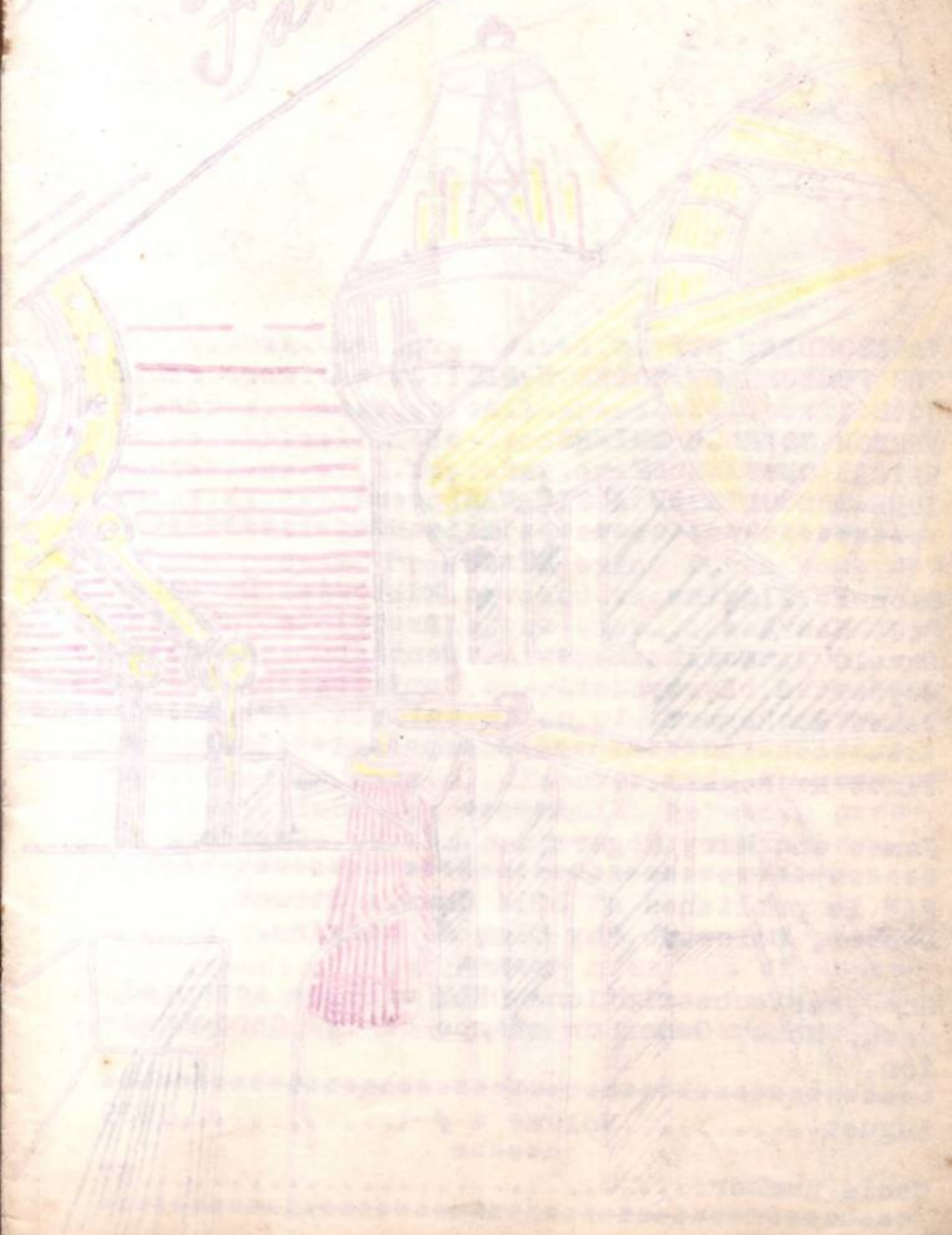


The  
Science of Fiction  
Fan



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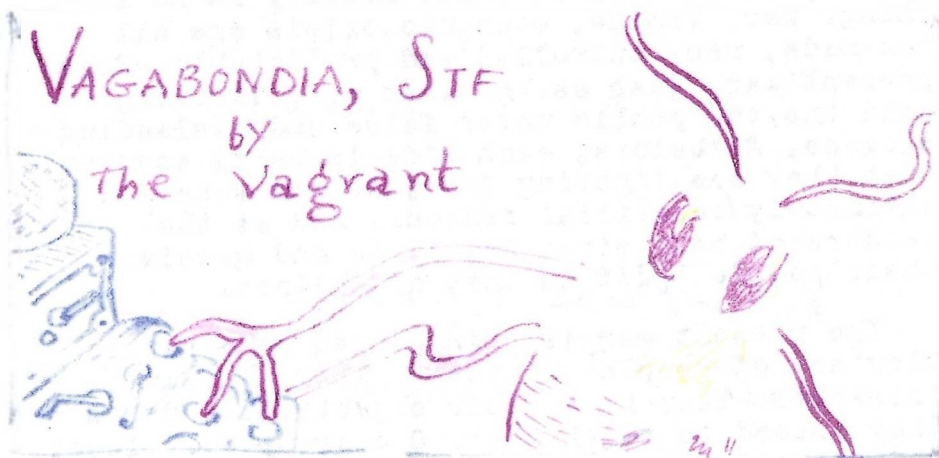
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August.....Volume 4 # 1.....1939

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Now that the long feared shadow has fallen solidly upon the world and war rages without our shores, fans can well speculate upon just what it will all mean. And perhaps among the speculations will be: what of those horrific weapons of destruction and incredible devastation that STF authors have so often written? Will the present holocaust bring forth some new plague, unleash some new and uncontrollable forces which will wipe the earth clean of human (and perhaps all) life? At the beginning of the last war, such questions would have been laughed away, consideration of them dismissed most lightly. But now....how much has science, prostituted by madmen, discovered in the way of mass desolation? Your columnist herewith presents his views on the subject for what they are worth.

I feel that we need not fear and such developments. Were history a series of unpredictable accidents and such chances and whims of individuals, then perhaps these nightmares



might well be dreaded, but history is no such thing. War, famine, economic crisis are all man-made, man-controlled and predictable. This present war, just as the last war, is being sold to the public under false and misleading slogans. As before, each side is being assured that they are fighting for just and sane and ultimately beneficial reasons. And as the leaders of both sides are lying and deceiving their people just as they did before.

The present war is being waged by a particular set of people for their own interests. They know their objectives and how they intend to reach them. One group will lose: that is a foregone conclusion. But neither group dares to use uncontrollable weapons because they intend to win and to profit by their gains. As before, they must win, but they must not defeat their opponent too badly: there must be enough left for the winner to enjoy his victory and for the loser to pay and pay and pay. Thus, no matter how desperate one side becomes, they will accept momentary defeat (in the hopes of winning again later) rather than wipe out the whole game. The instruments of either side may be madmen but they are madmen controlled by individuals who know just what they are doing. To a certain extent, destruction will be uncontrolled; a certain amount of appalling slaughter will be allowed in plans. But enough losers will be permitted to live to pay for the game; thus complete desolation will not be allowed.

