

The Arkham Sampler

SPRING, 1948

A GROUP OF LETTERS
by H. P. LOVECRAFT

A MEMOIR OF LOVECRAFT
by RHEINHART KLEINER

A DAMSEL WITH A DULCIMER
by MALCOLM FERGUSON

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Spring 1948

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A DAMSEL WITH A DULCIMER

By MALCOLM FERGUSON

It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.

* * *

Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

—*Kubla Khan*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

It was late spring when Hilaire MacLeod came back to Devonshire from India,—pale, thin, and still somewhat shaky as a result of typhoid fever contracted while serving with the armed forces in the Orient,—and placed himself in my care. He had been able to shake most of the fever, the disorientations of time and place which had arisen from his sickness, for he could recognise them as such. However, there remained, as he told me, certain occurrences which persisted much more strongly, seeming to have a further existence than in his mind alone. For he had seen the shapes of a world with laws and patterns of its own, convincing and as firm and immutable as our own, yet different. But where they existed, or how, MacLeod was unable to say.

“Two dream-fragments keep teasing me, trying to break through,” he explained. “One of a torrent of water falling from a great height with yet further to go where a camel-humped stone bridge,—quaint, Cathayan, yet sturdy, built with breadth,—spans it. Something lies beyond it for me, if I can only venture across.

“The other dream is of a tree that spreads out as extensively as a banyan, a great umbrella of foliage, yet somehow a baneful thing. Its leaf seemed like the upas tree one sees in India and Malaya, so I guess that’s what it is. Two figures appear beneath it. And then the picture usually blurred and faded.

“One day, just before leaving the base hospital in India, the second dream came through clearly. I now saw the two figures beneath the tree quite plainly and close at hand, one tall, the other short. They were dressed in black, in tight jacket and trousers coming just below the knee. Though in typical Burmese

costume, they were not Burmese. Their skins were too white; whiter than any known race, occidental or oriental. A dead-white. Albinos? I wondered.

“In a moment, however, the strongest instincts told me otherwise. There was something about that tree wholly unlike the ordinary upas under which children and farm animals tumbled about unharmed throughout India and Malaya. That this was the rare upas tree that blighted all ordinary life that strayed beneath its shade bore in my mind the weight of proven fact. Surely, then, these were no ordinary mortals whom I was somehow observing, undetected, from a vantage-point unknown to myself or them; yet I was equally convinced that I was witnessing something that had a meaning, that existed outside my own mind, just as surely as pieces on a chess-board, the record of a Morse code, a geometrical axiom, all exist whether we understand their meaning or not.

“The two sombre, alien figures stood barefoot on the black earth beneath the tree, talking earnestly. The lean, angular one spoke; and I understood him:

“‘It is long, Tibar, since I have drawn the soul and breath from a European.’

“The other grunted monosyllabically, and bit on a carrot-like root.

“‘Yes, to have one staked to the ground yonder and draw forth the richness of mind and soul and breath from his em-purpled lips is good, Tibar. But if they will not come as explorers, we must start them seeking, drawing them with our mental faculties.’

“Tibar threw down the top of the plant he had been chewing. The tall one drew a dozen seeds from his pocket—six bleached ones and six ebony.

“‘Do you plant these that are as dark as the Gulf-dweller near that bamboo thicket. Yes. And I will find means to em-plant six white ones in the snug, warm area betwixt the skull and brain of six Europeans. They should root well, Tibar . . .’

“That was all, Dr. Rochester. A bizarre nightmare, cut off abruptly, with five degrees of fever to explain it. Yet I cannot shrug off these absurd simulacra as I can the grey don-keys, the misshapen bats and cats and owls, the crawfish and other creatures of delirium.”

I reassured MacLeod by mentioning instances of obsessions and delusions which occurred to famous men, who had taken them in their stride. Usually, I explained, there are physical factors—in his case, fortunately, temporary ones—in the case of our fellow Devonian, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, rheumatic fever, a breathing difficulty, an addiction to drugs, a propensity—

MacLeod broke in. "That's the devil of it, doctor. Look. I was reading about Coleridge on the boat coming back. And that's what I was puzzled about."

He rummaged in his jacket pocket and found a scrap of paper. "Coleridge was taken up with this matter of the poisonous upas tree. In his commonplace book he wrote, 'Describe a Tartarean Forest of Upas Trees' and later, 'Upas Tree—a poem—or article. Mem.—' followed by an illegible scrawl. Now when I dreamt this dream, I had not seen this passage and it makes me wonder—that is—well, Dr. Rochester, suppose that some idea, some force, had tried to get through to Coleridge, and now is trying to get through to me. Can I be catching sight of the world that Coleridge glimpsed? Will I somehow find the key he never found?"

"In the dream-fragments there are sources of both hope and fear, just as in the rest of life. But to feel that something is lurking just outside consciousness is another matter, beyond hope and fear. It is a challenge, a provocation."

I sat back. The idea was too strong for me. I had read Coleridge, and thought then of his *Kubla Khan*, a marvelous fabric of poetic images. An unfinished thing, for here as elsewhere Coleridge had been led astray in his dreams; in dreams he could not finish, which dissolved when a chance visitor, a man from Porlock, came, leaving him bemused, hardly able to carry on in the world. The rubble of a tumbled air-castle, of a Khan's pleasure-palace, had thundered down on his head, leaving him what?—a sublime somnambulist.

A little later, when MacLeod turned to leave, he asked me if I felt it would be too much of a strain if he bicycled out to Ottery St. Mary, where Coleridge was born—a matter of ten or eleven miles from Exeter—on the next clear day. I thought of my own anxiety to see the countryside again after the first war, and replied that if he took it easy he could do it, but that he should not travel in the heat of the day, and if he became

tired, to leave his bicycle at a shop by the way and go on by bus. He agreed, and left. A fine young man, MacLeod, with a will to match his imagination. However, I'm afraid that will-power is no match for obsession, if that's what I can call it. The matter certainly seemed deep-rooted, and I could not see it fit into the cast of MacLeod's mind.

The evening of the next day I had settled down to read when I heard a knock on the door. I went to the door in my house-jacket. MacLeod was there, bareheaded, his dark hair tousled, his eyes flashing. He appeared nervous and stammered in framing his words.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, Dr. Rochester, but I have had an experience of which I must tell you before I rest tonight, for it hints at the nature of my mental disturbance. Yet the hint only leads damnably further and deeper, like a will-o'-the-wisp."

I bade him sit down, and offered him a cigarette.

"It was ten o'clock when I left Exeter for Ottery St. Mary, and quite warm. By eleven-thirty I reached the hill above the town, left my bicycle by the hedge-row, and climbed over so I could look down on the little town nestled in the valley. I sat in the shade of a cedar, and realized for the first time that I was quite hot from my exertions. Below me, by a smaller knoll, was the site of Coleridge's home, which had burned eighty years ago. The foundation could be traced, however, though the brush was coming up where the ground's irregularities deterred the cattle from grazing, and it was this growth that traced the house's walls.

"Lying down to enjoy the tranquil scene most fully—the rooks swirling overhead and the lambs grazing below, I was soon asleep."

MacLeod hesitated, reluctant to trouble me with the matter of a dream, a little nervous play about his lips, as he set about to tell me and ease his mind. It had become, he said, "more than a dream."

For in the dream he saw a palace of milk-white marble, rising to a central dome like the Taj Mahal, with a multitude of minarets and towers. Yet it was more lofty still, and was set over a natural scarp of black rock on the edge of a tumultuous river whose coursing cast up jets of water, and whose cataracts re-

sounded turbulently in tones constantly rising and falling like the war-cry of a tribe of Tartar horsemen.

MacLeod found himself on horseback, following the road which was hewn from rock, across the camel-humped bridge, and sweeping up out of the gorge, curving gradually to the palace gates. In a moment he heard himself giving the password, and was admitted to the grounds. He flung the reins of his long-maned horse to an attendant, and ran up the flight of marble stairs ascending the height of the outer walls. He stood a moment in thought, slapping his leather gloves against his thigh and pulling his earlobe. For a moment he looked out upon the valley directly across the river, and back down the winding road that bridged the river before it at last dipped out of sight.

Then, with a headshake of wonderment he turned and strode into the vaulted doorway and down the vast corridors lit by sconces and braziers in which clear flames gave off a faint trace of cedar and other aromatic woods. The air was comfortably cool, and though the smooth, bare stone looked cold, it was not.

MacLeod pressed on into the palace, passing into rooms richly furnished with tapestries, scrolls, carved wood-screens, paintings, ivories and T'ang potteries. At last he called a servant, "Prithee, fetch me Ina." And the servant hastened off, he turned to look at a courtyard in the lower half of which peacocks wandered among flower-beds, while in the upper terrace a fountain played.

A gasp behind him made him turn.

"Oh, sir. You dared. The princess—."

It was Ina, the Abyssinian handmaiden, her kerchiefed hand held in alarm before her lips. She siezed MacLeod by the sleeve, pulled him to a wall and thrust him into a narrow staircase behind a heavy tapestry. Barely lit by cunningly concealed slits in the masonry, the stairs ran up the wall, abruptly and deviously. He hastened to climb, with Ina behind him. Three times the stairs turned, almost upon themselves. Then MacLeod waited a moment, until at a nod and thrust from Ina, he slipped past the concealing carpet into a small chamber.

"Do you wait here, sir," said Ina, hurrying away.

He had only time to glance out a casement window at the walled-in garden that treasured up the wealth of the Indies and

Cathay, when a soft step bade him turn.

"Prince of my hope, you have come."

His heart was a nightingale. His words were simple, overpowered with his love. She was in his arms. Then, feeling her tightening grip on his arms, he released her lips.

"Shan, beloved," she gasped, "you have come here but to die."

"I came here as I had to. I met your father's courier just inside my province, for I was hunting with my hawks near the border when he came. I came straightway."

"Yes, but he called you but to kill you, beloved. Soon he will be back, and then, on the morrow my future husband will come. Maybe if I can change the guards he will not learn that you have come yet. But—oh, listen!"

She stood, horror-stricken, her hand at her colorless cheek, as the faint sound of pipes, drums, and cymbals sounded against the river's brawl.

"It is the Khan! Merciful gods, make him deaf to the tales of his guardsmen. Ina! Quick, my love, follow her."

Reluctantly Shan left his leman and followed Ina through a maze of passages, fleetingly and furtively crossing and climbing yet further through a fantastic succession of chambers until at last the outermost minaret looking down on the road and the river were reached.

"Let us pray that he does not hear of your coming," said Ina, "for ever since he threw his master-builder over the parapet into the Alph, he alone knows every stone and nook of this palace."

All Shan's hopes now lay in getting down the only road, he guessed, brazenly if necessary, trying to run the gauntlet without meeting either the Khan or any of his henchmen set to watch for him and carry out his murder. At least the gods favored him with a day's grace in arriving prematurely.

Restlessly Shan cast his eyes about the tower-room, with its casements facing four directions, its stone floor with a carpet in the center. Cautiously he looked out and down, and seeing nothing to concern him, gave himself over to his plans for the morrow. He paced the narrow confines, gradually erupting into spluttered curses and fretful gestures. He would choose his time when the gates had opened in the morning, he vowed, his right fist a restless mortar in the pestle of his left hand, and he would call for his horse and ride as if enjoying the new day until he had crossed the bridge. He would then mount a

rocky hill he had observed through which the road had been hewn. There he could challenge the prospective bridegroom to personal combat, and if he refused, hurl down boulders on the party until he was shot full of arrows.

But now he must battle air, with windy ifs, with the demon of delay; here, waiting, his fists aching to splinter a jaw, their muscles corded to choke. Below, in the palace, there was no hue and cry. Rather, there was laughter, the sound of musical instruments, the clatter of flagons, a babble of voices, men drinking, brachets barking, hunting-leopards crying, the familiar sounds of the evening feast. The sun was sinking out of view, and the night-watch was being posted in the courtyard below. To himself Shan alternately cursed and implored his gods. Supposing he won, would the Khan recognize his prowess and provinces then with the hand of his daughter?

Ina, who all the while remained silently in a corner, drew from somewhere a dulcimer, and sitting cross-legged upon the floor, began to play upon it, weaving back and forth as with graceful movements she hit the wires with the light hammers, softly at first, singing in an undertone soft fragments of song. She sang and played as if to herself, so as not to approach too directly the objective of soothing Shan, lest he become even more irate. Then at last she sang more fully, realizing that down below no suspicion would be aroused should anyone hear her singing of her birthplace, of Mount Abora, weaving a symphony in memories of her distant homeland, of time-old yearnings, of the proud burden of striving, the eternal ballad-themes that come after the struggles, in the mood of recollection, which tranquillize . . .

Though at first Shan tried to put this by as an attempt to soothe him, he soon saw that he could only risk his life and hazard his love if he were calm, and so reluctantly he slumped to the carpet, determined to be quiet and reserve his strength. So this song of Ina's homeland began to take form and enthrall him, drawing him at first to silent, motionless brooding, then to a lynn of dreams that moved with the sounds of the river in the darkness below, and of Ina's hands before him, storing courage and resolution so that on the morrow . . .

MacLeod rubbed at the back of his neck, perplexedly.

"But there was no morrow. I lay again in the sloping field,

blinking up at a stout, dumpy woman who prodded me with her walking-stick.

“‘Young man, what town is this?’

“I was stricken dumb for a moment from the sudden shift from world to world, and only after a long moment spluttered that it was Ottery St. Mary.

“‘Well. I suppose there’s nothing here of real interest.’

“‘Doubtless you would find it so,’ I countered, though my heart was not yet in my remarks.

“‘Humph!’ she sniffed, and walked off.

“And as she was leaving my anger mounted slowly until by the time she had reached the turn and started down the hill into Ottery St. Mary I was cursing her softly but vehemently, standing legs spread and hands on hips.

“At that moment I remembered how Coleridge, in writing *Kubla Khan*, had reached the same point that I had when someone had interrupted him, and the magic he had woven was left unfinished, the art of the weaving being gone.

“I was still following the dumpy figure with my eyes when the thought came to me that Coleridge and I reached toward the same dream, clambering over the limitations of the media of our minds with different degrees of success, perhaps, but questing for the answer to the same riddle, and being stopped.

“Now a very strange thing happened, Dr. Rochester. The woman stopped by the cellar-hole of the Coleridge homestead, paused a moment, fumbling with her guidebook. Then she turned, apparently assured this was the place she wanted. She went to the stone steps, mounted, made a motion as if to knock on the door that was no longer there. In a moment, as if her strange ritual had evoked the desired response, she stepped across the overgrown granite threshold, and I lost sight of her for an instant behind a bit of brush. It was such a small scrap of a shrub that I could not believe it capable of hiding her, even momentarily. I waited for her to reappear. Though I never once took my eyes off that bush for over fifteen minutes, I saw no more of her, and it became increasingly absurd that that scant shrub could possibly have concealed her.

“I believe, Dr. Rochester, that if that woman really existed, it was for the sole purpose of breaking off my dream!”

MacLeod stood up and paced to and fro in front of me as I strove to hit on the right question. Before his agitation could

build on itself, I asked, "Well, what do you propose to do about this matter? If the woman is gone you must dismiss her as a fluke of your senses—or accept her as real and her disappearance as a fluke."

Then, before he could counter this, I went on, "You've been in the Orient. You must have noticed the attitude almost universal in Oriental philosophies that our senses and their physical experiences are of less importance than we Occidentals believe. It is all up to you. And I feel sure, MacLeod, that if you can think of this as a fleeting experience, as something to be thought of as you might a scrap of a tune, without trying to tease it into a symphony, or coax some absurd meaning into it, then you'll be better off.

But MacLeod was paying scarcely any attention.

"Now if I were back in India again,—” he began, as if to himself. "Maybe I'd pick up the trail. Surely there must be some clues, some links, some points of contact."

After a bit he seemed to be more aware of my presence. I hardly remember what I said to him, being concerned because he was agreeing with me haphazardly, heedlessly, out of courtesy; so I finally advised him to go home and rest.

He started, but turned to stammer thanks to me. I waved them away with the back of my hand. So he left.

That was the last time I saw Hilaire MacLeod. The next morning, however, a boy about twelve years old rang my bell.

"Here's a note for you, sir. Man asked me to give it to you."

"Dear Dr. Rochester, after leaving you I came out here, trying to settle my mind. Will this fantasy of Kubla Khan never resolve itself? I can't live two lives, one a dreamy reality and the other a real dream. That's what I've been doing, more and more, until I find myself believing, most curiously, that this one in which we meet has become the dream and the other the reality. Then again I ask 'Can it be so?' and am afraid. I don't know, but I think I can solve the matter. And by the gods, I'll try . . ."

The boy was still standing there when I looked up. "Where was the young man when he gave you this?"

"Ottery St. Mary. The old Coleridge place, sir."

"And what did he do after he asked you to deliver this note?"

"Turned and walked towards the doorstep of the Coleridge place, sir. It did seem a bit odd, sir, now that you speak of it."

There are a number of ways to get to the Orient from England, MacLeod's parents realize. Indeed they have gone so far as to offer a substantial reward "for information concerning Hilaire MacLeod—last seen near Ottery St. Mary, Devonshire, June 18, 1947."

HELLENIC SEQUEL

By CLARK ASHTON SMITH

I.

Skies of verd-antique
 Domed the murex-tinted peak
 In the dreamland where I found
 Flowering grape that clasped and crowned
 One fluted column still unbroken,
 Lovely, old and Greek.

II.

Near the column,
 In the stream that flowed
 From the sunset mountain-spring,
 I heard the lonely naiad sing,
 Praising the weedy bowers of her abode.
 Sweeter than silence was her song,
 Sweeter than sleep her answer
 When I spoke:
 Quickly then her cold arms wound me
 In the water, and they drowned me
 Ere I woke.

A GROUP OF LETTERS

By H. P. LOVECRAFT

The late H. P. Lovecraft was a letter-writer without peer in his time. His range of subjects was virtually unlimited, and he wrote with scholarly erudition but never with academic stodginess. He wrote far more letters than his combined total of all other writing, ranging all the way from his early astronomical articles for his Providence newspaper through his poems, essays, and stories. The letters presented herewith are selected at random to impart the flavor of H. P. Lovecraft's letters, primarily, and afford readers a taste of what is to come in the *Selected Letters*. Readers will note especially the headings, the salutations, and the closings of certain of these letters. These are selected extracts and not complete letters.

To his Aunt, Lillian Clark

259 Parkside Avenue
Brooklyn, New York
September 29, 1924
(Finish'd Tuesday, Sept. 30)

My dear Daughter Lillian: —

On Friday the 19th, at four-thirty p. m., I welcomed Samuelus (Loveman). He was feeling rather weak, however, so that he slept in the morris-chair most of the time, whilst I continued to work. After dinner he felt much better, and I accompanied him to his room in Columbia Heights, where I met the redoubtable Hart Crane, a little ruddier, a little puffier, and slightly more moustached than when I saw him in Cleveland two years ago. Crane, whatever his limitations, is a thorough aesthete; and I had some enjoyable conversation with him. His room is in excellent taste, with a few paintings by William Sommer (that elderly eccentric whom I described when I visited Cleveland), a choice collection of modern books, and some splendid small *objets d'art* of which a carven Buddha and an exquisitely carved Chinese ivory box are the high spots. Loveman's room is at the other end of the hall, with an outlook over the East River and a stupendous panorama of the Manhattan skyline. I nearly swooned with aesthetic exaltation when I beheld the panorama—the evening scene with innumerable lights in the skyscrapers, shimmering reflections and bobbing ship lights on the water, and at the extreme left and right, the flaming Statue of Liberty and the scintillant arc of the Brooklyn Bridge, respec-

tively. But even this was not exactly the climax. That came when we went out on the flat roof (Crane and Loveman are on the fourth and top story) and saw the thing in all its unlimited and unglassed magnificence. It was something mightier than the dreams of old-world legend—a constellation of infernal majesty—a poem in Babylonian fire! No wonder Dunsany waxed rhapsodic about it when he saw it for the first time—it is beyond the description of any but him! Added to the weird lights are the weird sounds of the port, where the traffick of all the world comes to a focus. Fog-horns, ships' bells, the creak of distant windlasses—visions of far shores of India, where bright-plumed birds are roused to song by the incense of strange garden-girt pagodas, and gaudy-robed camel-drivers barter before sandal-wood taverns with deep-voiced sailors having the sea's mystery in their eyes. Silks and spices, curiously-wrought ornaments of Bengal gold, and gods and elephants strangely carven in jade and carnelian. Ah, me! Would that I could express the magick of the scene! Crane is writing a long poem on Brooklyn Bridge in a modern medium, which may some time be printed in the *Dial*. . . . I subscribe myself ever Yr. most aff: nephew and obt: Servt: H. P. L.

To Frank Belknap Long

Sunday, August 2, 1925

Hello, Sonny!

I like a tale to be told as directly and impersonally as possible, from an angle of utter and absolute detachment. Which reminds me that I have just finished a new attempt at fiction—the story I told you I would write, with Brooklyn as a setting. The title is "The Horror at Red Hook," and it deals with hideous cult practices behind the gangs and noisy young loafers whose essential mystery has impressed me so much. The tale is rather long and rambling, and I don't think it is very good; but it represents at least an attempt to extract horror from an atmosphere to which you deny any qualities save vulgar commonplaceness. . . . Yr. obt. ancestor, H. P.

To Frank Belknap Long

Castle Theobald—Monday Afternoon
August 10, 1925

Thou poor Lambkin!

Just now Grandpa is reading up his Machen material—*Far-Off Things* and *Things Near and Far* done, and *Secret Glory*, *London Adventure*, and *Hieroglyphicks* ahead. Of the two I've finished, the first is incomparably the greater. His accounts of Caerleon

are pure poetry of the sort to which I am most sensitive, and the very perusal fills me with a wish to write beautiful and incredible things. . . . Yr. obt. ancestor, H. P.

To Frank Belknap Long

April 23, 1926
Providence

Young Man: —

I took a sunset-and-evening walk Thursday—a Machenesque Slum-and-Suburb pilgrimage in quest of mystery and horror—and found many things of striking and even of terrible novelty. It is astonishing what a wealth of hidden and tangled lanes and obscure, surprising quarters Providence possesses. A good three-quarters of my recent trip took place over territory my feet had never before trodden, and I found one monstrous and blasphemous neighbourhood whose existence I had never suspected—a region actually inhabited by degraded and quasi-human forms of life where I had always fancied there were merely factories and railroad yards. God, that frightful and cacodaemoniacal valley of gray tottering houses and black earth and choking smoke and nameless labyrinthine courts straggling up steeply coal-dusty hillsides without pavement, plan, or purpose! The houses are very tall and ancient and grey, with shaky clapboards and shingles, and windows rheumy with unmentionable elder morbidities. Oozing out of various apertures and dragging themselves along the narrow lanes are shapeless forms of organic entity whose dead faces hint fiendishly of the rites and orgies and incantations in the hideous leaning synagogue whose wormy, unpainted boards hold strange Eastern signs and unholy marks taken from the cabala and the *Necronomicon*. Awful things have been evoked in the pits under that accursed temple—one can read it in the puffy, malformed faces of the slug-like beings which crawl about and wheeze in the acrid smoke which pours from passing trains—or from secret nether altars. Ngrrh. . . . I shall weave all this into a tale some day! . . . Yrs for wholesome and uplifting influences—Grandpa.

To Clark Ashton Smith

January 28, 1932

Tower of Narghan in Pnath

Hour when the Dogs bay at the opening of the Topmost
Circular Window

Dear Klarkash-Ton: —

Candlemas is only five days off, and I am carefully rehearsing

the formulae in the *Book of Eibon*—having borrowed the mediaeval Latin version of Philippus Faber from the library of Miskatonic University. A look of doubtful expectancy seems to have subtly gathered on the stony muzzle of the Eidolon (a reference to a carving sent Lovecraft by Smith), and I am reminded hideously of an elliptical allusion in the original Dusseldorf edition of the *Black Book*. Everything, of course, depends upon the precise identity of it. Let us hope that the problem will not be solved in too hideous a way!

Yrs in the ritual of Y'ha-Nthlei, E'ch-Pi-El.

To Clark Ashton Smith

Feby. 8, 1932

Gate of the Never-Uttered Name in the Hillside of Ninghom beyond the Black Wood. Hour of the Singing of the Green Vapour.

Dear Klarkash-Ton:

Yes Candlemas is over, and I know not what to think. *It* has resumed its usual aspect of stony passiveness . . . but I tremble when I think how *It* must have looked on the Night. *It* had a leer of anticipation when I retired—but there fell upon me a deep sleep through which nothing penetrated save a monstrous baying of the hounds that scent utterly alien and unhallowed things. In the morning all was as now—*except that all the candles on the shelf with It were melted to shapeless masses of tallow.* Ah, well—it's many a week to Walpurgis-Night. . . . Yrs. for the Glory of Azathoth, Tsathoggua, Nig, Yeb, and the Magnum Innomundum. E'ch-Pi-El.

To Clark Ashton Smith

Feby, 18, 1932

Viscous Vortex of S'llhaa, beyond the Rim.
Hour of the Shaping of the Nucleus.

Dear Klarkash-Ton: —

Glad to hear that you liked "The Shadow Over Innsmouth", and thanks tremendously for the suggestions concerning possible alteration. Your central idea of increasing emphasis on the narrator's taint runs parallel with D'Erlette's main suggestion, and I shall certainly adopt it in any basic recasting I may give the tale. The notion of having the narrator captured is surely a vivid one containing vast possibilities—and if I don't use it, it will be only because my original conception (like most of my dream-ideas) centered so largely in the physical detachment of

the narrator. The best policy for my nerves, it seems to me, would be to forget all about editors—writing whatever I write solely for my own pleasure and allowing the results to accumulate as in the pre-1923 days. Some time the results may find a niche to fit in—but if not, it does not matter. Actually, that would seem to be about the only policy I *can* follow; for whenever I try to keep editorial restrictions and popular preferences in mind I find myself completely tongue (or pen) tied—unable to utter a thing! But of course, nervous states come and go with the years, and at some future period I may be able to work under conditions which are at present impossible for me. . . . Thine for the 49th Aklo Unveiling—E'ch-Pi-El.

To Clark Ashton Smith

October, 1932

Many-columned Arcades of Weed-grown
Y'ha-nthlei, in the Hour of the Unseen
Howling.

Dear Klarkash-Ton: —

Examining my work myself, I find it full of awkwardness and crudities—especially in the matter of style. There are too many hackneyed rhetorical devices and trite turns of phraseology, and the charge of too much explanation is certainly true. In tale after tale I can see how I virtually rub the central horror in, where a better author would be content to hint or adumbrate it in a manner far more productive of the desired shiver. Machen's "The White People," for example, merely *suggests* the monstrous reason for the child's suicide; so that perhaps half the readers never "get" the crux of the tale at all. If he had tried to make the matter utterly plain, as he did in "The great God Pan", he would have sacrificed much of the present power of the story. I must stand by my opinion of that tale—to which I would not even begin to compare my "Colour" or "Cthulhu." That and Blackwood's "The Willows" are in a class by themselves. My experimenting has not produced very good results—but I shall try again on another theme. At present I have on my hands a slow-moving atmospheric affair of 68 pages which I shall set aside for later recasting and possible condensation. I seem to have lost touch with the *short story* mood, for whatever I attempt seems to insist on spinning itself out to novelette length. I have, I think, been confining recent tales too much to a single pattern . . . The aspect of the Eidolon as the mystic Solstice ap-

proaches is such as to breed a vague disquiet. There is too much of a suggestion of unaccountable anticipation and satisfaction lurking about Its muzzle, and one cannot be quite sure as to a half-opened eye. I am even now collating the ritual texts in Dee's *Neconomicon* and in the Latin copy at Miskatonic University, in order to be safeguarded to the utmost on the Night. . . . Yours in the adoration of the Black Flame—E'ch-Pi-El.