It is to the interests of both sides to pretend that they are fighting against utter madmen and fiends. To pretend further that they represent sanity while the other side represents barbarism and complete desolation, and retrogression. Actually they both represent a society which is obsolete, corrupt, and

T H E - P U R P O S E - O F  
S C I E N C E - F I C T I O N

by

Douglas W. F. Mayer

(Editor of TOMORROW, Hon. Secretary Science Fiction Association)

This is the text of a speech delivered by the author at the Second Convention of the Science Fiction Association, April 10, 1938, at A.O.D. Memorial Institute, Holborn, London,, England.

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June 1939  
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THE PURPOSE OF SCIENCE FICTION  
---by D.W.F. Mayer---

I should just like to say a few words about the new sociological movement which is beginning to develop in science fiction circles. There are some today, I know, who firmly believe in science fiction for science fiction's sake. They believe in subscribing to the four science fiction magazines, in reading them with the attitude of earnest critics, in writing to the editors and authors, in collecting fan magazines, stills from stf films, cartoon strips, etc., and in general making a kind of religious cult out of science fiction. I think we all do this to a certain extent.

But to those who are firmly convinced that this should not be the be-all and end-all of science fiction, I have a question to ask--"why?" Why do they all read science fiction and eagerly collect the magazines? Why do they subscribe to the fan magazines which, with about half-dozen exceptions, are worthless? Why do they pester editors, publishers, and writers? And above all, why are they monomaniacs with the one fixed idea of spreading science fiction?

Do they spread science fiction because they wish to increase the profits of the publishers? To some extent, I am afraid, this is true, as a large percentage of those who cry "science fiction for science-fiction's sake" have definitely a financial interest, whether as authors, publishers, editors, or distributors. I am not protesting against people making money out of science fiction, of course, since if they work, it is only fair that they should be paid, and you can hardly expect them to live on the admiration of fans.