10 Barnes St.
Providence, R. I.
Jany. 15, 1943

My dear Morse: —

Most of us lack the limitless energy and wide human sympathies of Derleth, who, of all the members of our "gang," is the farthest ahead now, and the safest one to bet on for future fame. He keeps his serious side entirely separate from his hack pulp side—a complete dualism which not many could maintain without the mutual encroachment of the two phases. However, Wandrei is now turning from the bizarre to the realistic and the contemporary, and his first modern novel is an utterly serious and painstaking product into which he has put immense sincerity and artistic integrity. Wandrei is not hampered by any of the high-flown and misleading theories of literature which tend to sidetrack Belknap, and I see no reason why he should not ultimately succeed, though his progress toward Parnassus may be slower than Derleth's. . . . I remain, Yrs. most cordially and sincerely, HPL.

To Richard Ely Morse

66 College St.
Providence, R. I.
Jany. 28, 1937

Dear R-Een: —

I envy you your glimpse of those surrealist exhibitions, which I fear I shall miss altogether. The group of elder sources— assembled and emphasized—must have been about as impressive as any part of the spectacle—even allowing for the naive Fusalian touch. In general, I am not exactly a surrealist enthusiast, for I think the typical practitioners of the school give subconscious impressions too much automatic leeway. Not that the impressions are not potentially valuable, but that they tend to become trivial and meaningless except when more or less guided

by some coherent imaginative concept. A thing like Sr. Dali's humourously-dubbed "Wet Watches" tends to become a *reductio ad absurdum* of the fantastic principle. However, I surely agree that this form of expression should be adequately recognized; since many of its products undoubtedly do possess a powerful imaginative reach and freshness, while the whole movement cannot but make important and revivifying contributions to the main stream of art. There is no drawing a line between what is to be called extreme fantasy of a traditional type and what it to be called surrealism; and I have no doubt but that the nightmare landscapes of the surrealists correspond as well as any actual creations could to the pictorial horrors attributed by *Weird Tales* fictioneers to mad or daemon-haunted artists. If there were a real Richard Upton Pickman, I am sure he would be represented in the current shows by several hellish canvases! . . . Yr. obt. hble. Servt. HPL.

THE BLINDNESS OF ORION

By CLARK ASHTON SMITH

So blind Orion, groping for the morn
With eyes uplift whereon forever hung
Infinite burden and suspense of night,
Had clomb the long and mountain-ending east,
Led by the Cyclops. Many a dim ravine
Where serried pines were silent ere the dawn
And many a slope or terrace of the snow,
Pure as Pentelic marble for the tread
Of roseal-footed light, lay far behind
Still drowned in stagnant purples. Toiling up
Even to the very threshold of the heavens,
They heard the ascending eagles hail the sun
Round the forsaken throne of Phosphorus,
Until the morning's levin-colored ray
Lightened upon the Cyclops, and he paused,
And over him ethereal glory drave
To rouse the dreaming colors in the cloud,
To give the sea its immemorial green
And strike the towered cities into gold
Along the low horizon.

Then, at last,
On dark Orion groping for the sun,
From out the sole, the Apollonian source,
Returning vision flowed, and he had power
And privilege once more upon the light,
And might receive its seven ministers
Even with gathering rays of stars remote,
And take the tithe of beauty proffered still
By terrene shapes and images—by forms
Of flowers and statues and of women dancing;
Of sapling laurels, ancient olives gnarled;
The noontide shapes of headlands and of clouds;
The meres that curve in darkening amaranth
Amid the sunset range, and seas and rivers
Straight-tided or with currents serpentine
Dividing variously their protean shores.

WEST COUNTRY LEGENDS

Out of a thick and delightful book entitled, *POPULAR ROMANCES OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND, or THE DROLLS, TRADITIONS AND SUPERSTITIONS OF OLD CORNWALL*, collected and edited by Robert Hunt, and published in 1881, we have selected the following traditional spectral tales for reproduction in *The Arkham Sampler*. Such legends as these are typical of all old countries; they grow and are added to year after year; they are handed down from one generation to another, and no amount of modern skepticism serves in any way to detract from the interest they arouse or their inherent charm as folk lore.

The West country of England is especially rich in such legendry. "The rugged granite range of Dartmoor, rich with the golden furze; the moorlands of Cornwall, with their mighty Tors and giant boulders fringed with ferns and framed in masses of purple heath; the stern coasts, washed by an emerald sea, quaint with rocks carved into grotesque forms by the beating of waves and winds, spread with the green samphire and coated with yellow lichens; are now found to have a peculiar—though a wild, often a savage—beauty. The wood-clad valleys, ringed with the rush of rivers, and the sheltered plains, rich with an almost tropical vegetation, present new features of interest to the stranger's eyes, in the varied characters of the organisation native to that south-western clime." Thus Robert Hunt, who goes on to assure his readers that "none of the legends . . . have been invented. They were all . . . gathered in their native homes, more than half a century since."

The tales selected for reproduction herewith are typical in that their themes have counterparts in the lore of other countries. But in each case, the tales are first and foremost good supernatural stories, and it is as such, as well as legends that they are reprinted here.

DANDO AND HIS DOGS

In the neighborhood of the lovely village of St. Germans formerly lived a priest connected with the old priory church of this parish, whose life does not appear to have been quite consistent with his vows.

He lived the life of the traditional "jolly friar." He ate and drank of the best the land could give him, or money buy; and it is said that his indulgences extended far beyond the ordinary limits of good living. The priest Dando was, notwithstanding all his vices, a man liked by the people. He was good-natured, and therefore blind to their sins. Indeed, he threw a cloak over his own iniquities, which was inscribed "charity," and he freely forgave all those who came to his confessional.

As a man increases in years he becomes more deeply dyed with

the polluted waters through which he may have waded. It rarely happens that an old sinner is ever a repentant one, until the decay of nature has reduced him to a state of second childhood. As long as health allows him to enjoy the sensualities of life, he continues to gratify his passions, regardless of the cost. He becomes more selfish, and his own gratification is the rule of his existence. So it has ever been, and so was it with Dando.

The sinful priest was a capital huntsman, and scoured the country far and near in pursuit of game, which was in those days abundant and varied, over this well-wooded district. Dando, in the eagerness of the chase, paid no regard to any kind of property. Many a cornfield had been trampled down, and many a cottage garden destroyed by the horses and dogs which this impetuous hunter would lead unthinkingly over them. Curses deep, though not loud, would follow the old man, as even those who suffered by his excesses were still in fear of his priestly power.

Any man may sell his soul to the devil without going through the stereotyped process of signing a deed with his blood. Give up your soul to Satan's daring sins, and he will help you for a season, until he has his chains carefully wound around you, when the links are suddenly closed, and he seizes his victim, who has no power to resist.

Dando worshipped the sensual gods which he had created, and his external worship of the God of truth became every year more and more a hypocritical lie. The devil looked carefully after his prize. Of course, to catch a dignitary of the church was a thing to cause rejoicing amongst the lost; and Dando was carefully lured to the undoing of his soul. Health and wealth were secured to him, and by and by the measure of his sins was full, and he was left the victim to self-indulgences—a doomed man. With increasing years, and the immunities he enjoyed, Dando became more reckless. Wine and wassail, a board groaning with dishes which stimulated the sated appetite, and the company of both sexes of disolute habits, exhausted his nights. His days were devoted to the pursuits of the field; and to maintain the required excitement, ardent drinks were supplied him by his wicked companions. It mattered not to Dando,—provided the day was an auspicious one, if the scent would lie on the ground,—even on the Sabbath, horses and hounds were ordered out, and the priest would be seen in full cry.

One Sabbath morning, Dando and his riotous rout were hunting over the Earth estate; game was plenty, and sport first-rate. Exhausted with a long and eager run, Dando called for drink. He had already exhausted the flasks of the attendant hunters.

“Drink, I say; give me drink,” he cried.

“Whence can we get it?” asked one of the gang.

“Go to hell for it, if you can’t get it on Earth,” said the priest, with a bitter laugh at his own joke on the Earth estate.

At that moment, a dashing hunter, who had mingled with the throng unobserved, came forward, and presented a richly-mounted flask to Dando, saying,—

“Here is some choice liquor distilled in the establishment you speak of. It will warm and revive you, I’ll warrant. Drink deep, my friend, drink.”

Dando drank deep; the flask appearing to cling to his lips. The strange hunter looked on with a rejoicing yet malignant expression, a wicked smile playing over an otherwise tranquil face.

By and by Dando fetched a deep sigh, and removed the flask, exclaiming, “By hell! that was a drink indeed. Do the gods drink such nectar?”

“Devils do,” said the hunter.

“And they do, I wish I were one,” said Dando, who now rocked to and fro in a state of thorough intoxication; “methinks the drink is very like” — The impious expression died upon his lips.

Looking round with a half-idiotic stare, Dando saw that his new friend had appropriated several head of game. Notwithstanding his stupid intoxication, his selfishness asserted its power, and he seized the game, exclaiming, in a guttural, half-smothered voice, “None of these are thine.”

“What I catch I keep,” said the hunter.

“By all the devils they’re mine,” stammered Dando.

The hunter quietly bowed.

Dando’s wrath burst at once into a burning flame, uncontrolled by reason. He rolled himself off his horse, and rushed, staggering as he went, at the steed of his unknown friend, uttering most frightful oaths and curses.

The strange hunter’s horse was a splendid creature, black as night, and its eyes gleamed like the brightest stars with unnatural lustre. The horse was turned adroitly aside, and Dando

fell to the earth with much force. The fall appeared to add to his fury, and he roared with rage. Aided by his attendants, he was speedily on his legs, and again at the side of the hunter, who shook with laughter, shaking the game in derision, and quietly uttering, "They're mine."

"I'll go to hell after them, but I'll get them from thee," shouted Dando.

"So thou shalt," said the hunter; and seizing Dando by the collar, he lifted him from the ground, and placed him, as though he were a child, before him on the horse.

With a dash, the horse passed down the hill, its hoofs striking fire at every tread, and the dogs, barking furiously, followed impetuously. These strange riders reached the banks of the Lynher, and with a terrific leap, the horse and its riders, followed by the hounds, went out far in its waters, disappearing at length in a blaze of fire, which caused the stream to boil for a moment, then the waters flowed on as tranquilly as ever over the doomed priest. All this happened in the sight of the assembled peasantry. Dando never more was seen, and his fearful death was received as a warning by many, who gave gifts to the church. One amongst them carved a chair for the bishop, and on it he represented Dando and his dogs, that the memory of his wickedness might be always renewed. There, in St. German's Church, stands to this day the chair, and all who doubt the truth of this tradition may view the story carved in enduring oak. If they please, they can sit in the chair until their faith is so far quickened that they become true believers. On Sunday mornings early, the dogs of the priest have been often heard as if in eager pursuit of game. Cheney's hounds and the Wish hounds of Dartmoor are but other versions of the same legend.

THE SPECTRAL COACH

"You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know
The superstitious, idle-headed eld
Received and did deliver to our age
This tale of Herne the Hunter for a truth."

—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

The old vicarage-house at Talland, as seen from the Looe road, its low roof and gray walls peeping prettily from between the dense boughs of ash and elm that environed it, was as picturesque an object as you could desire to see. The seclusion of

its situation was enhanced by the character of the house itself. It was an odd-looking, old-fashioned building, erected apparently in an age when asceticism and self-denial were more in vogue than at present, with a stern disregard of the comfort of the inhabitant, and in utter contempt of received principles of taste. As if not secure enough in its retirement, a high wall, enclosing a courtelage in front, effectually protected its inmates from the prying passenger, and only revealed the upper part of the house, with its small Gothic windows, its slated roof, and heavy chimneys partly hidden by the evergreen shrubs in the enclosure. Such was it until its removal a few years since; and such was it as it lay sweetly in the shadows of an autumnal evening one hundred and thirty years ago, when a stranger in the garb of a country labourer knocked hesitatingly at the wicket-gate which conducted to the court. After a little delay a servant-girl appeared, and finding that the countryman bore a message to the vicar, admitted him within the walls, and conducted him along a paved passage to the little, low, damp parlour where sat the good man. The Rev. Mr. Dodge was in many respects a remarkable man. You would have judged as much of him as he sat before the fire in his high-back chair, in an attitude of thought, arranging, it may have been, the heads of his next Sabbath's discourse. His heavy eyebrows throwing into shade his spacious eyes, and indeed the whole contour of his face, marked him as a man of great firmness of character and of much moral and personal courage. His suit of sober black and full-bottomed periwig also added to his dignity, and gave him an appearance of greater age. He was then verging on sixty. The time and the place gave him abundant exercise for the qualities we have mentioned, for many of his parishioners obtained their livelihood by the contraband trade, and were mostly men of unscrupulous and daring character, little likely to bear with patience reflections on the dishonesty of their calling. Nevertheless, the vicar was fearless in reprehending it, and his frank exhortations were, at least, listened to on account of the simple honesty of the man, and his well-known kindness of heart. The eccentricity of his life, too, had a wonderful effect in procuring him the respect, not to say the awe, of a people superstitious in a more than ordinary degree. Ghosts in those days had more freedom accorded them, or had more business with the visible world, than at present; and the parson was frequently required by his

parishioners to draw from the uneasy spirit the dead secret which troubled it, or by the aid of the solemn prayers of the Church to set it at rest forever. Mr. Dodge had a fame as an exorcist, which was not confined to the bounds of the parish, nor limited to the age in which he lived.