I do protest, however, their spreading of the belief that there is nothing better to live for than the reading, criticising and boosting of science fiction.

I think that Gernsback was the first to realize that if fans were to be encouraged to boost science fiction, they would have to be given a purpose. After all, it is rather silly when you tell people that you have organizations for advancing science-fiction and yet you can not tell them why science fiction should be advanced. And so Gernsback suggested that science fiction was a kind of sugar-coated educator for teaching science.

Well, it is not my intention to argue on the right or wrong of Gernsback's hypothesis. But I doubt very much if anyone who has studied science fiction really believes in this view. And if that were true, I don't think many fans would realize the job of being instruments for teaching people Ohm's law or the Binomial Theorem. Of course, in the early Gernsback stories, we did get some interesting data about the Fourth Dimension, the theory of relativity, etc., and I think that many fans will admit that their first introduction to the interesting social life of termites was Dr. Keller's story THE HUMAN TERMITES.

But few modern science fiction stories --even those of Well, Stapledon, etc., can be said to contain much scientific information. Any one who does desire sugar-coated science can easily get it from such magazines as ARMCHAIR SCIENCE, or such books as those by Jeans, Crowther, Haldane, or the Scientific Book Club. I have yet to hear of someone becoming interested in science fiction and then developing into a science-fanatic. In fact, I know several cases where persons



who were formerly keenly interested in things like chemistry and physics have, after reading a quantity of science fiction, lost this concentrated enthusiasm for chemistry and physics, and have started taking an interest in the world as a whole.

And I believe that this gives a clue to the real purpose of science fiction. It is becoming more and more certain that if there is one thing that science fiction does for an individual, it is to broaden his mind. It takes him outside his own egotistical little self, and gives him a mental birdseye view not only of the earth and its teeming multitudes, but of our solar system or galaxy, and even to the cosmos. He begins to realize what no other literature can make realize - that this world of misery and unhappiness, war and peace, dictators and democracy, press-lords and tub-thumpers, capitalists and trade unions, is nothing more than a cosmic speck surrounded by a microscopic film of air which transmits the ravings of so-called human wisdom of tow billion conglomerates of protoplasm.

In addition, science fiction stimulates the imagination. The reader is not afraid of gazing ahead, not only a year or two, but hundreds, millions of years. And it is not this quality of stimulating the imagination and creating a detached point of view, that makes science fiction something worth while and something which, or has been suggested, can do more for the world than any outpourings of politicians or scientists.

If the world is to be saved by some organization of active scientifically-minded young men depicted in such books as THINGS TO COME, WINGS OVER EUROPE, MAN'S MORTALITY, etc, then there could be better type of person better suited to the task than



science fiction fans. To judge by the history of the past few hundred years, we can expect no brilliant moves on the part of politicians. From what we know of scientists, they also, with a few notable exceptions, would be worthless in a serious and determined attempt at world reform. But most science fiction fans - are altruistic, energetic, think on scientific lines, are keenly interested in humanity and the world about them, and have sufficient enthusiasm and energy to get what they want.

With these few facts in mind, one or two American fans have advocated that science-fiction fans, reading as they do of Utopias, world reform, etc. should definitely play an active part in social and economic reconstruction.

It is not my intention at present to say much about this since my time is nearly up, but I should like to add that with the American views in mind, we in Leeds started, three months ago, a sociological group. Our chief activity, apart from discussions and talks, has been to send out a questionnaire to many fans whom we know are interested, with the object of finding out their detailed opinions on various subjects, and of finally obtaining an answer to the question: exactly what good can fans do? A lengthy report of the answers to this questionnaire - which has already provided us with much thought-provoking material - will be published in July.

Meanwhile, I would like to emphasize that the reading or propagating of science fiction merely for the pleasure the stories give, or are supposed give is rather pointless, as other literature is just as good in this respect. Furthermore, I doubt

----GOLD----

by

-----Ray Bradbury-----

Gold. All the gold he could ever use. Gold to swim in, gold to spend, gold to throw away. Gold sprawled on the floor in gleaming floods, coalescing, growing, merging, flowing. Yellow stuff like sun-colored tentacles moving in daylight. Sacks of it and chests of it. Gold everywhere.

Temples of gold, burnished by sky brightness. Enough gold pieces to replace every star in the heavens, enough to load every tramp steamer to the flooding, enough to buy up American and dump it back in the Indian's lap.