“Well, my good man, what brings you hither?” said the clergyman to the messenger.

“A letter, may it please your reverence, from Mr. Mills of Lanreath,” said the countryman, handing him a letter.

Mr. Dodge opened it and read as follows: —

“My Dear Brother Dodge,—I have ventured to trouble you, at the earnest request of my parishioners, with a matter, of which some particulars have doubtless reached you, and which has caused, and is causing, much terror in my neighborhood. For its fuller explication, I will be so tedious as to recount to you the whole of this strange story as it has reached my ears, for as yet I have not satisfied my eyes of its truth. It has been told me by men of honest and good report (witnesses of a portion of what they relate), with such strong assurances that it behooves us to look more closely into the matter. There is in the neighbourhood of this village a barren bit of moor which has no owner, or rather more than one, for the lords of the adjoining manors debated its ownership between themselves, and both determined to take it from the poor, who have for many years past regarded it as a common. And truly, it is little to the credit of these gentlemen, that they should strive for a thing so worthless as scarce to bear the cost of law, and yet of no mean value to poor labouring people. The two litigants, however, contested it with such violence as if it had been a field of great price, and especially one, an old man (whose thoughts should have been less set on earthly possessions, which he was soon to leave), had so set his heart on the success of his suit, that the loss of it, a few years back, is said to have much hastened his death. Nor, indeed, after death, if current reports are worthy of credit, does he quit his claim to it; for at night-time his apparition is seen on the moor, to the great terror of the neighbouring villagers. A public path leads by at no great distance from the spot, and on divers occasions has the labourer, returning from his work, been frightened nigh unto lunacy by sight and sounds of a very dreadful character. The appearance is said to be that of a man habited in black, driving a carriage drawn by headless

horses. This is, I avow, very marvelous to believe, but it has so much credible testimony, and has gained so many believers in my parish, that some steps seem necessary to allay the excitement it causes. I have been applied to for this purpose, and my present business is to ask your assistance in this matter, either to reassure the minds of the country people, if it be only a simple terror; or if there be truth in it, to set the troubled spirit of the man at rest. My messenger, who is an industrious, trustworthy man, will give you more information if it be needed, for, from report, he is acquainted with most of the circumstances, and will bring back your advice and promise of assistance.

“Not doubting of your help herein, I do, with my very hearty commendation, commit you to God’s protection and blessing, and am,

“Your very loving brother,
“Abraham Mills.”

This remarkable note was read and re-read, while the countryman sat watching its effects on the parson’s countenance, and was surprised that it changed not from its usual sedate and settled character. Turning at length to the man, Mr. Dodge inquired, “Are you, then, acquainted with my good friend Mills?”

“I should know him, sir,” replied the messenger, “having been sexton to the parish for fourteen years, and being, with my family, much beholden to the kindness of the rector.”

“You are also not without some knowledge of the circumstances related in this letter. Have you been an eye-witness to any of those strange sights?”

“For myself, sir, I have been on the road at all hours of the night and day, and never did I see anything which I could call worse than myself. One night my wife and I were awake by the rattle of wheels, which was also heard by some of our neighbours, and we are all assured that it could have been no other than the black coach. We have every day such stories told in the villages by so many creditable persons, that it would not be proper in a plain, ignorant man like me to doubt it.”

“And how far,” asked the clergyman, “is the moor from Lanreath?”

“About two mile, and please your reverence. The whole parish is so frightened, that few will venture far after night-fall, for it has of late come much nearer the village. A man

who is esteemed a sensible and pious man by many, though an Anabaptist in principle, went a few weeks back to the moor ('tis called Blackadon) at midnight, in order to lay the spirit, being requested thereto by his neighbours, and he was so alarmed at what he saw, that he hath been somewhat mazed ever since."

"A fitting punishment for his presumption, if it hath not quite demented him," said the parson. "These persons are like those addressed by St. Chrysostom, fitly called the golden-mouthed, who said, 'Miserable wretches that ye be! ye cannot expel a flea, much less a devil!' It will be well if it serves no other purpose but to bring back these stray sheep to the fold of the Church. So this story has gained much belief in the parish?"

"Most believe it, sir, as rightly they should, what hath so many witnesses," said the sexton, "though there be some, chiefly young men, who set up for being wiser than their fathers, and refuse to credit it, though it be sworn to on the book."

"If those things are disbelieved, friend," said the parson, "and without inquiry, which your disbeliever is ever the first to shrink from, of what worth is human testimony? That ghosts have returned to the earth, either for the discovery of murder, or to make restitution for other injustice committed in the flesh, or compelled thereto by the incantations of sorcery, or to communicate tidings from another world, has been testified to in all ages, and many are the accounts which have been left us both in sacred and profane authors. Did not Brutus, when in Asia, as is related by Plutarch, see" —

Just at this moment the parson's handmaid announced that a person waited on him in the kitchen,—or the good clergyman would probably have detailed all those cases in history, general and biblical, with which his reading had acquainted him, not much, we fear, to the edification and comfort of the sexton, who had to return to Lanreath, a long and dreary road, after nightfall. So, instead, he directed the girl to take him with her, and give him such refreshment as he needed, and in the meantime he prepared a note in answer to Mr. Mills, informing him that on the morrow he was to visit some sick persons in his parish, but that on the following evening he should be ready to proceed with him to the moor.

On the night appointed the two clergymen left the Lanreath rectory on horseback, and reached the moor at eleven o'clock. Bleak and dismal did it look by day, but then there was the

distant landscape dotted over with pretty homesteads to relieve its desolation. Now, nothing was seen but the black patch of sterile moor on which they stood, nothing heard but the wind as it swept in gusts across the bare hill, and howled dismally through a stunted grove of trees that grew in a glen below them, except the occasional baying of dogs from the farmhouses in the distance. That they felt at ease, is more than could be expected of them; but as it would have shown lack of faith in the protection of Heaven, which it would have been unseemly in men of their holy calling to exhibit, they managed to conceal from each other their uneasiness. Leading their horses, they trod to and fro through the damp fern and heath with firmness in their steps, and upheld each other by remarks on the power of that Great Being whose ministers they were, and the might of whose name they were there to make manifest. Still slowly and dismally passed the time as they conversed, and anon stopped to look through the darkness for the approach of their ghostly visitor. In vain. Though the night was as dark and murky as ghost could wish, the coach and its driver came not.

After a considerable stay, the two clergymen consulted together, and determined that it was useless to watch any longer for that night, but that they would meet on some other, when perhaps it might please his ghostship to appear. Accordingly, with a few words of leave-taking, they separated, Mr. Mills for the rectory, and Mr. Dodge, by a short ride across the moor, which shortened his journey by half a mile, for the vicarage at Talland.

The vicar rode on at an ambling pace, which his good mare sustained up hill and down dale without urging. At the bottom of a deep valley, however, about a mile from Blackadon, the animal became very uneasy, pricked up her ears, snorted, and moved from side to side of the road, as if something stood in the path before her. The parson tightened the reins, and applied whip and spur to her sides, but the animal, usually docile, became very unruly, made several attempts to turn, and, when prevented, threw herself upon her haunches. Whip and spur were applied again and again, to no other purpose than to add to the horse's terror. To the rider nothing was apparent which could account for the sudden restiveness of his beast. He dismounted, and attempted in turns to lead or drag her, but both were impracticable, and attended with no small risk of snapping

the reins. She was remounted with great difficulty, and another attempt was made to urge her forward, with the like want of success. At length the eccentric clergyman, judging it to be some special signal from Heaven, which it would be dangerous to neglect, threw the reins on the neck of his steed, which, wheeling suddenly round, started backward in a direction towards the moor, at a pace which rendered the parson's seat neither a pleasant nor a safe one. In an astonishingly short space of time they were once more at Blackadon.

By this time the bare outline of the moor was broken by a large black group of objects, which the darkness of the night prevented the parson from defining. On approaching this unaccountable appearance, the mare was seized with fresh fury, and it was with considerable difficulty that she could be brought to face this new cause of fright. In the pauses of the horse's prancing, the vicar discovered to his horror the much-dreaded spectacle of the black coach and the headless steeds, and, terrible to relate, his friend Mr. Mills lying prostrate on the ground before the sable diver. Little time was left him to call up his courage for this fearful emergency; for just as the vicar began to give utterance to the earnest prayers which struggled to his lips, the spectre shouted, "Dodge is come! I must be gone!" and forthwith leaped into his chariot, and disappeared across the moor.

The fury of the mare now subsided, and Mr. Dodge was enabled to approach his friend, who was lying motionless and speechless, with his face buried in the heather.

Meanwhile the rector's horse, which had taken fright at the apparition, and had thrown his rider to the ground on or near the spot where we have left him lying, made homeward at a furious speed, and stopped not until he had reached his stable door. The sound of his hoofs as he galloped madly through the village awoke the cottagers, many of whom had been some hours in their beds. Many eager faces, staring with affright, gathered round the rectory, and added, by their various conjectures, to the terror and apprehensions of the family.

The villagers, gathering courage as their numbers increased, agreed to go in search of the missing clergyman, and started off in a compact body, a few on horseback, but the greater number on foot, in the direction of Blackadon. There they discovered their rector, supported in the arms of Parson Dodge,

and recovered so far as to be able to speak. Still there was a wildness in his eye, and an incoherency in his speech, that showed that his reason was, at least, temporarily unsettled by the fright. In this condition he was taken to his home, followed by his reverend companion.

Here ended this strange adventure; for Mr. Mills soon completely regained his reason, Parson Dodge got safely back to Talland, and from that time to this nothing has been heard or seen of the black ghost or his chariot.*

*The parson Dodge, whose adventure is related, was vicar of Talland from 1713 till his death, so that the name as well as the story is true to tradition. Bond (**History of East and West Lore**) says of him: "About a century since the Rev. Richard Dodge was vicar of this parish of Talland, and was, by traditionary account, a very singular man. He had the reputation of being deeply skilled in the black art, and would raise ghosts, or send them into the Dead Sea, at the nod of his head. The common people, not only in his own parish, but throughout the neighbourhood, stood in the greatest awe of him, and to meet him on the highway at midnight produced the utmost horror; he was then driving about the evil spirits; many of them were seen, in all sorts of shapes, flying and running before him, and he pursuing them with his whip in a most daring manner. Not unfrequently he would be seen in the churchyard at dead of night to the terror of passers-by. He was a worthy man, and much respected, but had his eccentricities."

THE WIND IN THE LILACS

By STEPHEN GRENDON

When the train drew into Castleton, Miss Alice Glennon looked anxiously out of a coach window to see whether anyone was there to meet her. Being strange to Castleton, she did not wish to be left to find her own way to her sister-in-law's house. She was already regretting her impulse to come all this way just to visit; Emma had never been very close to her, but then, of course, they had been separated by half a dozen States or more—all the way from Missouri to this Vermont hill town. But there was a buggy there, and that was surely Emma sitting in it, sedate and upright. She waved a gloved hand at the pane, but Emma was looking neither to left nor right, but simply staring straight ahead of her at a place along the platform where she presumed the train would draw up the coaches.

She got off the train, and this time Emma saw her. Without thinking that it was strange of Emma not to have come down out of the buggy, Alice walked rapidly over to where her sister-in-law waited and, handing up her luggage, got into the buggy. The two women exchanged perfunctory kisses.

"I'm sorry not to have been down there helping you with that suitcase and all," said Emma. "But my back's been lame, and it's quite a little effort to get in and out of the buggy. I'd have sent Teresa, but you don't know her and she don't know you, so that wouldn't have been any use."

"Oh, I'm just glad to be here," said Alice. "That long train ride!"

"I don't doubt it. It's more'n I would do, I can tell you that." She pulled the reins and clucked at the horse. "Git around there, git for home."

Alice looked sideways at her sister-in-law. Emma had always been a large woman. Junoesque, she thought was the word for Emma. Now, however, in the interval since last she had seen her—four years—she seemed larger than before, though it might have been that she, Alice, had shrunken, for she had lost weight, worrying about Benjamin, and all. Emma had red arms, well-fleshed, and huge hands which looked as if by their force alone she might stop the horse in its tracks. Her face was flushed by the late Spring heat, for the sun shone very

hot in a cloudless sky; even in the train Alice had felt the heat; so it was no wonder that Emma, sitting there in the buggy right out in the sun, should show it. There were beads of perspiration along Emma's thick upper lip and following the line of her hair from one temple to the other.

"Is it far?" asked Alice presently.

"Oh, not what I'd call far," said Emma. "It ain't rightly in town, but it ain't rightly out of it either. It was a farm once, but now the other buildings are gone; there's just the house and one or two sheds, that's all. Such a big house, too! I don't know what made Ben build it so big."

But I know, thought Alice. He expected to raise a family. Perhaps that was why he ran off three years ago without anything but that note he left for Emma. She said nothing for a few moments. Then she remarked, "From the picture Ben sent just before he run off, it looked like a real pretty place."

"Well, I suppose it is that," said Emma grudgingly. "There's some that likes it real well. They're always coming to buy it, but it ain't for sale."

"Why not?" asked Alice innocently.

"Because I can't sell it," said Emma fiercely, so that Alice was surprised. "It's the law. I asked about it. It'll be four more years yet, and then, if I ain't heard from Ben, they can declare him legally dead, and then I'll get the house, and once it's mine, I can do with it what I like."

"Will you sell it then?"

An odd sort of expression flared up in Emma's eyes, and her mouth got a sullen set to it. "I don't know," she said. "Time'll tell that."

"Well, it's nice your sister could stay with you. It must be mighty lonesome without somebody."

Emma looked at her as much as to say that if Alice could stand living alone, surely she could, too. Alice was silent now, confident that the house could not be far away. She was beginning to feel the warmth of the sun despite the fragrant air flowing in and about the buggy in its passage down the dusty street. Castleton, she thought, from what she saw of it, was a pretty town. More trees than most Missouri towns. It takes the old towns to have and keep the trees, she thought. Ben had always liked the trees, too.

"I don't suppose," she said finally, "you've had any word."

"No, I haven't," said Emma.

"Nor I, either. It does seem strange. Of course, pa always said Ben was a kind of queer one, different from the rest of us. And why he run off like that, nobody could tell. Might be even Ben couldn't."

But Emma said nothing, only sniffing a little, as if to show as much as she thought she dared the contempt she felt for a man like that.

Alice thought that Emma must now be forty-two, and the sister, Teresa, who was six years older, as Ben had written her just before he went, would be forty-eight, then. The two of them had been living together in the house since that time. How would I feel, she wondered, if a husband of mine ran off like that? Would I think to blame it on having no children when he wanted them so? Or was Ben a hard man to live with? She reflected that one seldom really knew people, not really, even living with them.

They came to the house as last, a white frame building with green shutters and a picket fence around it. There were trees, too, handsome old elms. The house was just on the outskirts of town, on the western edge. There was a little grape arbor off to the east, near to the pump and the sheds, facing town; and on the west a kind of little walk arbored over with lilacs. But, as she got out of the buggy and turned to help Emma down, she noticed that the western half of the big house seemed unoccupied; all the shutters were in place, and all the slats closed.

"Oh, you're just living in half of the house," she said.

"Yes," said Emma hurriedly. "No sense to keeping it all up. Of course, we ain't got that half *locked* up. But there's plenty room for you in our half. We're letting you have the downstairs bedroom. Teresa and I can sleep upstairs just this while. How long do you figure on staying, Alice?"

"Oh, not long," said Alice hastily, somewhat startled by the abruptness and intentness of the query.

Teresa came out to meet them. She was thin and angular. She wore her hair tightly drawn to her head and pugged in the back, high off her neck. Her face was plain, and she dressed plainly, too, in brown broadcloth. The only ornament on her entire person was a small brooch. She seemed to be quite strong, however, for she lifted Alice's heavy suitcase without trouble.

"It's a long time since we had visitors," she said conversationally. "Not since Ben left. Ain't none left of our folks, and Ben's are all so far away. It's real nice you come."

"Well, I wanted to come," said Alice.

She intercepted a glance between the sisters. How strange it was! It seemed almost as if a flash of apprehension passed between them. But at once Teresa said something to Emma about her back, and Alice supposed it was that which she was concerned about.

Yet a feeling of strangeness persisted. She almost wished she hadn't come. They were polite and friendly enough, but just the same, she felt sure, by supper time, that she wasn't wanted, and she resolved to cut the week short by two days or so, and return home. That would give her a little time to visit in Boston, which she had planned to do if possible. So she did not mind, though she was curious. Perhaps the two women had lived for so long alone that they did not care for visitors.

After supper she thought that the women would naturally want to get out of the stuffy house and sit on the front porch, but no, they did not, and when Alice proposed it, Emma said stiffly that they were not in the habit of "making a show" of themselves.

"Oh, I don't see making a show of just sitting on the porch minding your own business," said Alice.

"There's some that does and some that don't," said Emma shortly.

She was sewing, and she did not look up.

"Well, I feel as if I'd like to get out," said Alice. "I'm used to stretching my limbs a little before I go to bed."

"Go ahead then," said Emma.

"It's nicest on the east side of the souse, I always think," said Teresa quickly, nervously.

"Yes, it is that," said Emma in a flat, toneless voice. "There's broken ground on the west. And now it's getting dark, it's hard walking." Without looking up, she added, "I'd go along, but my back, you know."

"And I've got to get this darning done," said Teresa.

"Don't you stir. I'll not be gone long," said Alice.

She went out. It was strange indeed that neither of them had accompanied her. It seemed more as if they did not want to go out of the house at all; they were eager not to go. Yes,

that was the word—"eager." They were a queer pair all right. Funny that Ben should have married Emma at all. But Ben always did queer things, like running off the way he did.

That was three years ago now.

Judging by the way things looked, Emma and Teresa had had a hard time making ends meet. Ben's insurance and the house wouldn't come to Emma, just as she said, until seven years after Ben disappeared, unless they had word from him. And Ben was stubborn, he likely wouldn't write until the very last year.

Quite deliberately, she walked around the back of the house to the west side. The afterglow still lingered low along the west. There was a bank of clouds there, just a few degrees above the horizon; the clouds above and the earth beneath were very dark, almost jet black, so that the band of saffron and lemon and emerald was all the brighter between. Robins were still singing, and mourning doves made their melancholy coos from various places.

She walked leisurely toward the lilac grove, thinking there must be lilacs in bloom there. She smelled them as she drew up to the bushes, and stepped among them gratified at the perfume of the blossoms. She stood there looking among the slender limbs and boles toward the west, watching the afterglow fade.

A little wind was rising. She heard it rustling the leaves of the lilac bushes; she expected any moment to feel it. The wind made a hushing susurration in the leaves of the lilacs, and a few flowers fluttered down. Listening to it, she fancied that it made a sighing sound in the bushes, a sort of *ah-whsss*—quite as if they were breathing. How regular it was!

The lilacs were trembling in the wind now. Along the west, the afterglow was a light pink and lemon. The trees stood silent and tall against it, black and cleanly cut against that band of glowing heaven. But somehow, somewhere, there was something wrong with what she saw, something that should not be. What was it? Perplexed, she stared. Why, it was the trees! The trees should not be standing straight and tall and silent. The trees should be moving in the wind, which she could feel gratefully now with every fiber of her body, pulling at her, cooling her.

But the trees against the afterglow moved not at all. Not so much as a leaf trembled, not a twig shuddered—nothing moved.

She turned toward the house, looking to the syringa bush which stood in the light of the kitchen window. Was it moving? Was the wind rising in the east, blowing westward? But no, the syringa stood as still as the trees along the west.

A chill touched her arms.

The wind in the lilacs went *ah-whsss, ah-whsss, ah-whsss*.

Suddenly she felt scared. She picked up her skirts and ran out of the bushes toward the house, and instantly, the moment she broke free of the bushes, she was sharply aware of the drug-like heat which lay in the air from the day.

Half-way to the house, she paused. She turned. Now the lilacs were against the afterglow, and she could see how the leaves shook and trembled, and how the bushes moved—almost imperceptibly, to be sure; but they moved. She stood there looking as if she could not believe her eyes, but then she turned her back on the lilacs, went around and into the house by way of the kitchen door.

Both the women looked up at her entrance. Their dark eyes challenged her. Emma had tipped the lamp a little away from her, so that more of the light would fall upon Alice when she sat down.

“What is it? What’s the matter?” whispered Teresa.

Alice swallowed. “It’s the lilacs,” she said in a weak voice.

“What about the lilacs?” demanded Emma brusquely.

“They moved.”

“A wind coming up,” said Teresa in a thick voice. “What a blessing! It’s been hot for May.”

“Very hot,” echoed Emma.

“But there wasn’t anything else stirring,” said Alice. “I looked. Not a leaf anywhere, on either side . . .”

“I suppose a wind’s got to start somewhere,” said Emma bluntly. She thrust a needle and thread at her. “Will you thread this for me, Alice? My eyes are getting tired, I guess.”

Alice wanted to say more, but she was too much aware that the women were waiting for her to speak. It would not do any good. She was mystified. She sat with them for a little while, saying inconsequential things, at which they were relieved, and then, when Teresa got up to go to bed, she got up, too.

In the morning the kitchen looked bright and cheery, not at all as it had looked the night before, with the darkness pressing in on the lamp, and the June-bugs striking the screens at

the windows, and the memory strong of the wind in the lilacs. Now the sunlight flooded the little room, and the sisters seemed bright and cheerful.

"I suppose we ought to take you through the town," said Emma, "but the truth is, we don't go out very much, only when we have to go to the store and have nobody to run there for us."

"Well, I didn't come to see the town," said Alice. "I came to see you. I planned to stay for a week, but I want to get to Boston, too, and see my Great-uncle Will; so I'll probably leave before then."

"We're glad to have you," said Emma.

"We don't get many visitors," said Teresa. "But if you must go, why then there's no good trying to change your mind."

After breakfast she went outside. She went around the house deliberately. The grove of lilacs stood beautiful with blossoms in the sun. All but one of the bushes bore purple lilacs; the one bore white blooms. The bees made a humming in the blossoms. She walked to their fragrance, under the lilacs into their pleasant shade. The bushes arched above her head she saw now, though she had not noticed the previous night.

A leaf rustled—and another. Then there were others, and suddenly all the leaves were agitated and troubled, turning this way and that, as if a wind was there among them. And surely it was, for once again came that whispering sound—*ah-whsss, ah-whsss, ah-whsss*.

Suddenly she caught her breath; her hand sped to her throat.

Was it indeed *ah-whsss* she heard—or was it *Alice*?

Instantly it seemed to her that the very air throbbled with her name, repeated over and over. She clapped her hands to her ears and stumbled out of the bushes into the sunlight, where, turning, she gazed back at the shuddering lilacs in terror.

As she watched, the swaying diminished, the susurrations of the leaves faded and died away, the bushes were still. Then she noticed that the angry humming of the bees which had risen with the disturbance of the blossoms was subsiding, too.

She stood looking for a long time. There was something terrible there. She felt it.

She went around the house, resolved to speak once more to the sisters, but when she saw their grim, expectant faces, she choked down her words and tried to appear casual.

"It's hot again," she said.

"Yes, it is," said Emma.

She leaned up against the wall with her hands flat to the cool wall behind her.

"I declare, you're white as a sheet," said Teresa, agitated.

"It's the heat," said Emma.

"No, it's not the heat," retorted Alice. "It's the wind in the lilacs, that's what it is." She took a step forward. "There's something wrong in this house, that's what. What is it?"

"I don't know what notion's got into you, Alice," said Emma.

"What is it?" asked Alice again. "Why have you got that west side all closed up? Is it so you can't see and hear the lilacs?"

No one said anything in reply.

"Why don't you talk to me? Why don't you answer me?"

Emma broke silence at last. "It's because we don't know what to say to you. You talk like—like a crazy person, Alice."

"I swear to you the bushes talked to me. I swear it."

Teresa looked dubiously at Emma. "I think maybe if Alice had a little tea—good and strong—?"

"Yes. Yes, that's just the thing," said Emma.

Her tension passed. She swallowed; her throat was dry. "I'd like a little tea," she said weakly, coming forward to sit down.

"I'll make you some," said Emma.

She got up quickly and moved into the pantry.

"Your back's better," said Alice. "That's good."

"Some better," admitted Emma in a muffled voice from the pantry.

Teresa sat down across the table from her. "Castleton's a little town, Alice. If they heard you talking like that about the lilac bushes, why, they'd just think you were plumb crazy."

"I'm not crazy," said Alice.

"No, you know that and we know it, but would they know it?" asked Teresa, her dark eyes wide and staring at her.

"I'm not crazy," said Alice again.

Emma came with the tea, steaming. There had been water boiling on the stove all along. She brought along two other cups and poured tea into them after she had served Alice.

"It's bitter," said Alice.

"That's because it's herb tea. It soothes your nerves. Mother always gave it to us, and it was always good for us." She drank

deeply herself, grimacing. "It *is* strong. If it's too strong for you, I'll thin it a little."

She held out her hand for Alice's cup, but Alice shook her head. "I'll drink it slow, thanks."

That afternoon she was unwell. The heat was strong again, and she had to lie down. She had no appetite for supper, having been sick twice in the afternoon; but at dusk she got up, determined to walk a little so that she could sleep the night. Emma came with another cup of tea, but she did not want it; so Emma carried it back to the kitchen, promising to heat more whenever she would like it.

She went outside once more, determined not to go near the lilac bushes.

But she could not keep away. Something drew her there. Something made her come around from the east side of the house, and step by step, she went toward the lilac bushes standing beautiful and still in the twilight.

As she came up to them, they seemed to lean toward her, and for a moment she fancied they were bending to caress her.

Then at once, even before she had entered their arbor, the trembling and shaking of the leaves began, and the frightening whispering—the *ah-whsss* which might easily be *A-lice*, *A-lice*, *A-lice!*

She stood it as long as she could, feeling the wind, hearing the sounds of the leaves, looking wide-eyed toward the afterglow where the leaves of the trees hung silently, unmoving in the evening's heat, dark and still on that bright turquoise and amethystine sky. Seen among the lilac leaves, the evening star winked and reappeared, as the leaves alternately concealed and revealed it.

Then she ran, trembling, back to the house, going in by the front way to her room.

In the morning she packed and came out with her luggage.

"I'm going to Boston," she said.

"Already?" asked Teresa, surprised.

"I promised Great-uncle Will. Besides, I have to be getting back. If Ben should turn up there, he'd find nobody at home."

"If your mind's made up, there's no use trying to change it," said Emma. "I'll drive you down to the station. The nine-fifteen's for Boston."

She got out of the buggy at the station with a feeling of rushing relief. "Thank you, Emma. It was real nice. If you hear word from Ben, be sure to let me know right away, will you?"

"I surely will. And you do the same."

Alice waved goodbye and boarded the train.

From her trembling lips Great-uncle Will heard about the wind in Ben's lilacs. Great-uncle Will was a Boston lawyer with imagination. He did not neglect to take note that Alice had been nauseatingly ill that afternoon, after drinking the bitter tea Emma had prepared for her. He clucked and comforted Alice, but as soon as she had set forth on the return trip to Missouri he boarded the first train he could get and went up to Castleton to have a talk with the proper authorities.

Even before he got there, he wondered how he could break the news to Alice that Ben Glennon had never run away, that he was buried there under the lilac bushes, filled up with arsenic or something of the kind, which those foolish women had given him, never knowing the insurance and the house were held away from them for seven years in the absence of his body. It gave him a certain grim satisfaction in the fitness of things to realize how those miserable, conniving women must have had to scrape these three years past to hold body and soul together.