Paul Freeman stumbled and tripped through banks of slithering, clattering money. He laughed a strange laugh and tore handfuls of the gleaming stuff up and it trickled down, watching the golden stuff as it streamed down.

So this was one of the fabled islands of Atlantis? But how rich! In his wildest dreams nothing like this had ever taken shape. It was fantastic. It was a living dream. He was mad with ecstasy.

After part of the elation had worn off he went back down thru the massive temples,

out into the jungles. There, a mile away, lay the cove where his nicely-sized yacht lay at anchor.

He called the natives whom he had brought with him and they scurried thru the bushes to him.

"Go into the temples," he instructed them, breathlessly, "and bring all the casks and sacks of golden metal out, put them in the row-boats and take them out to the ship."

The dark men obeyed. They toiled all afternoon in the hot sun. Paul Freeman surveyed his work with a professorly scowl. This would be great, wonderful. All the money in the world, and FROM LOST ATLANTIS!

He wanted to jump and sing.

At midnight the yacht was ready to sail. Freeman's large suite of rooms was filled to over-flowing with sacks and caskets of gold.

"What in the world have you in those sacks," a member of the yachting party asked Freeman.

"It's a secret," replied Paul. "Wait until we reach NY and I'll tell you and the newspaper-men simultaneously."

He went back to his cabin and opened a chest of gold and the stuff sprawled on the floor. He smellad the stuff, even tasted it. what a wonderful find! It felt powerful and cool in his fingers.

The ship was far away from land now.

Someone knocked on the door.

"Radiogram, sir! said a voice. "Urgent."

"Slip it under the door," snapped Freeman. The yellow paper appeared beneath the door. He picked it up and went back to his gold.

It was almost morning. Suddenly, from Freeman's room, there came a high wailing sound, a maniacal laugh, a scream. Thrashing sounds were heard. The clattering of metal. Then, in the gloom preceding the dawn, the sound of caskets and sacks being dropped overboard. Then, with a final despairing laugh, something that was once a man, dragged himself to the railing and fell down into the turgid blackness of the ocean. All was silent.

When the men of the party arrived at Freeman's room they found it empty. Freeman was gone. He could be found nowhere on the ship. There was nothing but one gold coin lying in the middle of the room, oddly heirogl-yphed, lying on the rumpled radiogram.

And the radiogram read: "July 7th, 1943. MARKET CRASHES! STOCKS DROP TO ZERO! COUNTRY FACES CHAOS! GOLD IS NOW WORTHLESS!"

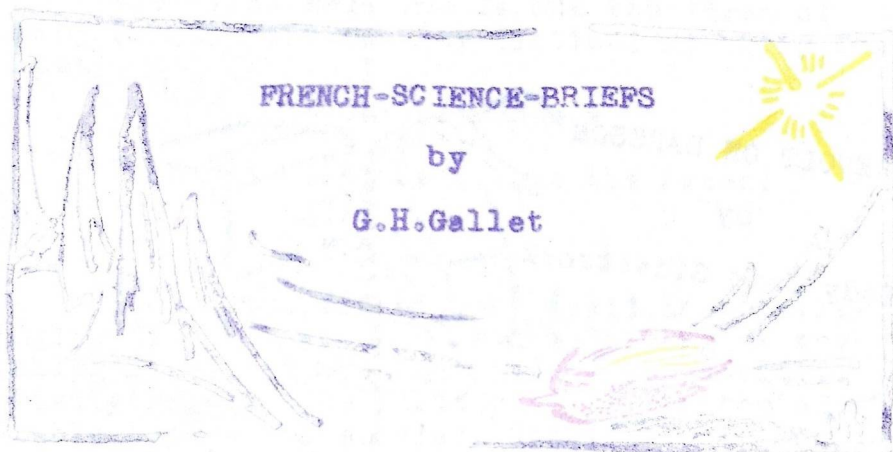
Another radiogram came an hour later, reading: "Dear Paul: I hope I didn't frighten you with my earlier radiogram. I got the idea last night and thought it would be a splendid joke to play on you."

Anthony(Technocracy Inc.)Jones.

And the gold coin gleamed intelligently in the dawn .....