UNHAPPY ENDING

By LEAH BODINE DRAKE

The wood was lonely and grey,
The wood was misty and cold,
The wood was unspeakably old.

The four who journeyed that way
Were lost, for their lantern had died
And the map they'd consulted had lied,

For the path did not turn where it should.
Dead leaves lay deep on the ground
And brambles grew thick all around.

Now the four were alone in the wood,
And a fear of which none of them spoke
Had settled on each like a cloak,
For night had darkened the sky
And the wood was so silent and cold,
The wood was so terribly old . . .

Then did the travelers spy
A little, squat round-tower loom
Ahead in the lowering gloom.

A tower set deep in the wood
With a light from a high, broken slat
Like the stare of an old, one-eyed cat.

Then the four had visions of food,
Warm fires, and beds in a house;
And they halloo'd the dwellers to rouse!

And They who lived in that tower
Listened . . . and each crouching thing eyed
His brother and nudged furry side.

Like coals did their lidless eyes glower,
As with mouths that driveled and slobbered
They quietly mewed and gobbered.

Then one padded slyly down stair
And drew back the double-barred lock
And waited . . . All was still. Then a knock

Thundered. "Is there anyone there?
We are four honest, lost journeymen."
Cried the first of the wayfarers. Then

He opened that dubious door
And the rest followed hopefully after—
Those plump, tender journeymen four!

In the tower was horrible laughter.

FANTASY ON THE MARCH

By FRITZ LEIBER, JR.

Halt the column! Here's a likely spot to hold our council, where vast eldritch rocks offer us shade from the wild sunshine of the atom bomb. Call in the scouts and foragers. Count up the sick and dying. Make reports.

But first, softly lower *Fantasy's* banner. Poor black and opal cloth,—tattered, torn, and pocked with realistic bullet holes. The people of the plain must think we march toward mystery under the ensign of a dirty rag. You who are skilled in sewing silver thread, stitch up each rent, bind the frayed edges—there'll be whipping winds and gales like frosty knives in those sky-scraping mountains up ahead.

Who's this that comes with ashen face? You say the last vampire lies near death? Well, why do you hesitate? Give him transfusion of your heart's own blood. — And you, whose countenances show a stony, long-continuing grief, say the naiads, hamadryads, those lovely camp-followers, still lie in deathlike sleep? They may find comfort in this cromlech's shadow. Chafe their thin wrists, massage their shrunken brows, give them your warmth, breathe between their fevered lips your breath of life. In ages past they've loved you well, and now's the time to show your gratitude. I know their trance has lasted long, you're weary of this nursing, but what's a love that ends with joy and health?

Your looks tell of a loss, oh dusty scout. The last werewolf? Of a gunshot wound? And this the bullet? Bury him, then. Full military honors! Dig the grave deep and pile it high with stones, so that no cheap-jack horror-monger of the plains can come and dig him up, to make out of his stinking bones and fur a show for fools.

We've grown fond of these old fears, haven't we? So tender with our monsters! Because they are almost the only hint of what imagination can attain beyond the star-high walls that ring this plain. And they've grown weak, you know. Look here—it was not a silver bullet killed the wolf.

But come now, sit and rest—may be your only chance between the recent planet-maiming war and some atomic doom that's just ahead. Find each a friendly boulder. Eat and drink. Lick

your old wounds. Set one to play the flute—some dreamy, solemn strain to make our ears forget the querulous, muttering voices of the plain. And deeply rest—things will not seem so bad when we have rested.

How do I know? By what authority do I speak to you? By none. I'm nothing. Just someone whom you've paid to dream for you. A kind of twilight skald.

You say, Dark Eyes and Weary Smile, we're going nowhere? That our small band is out of touch with life? Our path only circling retreat, a flight to childish, superstitious dreams? What then, I ask you, are those peaks ahead, that black, forbidding rampart in the sky? Oh, an illusion, is it? The plainsmen say the mountains are not real and you, Dark Eyes, believe them? Well, just wait! When the cold blasts that brim the passes chill your bones, when your lungs strain to gulp the icy air, when the jagged pinnacles cut and bruise your feet—then tell me it's illusion!

You in that rusty cuirass, what said you? They laugh at us and jeer at *Fantasy*? Well, let them. When haven't men going somewhere been laughed at? Stiffen your backs, scoff at the scoffers, pay them sneer with sneer. Best, burnish your armor till it reflects back an image of their stunted, monstrous selves, set against those mountains they insist aren't there, and run off in headlong stumbling flight, their insane laughter echoing in their ears.

Oh, but your doubts go deeper, Grim Face, eh? You think that everything that thrills 's been done, that there's no more true eeriness in life, but just a wearisome atomic round, and that the future—if only a tag end—belongs to some pragmatic, plodding breed who never heard Pan pipes or feared the darkness that's between the stars? That is to laugh! Pass me the wine-skin. And yet that's just as I too think part of the time.

But how untrue! When each new fact, like an old witch, has as familiar some new mystery, when each conquered realm opens a new wilder, wider frontier, when man's about to leap the planets . . .

No! The fault's in us. Open your eyes, close your ears to the drug-murmurous voices of the plains, polish the windows of your mind, and you will see wonders undreamed, innumerable—and I don't mean bright gadgety to prick desires and empty pocketbooks. Wonder as great as in archaic times made gleaming

eyes by rocks like these at Stonehenge and in the darkling woods where satyrs danced.

You question that, Crooked Lip? You say the gods are dead? That's true enough. You need only look back to the last ridge to see their moldering bones, like dinosaurs', their ribs black bars against the reddening sky. One still lives on, a vast and quaking hulk, bloated, diseased, urged forward by his pygmy servitors. I doubt he'll ever reach the peaks ahead. But what of that? There will be new gods there. And if there aren't no matter—I'd liefer feys than great gods any day: small demons, sprites, leprechauns and fauns—creatures that cannot promise us eternal life, whose only gift to us is shuddering fear and glimpses of what lies beyond the veil, when for some midnight whim they twitch it wide.

You say it's science that does that? That science strips all glamor from the world? I disagree. Science has given us new eyes and ears—to see the twisting demon of the pox, and stars beyond the stars, to hear the moonlight and the dead. Science has broken down the gates of time, to show us Akkad and Gondwana land, the spaceship and the gleaming brain-machine. The wonders there—it's we who fail to see it. We let ourselves be cowed by unread books, by our lost thoughts, by fear of ridicule, by our unwillingness to face the world and, as an ancient landscape, drink it in; by our own lethargy of mind and sense, and by these modern puritans who loathe the wonder-spinning spider in our brains.

Science has given us . . . hints. What lurks beyond the universe's rim? What thinks the tiny demon of the pox? And who was on the moon eons before *Tyrannosaurus rex* was on the world? What signifies the surging in the dark of forces only mathematics can discern, the dance of the giant-gutted atoms? No, I'll take science. We'll need all its eyes to help us pass those peaks that lie ahead—I yearn for them, for the foothills, for . . .

But oh (play louder, flutist!) there is a muttering upon this plain that saps all strength. You hear it everywhere. It rises from the very ground, like gases from a bog. Cajoling voices promising to you the satisfaction of each last desire—the money-voice of film and print, white-breasted advertisement, and the sky-tainting lies of radio. They promise all wonder and you get: a candy bar and a plastic comb. They promise ecstasy and you receive: a Buick and a Chemtoned home. They really say:

wonder is dead, be thankful for a square meal and a roof over your head; romance is dead, too, there's really nothing interesting left in the world for you; so we'll furnish you (at a price, quite nice) with some toys (attention, girls and boys!) to keep you (yes, you!) from getting too blue, to occupy your mind until you die.

And when those Circean voices call to *us*—oh, and they *can* be sweet (louder still, flutist, louder play!)—and seem to ask for nothing, this I know: they ask for *Fantasy's* rich red hearts-blood, in order that that blood may be displayed (watered down to inoffensive pink) inside glass globes that grace the show-windows which lure fools inside the dens of thieves—you've seen them glow, like will-o-wisps at night.

There are your blood-hunters in the dark. Our sick, old-fashioned vampire they'd suck dry, if just a penny profit were at stake.

We cannot wholly disregard those voices. Even our column must have foragers. And, understand most certainly, I have no quarrel with a good square meal or with a roof and clothes. And I will not deny that there are noble strivers on the plains, who seek for food for all, and health and wealth to be shared equally. That's worthy, yes. But it's not all, or even most.

For, after all (this is a riddle, played by the Sphinx beside this ancient stone), just what are food and clothes and well-pegged tents, good boots and thick warm cloaks, this wine, this strip of meat I chew, weapons and vehicles, victuals and water-casks, brim-filled canteens and tins of provender? What are they, eh? What do they signify? Provisions! Right! They are no more nor less than *the equipment for an expedition*—over such mountains as now lie ahead. Look at them there, so big and black and strong—Mountains of Madness, Parapanisades. No, turn and look!—not just a glance and nod. Let your gaze wander up the sinister slopes, and flinch not from the saw-toothed, mystic tops, which glitter more with terror than with ice. Imagine a horned planet rising o'er them—some craggy orb come to affright the earth—a green and living fog, a moon-big face . . .

There are your Alps, my Hannibals, barring the way to sun-drenched Romes of wonder! Behind each crag you shall find mysteries; each rock will be an anvil for your dreams. Mark well that cavern midway to the top, that ominous maw

upon whose jagged lip some midges seem to move—dragons, perhaps—chimeras, behemoths. Those are the Caves of Mind, as infinite as space, but lacking stars. Reaching that point, our cavalcade will split. One party will explore those murky deeps, threading perhaps, if legendry speak true, a passage-way that leads beneath the peaks up which the other party grimly toils.

And what—here is the question dwarfing all the rest, the question from which even fancy shrinks—what will we find upon the other side? A golden valley, Eden of new gods? A pit of horrors, ringed by peering giants? A tinkling crystal hall for each man-jack? Or just another valley such as this, with higher mountains rampart up ahead?

What matter what we find? Even if Nothing—and we might find that—would it not be the greatest thrill of all, to front that unimaginable void of voids, and say, knowing it true, “This is the end?”

And so—break up, my friends, our council’s done! Sound trumpet, scatter forager, gallop scout! Up Weary Smile, Crooked Lip, and Rusty Chest! Out fires, shoulder guns and packs on backs! Lift up the naiads’ litters carefully—color’s returning a little to those cheeks. You say the vampire’s heart beats stronger? Good!

Are we all ready? Then unfurl the flag and forward once again!

Escape? Oh, no! Forget that coward word. Deep in your hearts you’ve known it wasn’t true. A volley for the werewolf! Then advance!

RANDOM NOTES

On the Cthulhu Mythos

The fictitious tract invented and incorporated into the Cthulhu Mythos called *The Book of Dzyan* has perhaps a prosaic origin from a word in the dictionary, one with similarities in assonance and general meaning: "Dzan—that which is to be understood only by the initiated; esoteric; that kind of doctrine taught secretly." *The Plateau of Leng*: in itself the word *Leng* is a Chinese word of equivocal meaning. Used as a noun, it means "mountain"; used as an adjective, it means "cold." As was pointed out in *H. P. L.: A Memoir*, one of Lovecraft's ailments was his susceptibility to any temperature below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. Considering the two meanings of *Leng*, it is possible that the derivation of the term in the Mythos was not altogether accidental, but a deliberate and scholarly choice of a word with a psychological association for Lovecraft. There is a parallel in the manner in which his aversion to marine life was manifested in his work, as, for example, in *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. The Arab Abdul-Alhazred, author of the *Necronomicon*, might well reflect Lovecraft's little-displayed sense of humor. Lovecraft had traced part of his ancestry back to one Thomas Hazard, an early New England settler. The suggested connection between the two names is obvious. Concerning the *Necronomicon*: a book published in Boston in 1882 entitled *South Mountain Magic*, by Madeleine Vinton Dahlgren (James R. Osgood & Co.), pages 204-218, suggests a parallel. This post-Civil War authoress devoted a rambling series of folklore, historical sketches, and factual accounts of several real personages among the old German settlers on South Mountain in Maryland to the general subject of the outre. She mentions one rather enigmatical man: Michael Zittle, a self-confessed wizard, who managed his thaumaturgy by the guidance of a certain "Black Book." After his death, this odd tome was left to some relatives, who showed it to the authoress. Her description of it is provocative. It bore the ambiguous title: *The Friend in Need, or, Secret Science*. The title page simply asserts that it was originally translated from the Spanish into the German and "printed for the Purchaser: 1826." No publisher's name was given, nor was any place of printing designated, so that there was no danger of anyone's being held to

account for its blasphemous formulas. The book was prefaced: "(This book is written) according to the secret tricks found in an ancient Spanish manuscript herein brought out, which was discovered by an old hermit over a hundred years ago, hidden among the mysteries of the Holy Land, many wonders having thereby been performed in this same country." It also makes mention of an obscure and undefined "Dragon with the Four Young", possibly some metaphysical imagery of the four elements. It is suggestive of Shub-Niggurath. It was purported to contain rare prescriptions found in Freyburg in 1752. The tome suggests possible antecedents of the *Necronomicon*, and the fictitious history of the book which Lovecraft wrote. There is also a family resemblance between the *Necronomicon* and the *Book of Thoth* of Egyptian mythology, supposedly found by an Egyptian scribe and antiquarian in the dismal necropolis of Thebes. He, not impressed with the mythological warnings that all beholders of this fearful book come to a ghastly end, flees with it, and comes to the predicted doom. The elements in certain of Lovecraft's stories show a strong similarity to this ancient myth—the forbidden manuscript or book, blasphemous arcana, the curious searcher, the grisly, climatic fate that inevitably overtakes the individual who plumbs too deeply the well of forbidden knowledge. The theme is also used repeatedly by M. R. James, and to a lesser extent by others.