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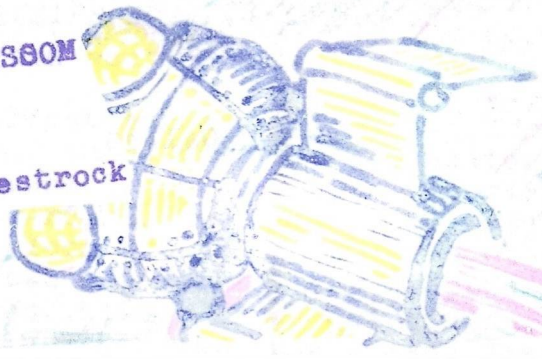




La Science et la Vie (Science and Life) the French monthly has published in its last two issues articles of considerable interest to the stfists.

March issue: What do we know about Stars? by Marcel Boill D. Sc. How modern astrophysics has searched their position, their size, their mass, their temperatures, their composition. The successive stages of astronomy- 1: Astrological period, 2: Celestial mechanics, 3: Astrophysics (illustration's show a simplified map of the Skies, a sectional view of a telescope and a spectrograph). How the remoteness of the stars is measured, with figures (from two points on earth, from two points of earth's orbit) Spectral types of stars (with specters from cold to hot, types M, K, G, F, A, B, O,) -our star (with Eddington law) - Radiated masses and powers (with comparative diameters of stars) Diameters and densities (with characteristics of the most luminous stars in the sky) - superficial layers and internal structurea. (Luns' atmosphere, and true position of the stars (with figure showing sun's and some

REVOLT ON BARSSOM  
by  
Lady Jain Sidestrock



MR

Aug. 30. '39

Ladies and gentlemen:

While leafing idly thru a back copy of the Writer's Digest I noticed in the "Magazine Material needed---" section a little paragraph devoted to your magazine "Imagination!" and the story and article requirements concerning it. What particularly delighted me was the word rate you would: 20¢ per word! This led me to write something for you.

Before writing it, I might add that I believe there is a definite place in the magazine publishing field for such a magazine as yours. For too long have westerns, love, detective, etc. held sway over the newsstands while off-trail, fantasy and imaginative fiction has never saw the light of day. It is with great joy that I welcome you into the world of fantastic fiction, for LOI, I too, am somewhat of the same type. Years ago I use to read an imaginative magazine called Amazing Stories, or AmazU Stories, or something like that. That was about 1927. It has been so long since that magazine was published that I don't even remember its name. At any rate, let us

hope that your magazine is but the first of many turning out fantasy fiction! My story follows:

### REVOLT ON BARSOOM

-OR-

(Bob and Koso Bring Home the Bacon)

"Look, you, friend Bob", said Koso smilingly, "I don't mean to be complaining or anything like that you understand, but would you kindly remove your feet from off the top of the table top-----a shoelace dangles in my soup, which disturbs me no end!"

"Ah, Koso old sock", replied his old and staunch friend of the either patrol, "you are never happy! I fear that your Lunarian ancestors live wrongly-----on Mars a pretty Snodka maiden was yours for the taking, but did you take her? No, because of a mere trifle! You passed her by because she didn't happen to have any eyes, nose or mouth on her face. On Jupiter, my too choosy friend of a thousand barroom brawls, you deliberately walked out on a whole harem of luscious beauties just because they grew cactus vines on their head instead of hair.....ah Koso, you are hopeless.....now you complain because my shoelace is in your soup!"

"But friend Bob," complained Koso complainingly, "your shoelace annoys me no end, it disturbs me, .....it.....it.....it well, damnit, take it out or I'll tell Taurasi on you."

"Shhhhhhhhhhh, not so loud, bucktooth. Don't let people hear you. It might spoil our plans. Remember, tonight we spawn a resolution.....no, wait a minute, that isn't the word

I was supposed to use.....Tsurasi is mixed up again...ah! REVOLUTION! That is it! Tonight we spawn a revolution!

"Quiet, freind Bob, quiet I beg of you! Do not shout that word so loud. If word or hint of tonights work got around, we would be tossed in the Royal Barssomian cooler and our revolution would not revoluate."

"Ah, staunch ally Koso, nener fear. If that unlikely event ever happened, we could write up the story under the original title and sell it to Amazing Stories. They veer towards revolutions somewhat.....but that is unlikely, I suspect our author has taken discreet steps to prevent the local population from preventing us from revolving a revolution. Most likely he has invanted the citizens of this world without ears. It would be very handy you know....."

"P'raps so, friend Bob, but 'tis said that on Barssom even the beer mugs have ears."

"Nay, nay, staunch friend Koso, you are thinking of bar rooms, not Barssom. There is a difference, y'know!