—George T. Wetzel

On The Lurker at the Threshold

Publication of *The Lurker at the Threshold* stimulated a certain amount of speculation as to how much of that collaboration was written by H. P. Lovecraft and how much by August Derleth. It had not occurred to us, in our naivette, that this might be so; it had not occurred to us because it did not seem that the work was of sufficient importance or stature even in the limited domain of the weird to merit such speculation. One brash reviewer of this book climbed right out on a limb and wrote: "The first 18,000 words . . . were written by Lovecraft before his death, and the remainder (some 45,000 words) have been added by Derleth following Lovecraft's notes. . . . The Lovecraft section, which ends at the bottom of page 58, is written in the quiet, restrained style of *Charles Dexter Ward*, and . . . may have

been done first, only to be abandoned midway in favor of the other novel. At any rate, this was the most felicitous period of Lovecraft's style . . ." and so on. Of Derleth's "portion", the same reviewer writes: "Whatever his intentions, his style differs markedly from Lovecraft's, which is shown by the exactitude with which, to the satisfaction of this reviewer, the point of transition can be determined—the bottom of page 58."

However well-intentioned such reviewers, and however vain in their cocksureness, the facts of the matter are quite otherwise. The facts are these:—under the title of *The Round Tower*, Lovecraft left a portion of writing describing a tower which some Providence friends and readers believe was suggested by the famed Newport tower, whose *raison d'etre* has not yet been revealed, though only recently a move was made to excavate about the tower and discover, if possible, the reason for its being. In another paragraph or two, not connected to the previous fragment, Lovecraft described the "rose window" mentioned in the novel. These Lovecraft portions were included in *The Lurker at the Threshold* in two places. *The Round Tower* portion begins with the last paragraph on page 19, and ends with the second-last line on page 21. A random fragment is reproduced in the quotation on page 23. The descriptive notes for the "rose window" were not in such form as to permit using as written; they were incorporated into the narrative between pages 55 and 57.

The total wordage thus written by the late H. P. Lovecraft was thus in the vicinity of 1000, certainly not over 1200. The possibility exists that the two sets of notes were for different stories; yet they appealed to me as manifestly related and as possible to connect, and out of them I constructed and wrote *The Lurker at the Threshold*, which had nowhere been laid out, planned, or plotted by Lovecraft, but was evoked from his fragments and notes.

—August Derleth

From a Letter

"I have worked entirely on carving since December, and so far have turned out about twenty-six new pieces. Only a few of these are grotesques, since I got to experimenting with the ornamental possibilities of my materials and have made small flower-

vases, trays, liquor-cups, candle-sticks, and even rings and a brooch and scarf-pin. Also there are six tobacco-pipes, three of which have been disposed of. One of the remaining pipes is a grotesque which I call *Water Wizard*: the bowl representing the wizard's head, and the mouthpiece his familiar in the shape of a black fish. The stem is made from a rare species of bamboo with yellow and purplish mottlings. I am planning more pipes, one to represent Tsathoggua, and the other an inhabitant of Innsmouth. Among the other new carvings I have a figurine entitled *Primal Fish*, which I am pricing at \$8.00; a bust entitled *Visitor from Outside* at \$6.50; and a half-length statuette, *Progeny of Azathoth*, which is a little on the lines of the *Elder God*, though with more animation in face and tenacles; this I am pricing at \$8.00. The check-list in *The Arkham Sampler* has already brought in letters of inquiry."

Auburn, California 2.8.48

—Clark Ashton Smith

A MEMOIR OF LOVECRAFT

By RHEINHART KLEINER

It is possible that I met Lovecraft a little sooner—in 1916, or so—than some who, making his acquaintance later, did much more to improve the resultant opportunities for correspondence and personal friendship. My meeting with him was not due to any planning of my own, although I had been receiving letters for more than a year. I happened to be one of a party of Blue Pencillers on the way to Boston for a National Amateur Press Association convention, and Providence was the place where we changed from the boat to the train. One of our group telephoned him, and he appeared to greet us at the station. He was still somewhat young in looks then, and, as I thought, of a very prepossessing appearance. What struck me was his extreme formality of manner, and the highly complimentary style of his approach to those with whom he had had previous epistolary contact.

The following year I went to Providence for the express purpose of spending a day or two with him. I was greeted at the door of 598 Angell Street by his mother, who was a woman just a little below medium height, with graying hair, and eyes which seemed to be the chief point of resemblance between herself and her son. She was very cordial and even vivacious, and in another moment had ushered me into Lovecraft's room. In those days he had not yet overcome a certain tenseness of manner, which a stranger might have taken, in some of its manifestations, as a desire for argument. If it became at all obtrusive—and I do not say it did—it showed itself in an insistence upon facts which his hearer did not question, and sometimes even in an "asperous" contradiction! Lovecraft, however, was much too carefully self-schooled in the correct eighteenth century code of conduct to be really guilty of any crudities of this sort, and we shortly got along very well together.

I noticed that at every hour or so his mother appeared in the doorway with a glass of milk, and Lovecraft forthwith drank it. Something was said about a cup of tea for me, but by that time I had become aware of the heat of the room and thought it might be a good idea to suggest that we take a short walk. I digress sufficiently to say that the room in which I sat was fairly small and lined around three sides with books, mostly old ones.

On the wall near his desk were small pictures of Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and one or two others. An almanac hung against the wall directly over his desk; it was a *Farmer's Almanac* with which he had been familiar for many years.

Just before broaching the subject of an outdoor stroll, I absent-mindedly took my pipe out of my pocket. I don't know why, but I suddenly felt that pipe-smoking in that house might not be quite the thing, and put it back into my pocket. At that very moment his mother appeared in the doorway again and espied the pipe sliding back into my pocket. To my surprise, she gave an exclamation of pleasure and wished that I could persuade Howard to smoke a pipe, as it would be "so soothing" for him. This may have been New England courtesy to cover a guest's embarrassment, but I knew that I never made the slightest attempt to convert Lovecraft to pipe-smoking!

We found ourselves outside very shortly, and Lovecraft suggested certain favorite buildings and localities which I might care to see. They were survivals of that more spacious century in which his mental home seemed to be, but I should have difficulty in finding them today. On our way back to his home, and while we were still downtown, I suggested stopping in at a cafeteria for a cup of coffee. He agreed, but took milk himself, and watched me dispose of coffee and cake, or possibly pie, with some curiosity. It occurred to me later that this visit to a public eating-house—a most unpretentious one—might have been a distinct departure from his own usual habits.

At this date—in 1917—Lovecraft, the friend and companion of all genial and well-intentioned literary men, was still in embryo. During his New York period of the early 1920's, he ate and drank like other men, and coffee never came amiss to him. He never touched liquor or tobacco, but he had company in our own group who shared this abstinence with him. He could sit with friends who drank beer or whiskey, and who smoked cigars, cigarettes or pipes, without being troubled in any way.

On the following day, Lovecraft came to my hotel and we set out on a tour of the second-hand book shops. I wish I could recall some cogent observation or shrewd quip in this connection, if Lovecraft made any; but I think we were both too dignified at that time to unbend and be quite natural with each other. It was on later visits that I met his aunts, Mrs. Lillian Clark and Mrs. Annie E. P. Gamwell. I thought both of them very gracious

ladies, but other details of those visits have quite left my memory.

It has always seemed to me that Lovecraft's fundamental instincts were entirely normal. Removed from the repressive sick-room atmosphere of his home and the attendance of his mother or his aunts, he blossomed out astonishingly. Furthermore, he had a real knack for making himself well-liked. W. Paul Cook attributed Lovecraft's final development to his sojourn among the amateur journalists of the metropolis, and I am willing to believe it—albeit even Cook was aware that the progress of that development was not entirely painless!

Winfield T. Scott, in his excellent article in *Marginalia*, says that Lovecraft did not sleep away from his home until after his thirtieth birthday, and he is probably right. But it was certainly very early in the course of our friendship that he came to the Broadway Central Hotel in New York for an amateur press association convention, and that he and I shared the same bed for one night. I know that neither he nor I paid for the room; so I suspect that we must have used one of the rooms in George Julian Houtain's suite—especially rented by him for the use of convention guests. The point I wish to make has to do with Lovecraft's sleeping habit, which consisted of a long night-shirt, reaching almost to his ankles. I believe this article of apparel had long been relegated by modern folk to the attic, even at that time, but its use by Lovecraft certainly indicated his love of the old and the orthodox. Lovecraft had already grown on me considerably by that time, and his frequent letters were received more gladly and read more carefully than the daily newspaper at my door.

It was at a Boston convention of the National Amateur Press Association in the early 1920's, on the deck of a harbor boat which was to take us to some neighboring beach, that I introduced Lovecraft to his future wife, Mrs. Sonia Greene. She, somewhat in the spirit of George Moore's *Euphorion in Texas*, decided to fall in love with him and marry him. On our return to Brooklyn, she sought out all those who were friends of Lovecraft—myself among them—and spent most of the time talking about him. I have no intention of dwelling unduly on this matter, but I do remember very well that it was while riding in a taxi with Mr. and Mrs. Houtain later that the news of the Lovecraft-Green marriage was imparted to me. At once, I had a feeling of faintness at the pit of my stomach and became very

pale. Houtain laughed uproariously at the effect of his announcement, but agreed that he felt as I did.

Sonia Greene was a very attractive woman of Junoesque proportions; the women of the Boston circle professed to be bored by her, but she was morally an absolute puritan. Her standards of conduct were not only severe, but they were often, at least for men, somewhat naive. I remember her once remarking with finality to a circle of Lovecraft's friends gathered at her home that no gentleman ever carried a pocket-knife. Forthwith, Lovecraft, Long, Kirk, Loveman and I produced ours. There was a general feeling that the marriage was not destined to last, nor did it.

As an example of the favorable impression Lovecraft could make upon strangers, I recall that he had one of his stories to type at one time, but his machine was still in Providence. Passing a printer's shop on Flatbush Avenue, he saw an unused typewriter on a table inside, and entered to ask whether he could use it. The printer not only gave him permission, but told him to come whenever he liked. Lovecraft's own generosity doubtless often inspired generosity in turn. I remember especially his generosity with books; he would lend any volume to almost anybody. The special feeling for a book as an entity, as a thing of beautiful type, artistic illustrations, and appropriate binding did not seem to be part of him. He probably admired all these details, but the printed word that was thus sumptuously presented was the main consideration with him. Even in the case of favorite authors, he showed much the same lack of interest in the book as a book. After all, a book could always be replaced! One of his acquaintances in the Flatbush period was a light versifier named La Touche Hancock. He appeared regularly in magazines of the *Puck* and *Judge* variety. To La Touche, whose home address was never very clearly known, Lovecraft entrusted certain volumes to be read and returned; but Hancock died suddenly, and the recovery of the books was doubtful. If, indeed, they were ever restored to Lovecraft, I do not know.

In those days, Lovecraft and Long frequently browsed among the outside stalls of second-hand book shops. Sometimes Lovecraft thought of a friend in connection with some particular book which came to his hand, and if it cost no more than fifteen cents or a quarter, he would buy it for presentation purposes. He was kind enough to think of me in that way when, one day, he

found a worn copy of Margaret of Navarre's *Heptameron*. It was minus the covers, and lacked about thirty pages at the end, but the price was but 15c. What could be more appropriate to the known proclivities of a certain Brooklyn rhymster than a copy of this very book? It was purchased and duly presented to me, with a delightful eighteenth century inscription in Lovecraft's hand on the fly-leaf. That may have been almost a quarter century ago, and the library I possessed in those days has long since vanished, but I am prepared to show that shabby copy of the *Heptameron* to anyone interested in seeing it.

Lovecraft and I sometimes walked across the Manhattan Bridge, the view of the sky-scrapers from various parts of the foot-walk being part of my artistic efforts in the letters I had written him. To me, these views were scenes in a drama which awaited only the right author to find proper appreciation. To Lovecraft, what he beheld here had secret links with some dream of mysterious fantasy or horror of which I had no inkling at the time. One night he relapsed into a benign eighteenth-century mood, as we were taking this walk, and suggested that we compose impromptu couplets about what we saw. I remember that his own efforts strongly reflected the influence of the "decent church that topped the neighboring hill" school, while my own were probably feeble imitations of the same thing.

Apropos *Something About Cats*, which was originally written by Lovecraft under the title of *Cats vs. Dogs* for a meeting of the Blue Pencil Club, the subject having been assigned to him by the director—probably not unwillingly accepted, considering his great love for cats—I remember that Lovecraft wrote it with great pleasure; the subject grew and expanded under his hand, historical literary allusions beyond number suggested themselves, and it was not finished in time for the meeting at which it was to have been read.

And writing of cats, I am reminded of Lovecraft's appreciation of humor in others, whether that humor was intentional or not. One night, after hours, he and I were sitting in George Kirk's Chelsea Book shop, discussing the word "parallelopipedon" Lovecraft, as usual, was primed with information, but what I could have had to say on the subject quite baffles me, for I certainly could not say anything on it today! At any rate, it suddenly occurred to me that "parallelopipedon" would be quite a name for a cat, a pleasing fancy which I mentioned to him.

Then, catching sight of the usual kitten playing around his chair, I stooped and began to pet it, murmuring soothingly, "Here, my little parallelipedon." Glancing up at Lovecraft, I beheld him in a state of helpless mirth, his face contorted and his body shaking all over; he was so completely convulsed that it took him some time to return to normal!

Lovecraft had, too, a very real interest in the welfare of friends. Samuel Loveman at one time had been looking for a new room on Columbia Heights, but in a rather more expensive part of that thoroughfare. He finally located quite a desirable room with the usual magnificent view of the downtown Manhattan skyscrapers on the other side of the river. The landlady, however, became unexpectedly capricious and did not seem able to make up her mind to part with the room. Loveman mentioned his dilemma at the Kalem Club one night, and awakened Lovecraft's sympathetic interest. With his aunt, Mrs. Gamwell, who was in New York at that time, Lovecraft found opportunity to call upon the recalcitrant landlady, a formidable guarantee of anyone's desirability as a tenant! Loveman received such a high rating that the room became his without further question.