"No, is that, really, friend Bob? Funny, I never knew that. But our author does'nt credit me with too much sense anyway. Gee, how I wish somebody else wrote us----- somebody with imagination and intelligence.... like Tucker, maybe, for instance. Do you think he would give me more intelligence?"

"Yes, I dare say he would, staunch ally Koso. He would give you the limit of his intelligence. But then, you still would'nt know the diffenence between a bar room and



FRENCH SCIENCE BRIEFS--Cont. from 13

star - true , ation in the Milky Way),

Also an article on the Curious chemical and biological properties of "heavy" water. (Chemists and biologists are now able to follow complex chemical reactions and even nutritive exchanges inside living organisms). Others on "What is a thunderstorm?" and the converting of wood into sugar.

April issue: WHERE DO COSMIC RAYS COME FROM? by Prof. L. Houllevigae. A mysterious radiation of an extraordinarily penetrating power, reaches us continually from the depths of space. Without doubt it is born during transmutations and disintegrations in the stars. The study of these rays has revealed to physicists the existence, extremely short, (millionths of seconds) of new elementary corpuscles, for instance positive electron (positon, Anderson, 1932) and heavy electron (mesoton, Yukawa, 1935). It has also contributed to problems of experimental theoretical microphysics whose solution means much to our knowledge of the intimate (inner) structure of matter.

Another article on science against crime: How scientific police identifies fire arms- physical, chemical, micrographic examination of the bulb t. The French and American methods.

.....GHG  
\*\*\*\*\*

VAGABONDIA, STF. Cont. from 4

lacking in all decency, ethics and sanity. They are ready to sacrifice millions in innocent people to prevent their own guilt and bankruptcy from becoming known, to divert the attention of those who would quickly overthrow them were the truth allowed to be known. As early as the time of the Greeks we find in Herodotus some queen chiding her king for failure to make war saying: "surely must thou waste thy people's strenght in war lest they revolt". The warlords of today have not forgotten this ancient reasomng.

We fans can do little about this. But we can, at least, prevent ourselves from becoming victims of the flood of pernicious and false propoganda emanating from both in the present struggle. we, at least, can see through these lies and deceptions and place our finger upon the real culprit:an economic system which makes such a society as the present one(and all that goes with its war, economic insecurity for millions, famine, scientific prostitution etc) inevitable.....The Vagrant.  
\*\*\*\*\*

THE PURPOSE OF S-F. Cont. from 9

very much if science fiction is a science-educator. But if science fiction serves no better purpose than awakening its in its readers the detached point of view I have mentioned, and if it makes them realize that the future is governed by our actions of today, and that what is good enough for today is much too bad for tomorrow, then I know that you will agree with me that our work and the role of sciencesuch organizati- ons as the Science Fiction Association is not in vain.

## REVOLT ON BARSOOM---CONT. FROM 16

Barsoom----but say, what is the name of this story, anyway?"

"Lemme see, friend Bob --- why yes, I know what it is called, REVOLT ON BARSOOM, or BRINGING HOME THE BACON. But why do you ask?"

"Because, staunch ally nose, our revolution has revolted out, the natives don't have ears to hear our boring from within, the typewriter our author used in writing this one is the damndest thing he has written in since he junked his Oliver back in 1898, and the bacon is already home----in fact it is on the stove and I'm hungry. Let us be off."

"Well, if you insist, friend Bob. But then, everything has its bright side. When you got up your shoelace was automatically removed from my soup, even if you did knock the soup over with you foot."

"And the two staunch friends of the either patrol (either beer or wine, they don't care) caroom out into the barsoom night. Say, if I had phrased that different I could have made a poem out of it.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Aside to the editor: There are 667 words in the above story, and according to your payment rate of 20¢ per word, you owe me \$133.40. Please remit. I will also take six free copies of the issue my story appears in to distribute them to my friends. Kindly advise me as to how soon you can use another piece of my fiction. Thank you.

\*\*\*\*\*

...through the Confused and Jumbled  
... of the ...

By

ROBERT S. ...

... is really fine,  
 ... as charged a time,  
 ... a travelling way out in the void,  
 ... is a bold,  
 ... a hat,  
 ... should be shown,  
 ... is better,  
 ... is settled,  
 ... by many a guest,  
 ... they served burnt toast,  
 ... are too many made,  
 ... the funds,  
 ... some day,  
 ... in the F.A.P.A.,  
 ... on Walpurgis night,  
 ... is always right!

... New Pandemonia. If he is a Futurian, substitute  
 James V. Carrisi.