Long walks or nocturnal prowls were always a part of Lovecraft's plan of life, and the hours of darkness were probably his preferred time for such ramblings. It is well known that Thomas de Quincey and Charles Dickens were notable night-prowlers, and I would place the name of H. P. Lovecraft well near the top of any list of such kindred spirits. In Greenwich Village, for whose eccentric habitants he had little use, he was fond of poking about in back alleys where his companions preferred not to go. In prohibition years, with murderous affrays among bootleggers and rum-runners likely to break out anywhere, this was a particularly dangerous business. Every other house in this neighborhood was open to suspicion as a speakeasy. I recall that at least once, while stumbling around among old barrels and crates in some dark corner of this area, Lovecraft found a doorway suddenly illuminated and an excited foreigner, wearing the apron that was an almost infallible sign of a speakeasy bartender, enquiring hotly what he wanted. Loveman and Kirk went in after Lovecraft and got him safely out. None of us, surely, was under any illusion as to what might very well happen in such an obscure corner of the city.

Just previous to his coming to Brooklyn, and no doubt as part of her campaign to impress herself upon Lovecraft, his wife-to-be had issued an elaborate number of an amateur magazine, *The Rainbow*. It contained half-tone reproductions of Lovecraft's portrait, together with portraits of his friends and articles or poems from their pens. It was a great success from the amateur journalist's point-of-view, and I believe it may have been during the early stage of her married life with Lovecraft that she decided to issue another one. Printing costs being then, as now, quite high, I suppose the first issue cost a couple of hundred dollars. The second could not have cost much less. I don't know what crisis took place in her affairs at this time—she had been holding a well-paid job as "buyer" in an uptown hat shop—but to pay for this issue she made an arrangement with the printer whereby his wife could obtain all the hats she wanted up to the amount of the bill. I am almost certain that Lovecraft was prominently featured in the first *Rainbow*, but he may have had enough influence to keep himself out of too conspicuous a place in the second. But this is mere conjecture.

In connection with his marriage, I remember very well the arrival from Providence of a surprising mass of material intended for his new home. There were heaps of fine linen, quite a few pieces of heavy, old-fashioned silverware, and other items which had probably been stored away for years. All Lovecraft's literary impedimenta—his books, pictures, files of correspondence and typewriter—were soon installed in a light, pleasant room of the apartment at 595 Parkside Avenue. Dropping in to see him and his wife, I could not forebear commenting on the speed with which everything had been placed in order. "Why, this looks as if you had lived here always," I said. He looked extremely gratified and, while I cannot recall the exact language he used, he explained that this was one way in which a gentleman could be recognized; a gentleman always made himself at home no matter where he happened to be.

His residence with Mrs. Lovecraft certainly resulted, at least for a time, in outward evidences of well-being. She was an excellent cook, and her meals were far from meager. Those who are familiar with photographs of the cadaverous, hollow-eyed Lovecraft may be surprised to learn that he grew stout for a while. I remember, after a jaunt with Kirk, Loveman, and Long, parting from him at some Brooklyn El station, and being

amazed at his girth, which impressed me forcibly as I watched him walking up the stairs. His shoulders had always been quite broad, and he was naturally tapering at the waist, but he filled out astonishingly at this time. Never again, however, did I gain the same impression of him.

It may have been shortly after this, and he and his wife may even have been away from Parkside by then, that he began writing letters in answer to want-ads. We all know now that Lovecraft had nothing to gain from a commercial connection. His job was to write stories, and he should have been allowed to continue as he was doing. But the situation in which he found himself after his unfortunate marriage seemed to require that he make some effort to find a permanent connection with a regular salary. A few of his "job-hunting" letters were seen by some from whom a little more understanding might have been expected; I think I am justified in saying that they were the sort of letters a temporarily straitened English gentleman might have written in an effort to make a profitable connection in the business world of the day before yesterday. Their tone was all wrong, of course. I think he received one reply and a request that he call, and he called once and again, but it remained my impression that the man who sent for him was looking for some interesting conversation. Nothing resulted, of course, as nothing should have resulted, and Lovecraft was shortly free to live the life he preferred to live.

Years later, possibly in the early 1930's, when Lovecraft had long returned to Providence and his New York episode was closed, I met his former wife by accident in the lobby of the St. George Hotel, in Brooklyn. Despite all one may think of the bizarre affair of Lovecraft's marriage, I am inclined to believe that the former Sonia Greene, however misguided or ill-advised, was sincere in her own way. I come to this conclusion merely from what she said when leaving me on this occasion. It was with some surprise that I beheld her walking by the divan where I sat. She was no longer the same woman, having grown perceptibly older. She was dressed very plainly, wore spectacles, and had no hat. Her hair, still dark, was worn quite flat on her head, and there were no signs of the rebellious locks which had formerly been one of her adornments. Physically, she had grown no slenderer. She espied me, and I rose. All I recall of what passed between us in that brief moment are her words, "How is H. P. L.?"

At least once, Lovecraft accompanied me on one of my Sunday hikes with the Paterson Rambling Club. This was to be a short walk not very far above Haledon, a few miles beyond the center of Paterson, New Jersey, but we were all dressed in full outdoor panoply, with hunters' coats, khaki breeches, leggings, stout shoes, and knapsacks on our backs. Lovecraft expressed his admiration of my "spectacular" attire, but added that he had never felt the need of such trappings for the kind of country walks he preferred. Leaving the train at the Paterson station, we started for the City Hall, where the hikers were to meet. Happening to pass a drug store with a selection of post-cards displayed in the window, Lovecraft suggested pausing for a moment while he purchased and addressed a few. The few cards required almost an hour, and some readers will remember the sort of card Lovecraft was likely to send. The postmark usually obliterated the upper part of what he wrote, and this, combined with his microscopic script, made his messages somewhat difficult to decipher. He usually left but the smallest space for the address, but the cards always reached their destination, though on occasion I received such cards with an extra "one cent due" stamp on them, which only added to my difficulties in reading them, whether or not it was an illegal affixation. No doubt the Post Office considered that a letter would be more suitable for such extensive communications!

Nothing notable occurred on this particular hike, but George Kirk once told me a story of an excursion made by Lovecraft and himself to some similar locality. Stopping at a rural refreshment stand, they beheld two sturdy women hikers, attired in breeches and with all accessories, not an unusual sight today, also in quest of refreshment. One of them of a particularly virile and commanding type strode aggressively past Kirk and Lovecraft. "Well," commented Lovecraft, "at least, you can't say *she's* effeminate!"

There were many other trips to all parts of the city and its boroughs which Lovecraft made, but I was not able to participate in many of them. At least once, Lovecraft and Kirk offered to "walk" me home from Columbia Heights. Since I lived in Bushwick, this was quite a jaunt for a nocturnal hour, along block after block for mile on mile, until the flashes and thunders of the El became evident—and half a mile remained to be covered after that! Lovecraft was undoubtedly a persistent and tire-

less pedestrian, but I think this walk proved a little too much even for him. Kirk and he, and of course, myself, reached Bushwick Avenue finally; this was quite near to my destination, but here Lovecraft's physical powers suddenly waned. He became dizzy and weak and had to sit down on a nearby stoop. He was probably much more of a sick man, even in those days, than some of us realized. Only three more blocks remained to be walked, but here I made my farewells and, being hopeful that Lovecraft had merely yielded to a passing spell of weakness, left him with Kirk. There were transit systems within easy reach, and I know they did not walk back.

But those days are long gone by—more than twenty years ago, though Lovecraft remained a faithful correspondent for many years after the 1920's. And for me, as for all who knew him, his passing left a vacuum no one else can fill.

THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH

By H. P. LOVECRAFT

II

But there was a way, and he saw it in due season. Only a very expert dreamer could have used those imperceptible footholds, yet to Carter they were sufficient. Surmounting now the outward-hanging rock, he found the slope above much easier than that below, since a great glacier's melting had left a generous space with loam and ledges. To the left a precipice dropped straight from unknown heights to unknown depths, with a cave's dark mouth just out of reach above him. Elsewhere, however, the mountain slanted back strongly, and even gave him space to lean and rest.

He felt from the chill that he must be near the snow line, and looked up to see what glittering pinnacles might be shining in that late ruddy sunlight. Surely enough, there was the snow uncounted thousands of feet above, and below it a great beetling crag like that he had just climbed, hanging there forever in bold outline. And when he saw that crag he gasped and cried out aloud, and clutched at the jagged rock in awe; for the titan bulge had not stayed as earth's dawn had shaped it, but gleamed red and stupendous in the sunset with the carved and polished features of a god.

Stern and terrible shone that face that the sunset lit with fire. How vast it was no mind can ever measure, but Carter knew at once that man could never have fashioned it. It was a god chiselled by the hands of the gods, and it looked down haughty and majestic upon the seeker. Rumor had said it was strange and not to be mistaken, and Carter saw that it was indeed so; for those long narrow eyes and long-lobed ears, and that thin nose and pointed chin, all spoke of a race that is not of men but of gods.

He clung overawed in that lofty and perilous eyrie, even though it was this which he had expected and come to find; for there is in a god's face more of marvel than prediction can tell, and when that face is vaster than a great temple and seen looking downward at sunset in the scyptic silences of that upper world from whose dark lava it was divinely hewn of old, the marvel is so strong that none may escape it.

Here, too, was the added marvel of recognition; for although

he had planned to search all dreamland over for those whose likeness to this face might mark them as the god's children, he now knew that he need not do so. Certainly, the great face carved on that mountain was of no strange sort, but the kin of such as he seen often in the taverns of the seaport Celephais which lies in Ooth-Nargai beyond the Tanarian Hills and is ruled by that King Kuranos whom Carter once knew in waking life. Every year sailors with such a face came in dark ships from the north to trade their onyx for the carved jade and spun gold and little red singing birds of Celephais, and it was clear that these could be no others than the half-gods he sought. Where they dwelt, there must the cold waste lie close, and within it unknown Kadath and its onyx castle for the Great Ones. So to Celephais he must go, far distant from the isle of Oriab, and in such parts as would take him back to Dylath-Leen and up the Skai to the bridge by Nir, and again into the enchanted wood of the Zoogs, whence the way would bend northward through the garden lands by Oukranos to the gilded spires of Thran, where he might find a galleon bound over the Cerenarian sea.

But dusk was now thick, and the great carved face looked down even sterner in shadow. Perched on that ledge night found the seeker; and in the blackness he might neither go down nor go up, but only stand and cling and shiver in that narrow place till the day came, praying to keep awake lest sleep loose his hold and send him down the dizzy miles of air to the crags and sharp rocks of the accursed valley. The stars came out, but save for them there was only black nothingness in his eyes; nothingness leagued with death, against whose beckoning he might do no more than cling to the rocks and lean back away from an unseen brink. The last thing of earth that he saw in the gloaming was a condor soaring close to the westward precipice beside him, and darting screaming away when it came near the cave whose mouth yawned just out of reach.

Suddenly, without a warning sound in the dark, Carter felt his curved scimitar drawn stealthily out of his belt by some unseen hand. Then he heard it clatter down over the rocks below. And between him and the Milky Way he thought he saw a very terrible outline of something noxiously thin and horned and tailed and bat-winged. Other things, too, had begun to blot out patches of stars west of him, as if a flock of vague entities were flapping thickly and silently out of that inaccessible cave in the

face of the precipice. Then a sort of cold rubbery arm seized his neck and something else seized his feet, and he was lifted inconsiderately up and swung about in space. Another minute and the stars were gone, and Carter knew that the night-gaunts had got him.

They bore him breathless into that cliffside cavern and through monstrous labyrinths beyond. When he struggled, as at first he did by instinct, they tickled him with deliberation. They made no sound at all themselves, and even their membranous wings were silent. They were frightfully cold and damp and slippery, and their paws kneaded one detestably. Soon they were plunging hideously downward through inconceivable abysses in a whirling, giddy, sickening rush of dank, tomb-like air; and Carter felt they were shooting into the ultimate vortex of shrieking and daemonic madness. He screamed again and again, but whenever he did so the black paws tickled him with greater subtlety. Then he saw a sort of grey phosphorescence about, and guessed they were coming even to that inner world of subterrene horror of which dim legends tell, and which is litten only by the pale death-fire wherewith reeks the ghoulish air and the primal mists of the pits at earth's core.

At last far below him he saw faint lines of grey and ominous pinnacles which he knew must be the fabled Peaks of Throk. Awful and sinister they stand in the haunted dusk of sunless and eternal depths; higher than man may reckon, and guarding terrible valleys where the dholes crawl and burrow nastily. But Carter preferred to look at them than at his captors, which were indeed shocking and uncouth black things with smooth, oily, whale-like surfaces, unpleasant horns that curved inward toward each other, bat-wings whose beating made no sound, ugly prehensile paws, and barbed tails that lashed needlessly and disquietingly. And worst of all, they never spoke or laughed, and never smiled because they had no faces at all to smile with, but only a suggestive blankness where a face ought to be. All they ever did was clutch and fly and tickle; that was the way of night-gaunts.

As the band flew lower, the Peaks of Throk rose grey and towering on all sides, and one saw clearly that nothing lived on that austere and impressive granite of the endless twilight. At still lower levels the death-fires in the air gave out, and one met only the primal blackness of the void save aloft where the thin

peaks stood out goblin-like. Soon the peaks were very far away, and nothing about but great rushing winds with the dankness of nethermost grottoes in them. Then in the end the night-gaunts landed on a floor of unseen things which felt like layers of bones, and left Carter all alone in that black valley. To bring him thither was the duty of the night-gaunts that guard Ngranek; and this done, they flapped away silently. When Carter tried to trace their flight he found he could not, since even the Peaks of Throk had faded out of sight. There was nothing anywhere but blackness and horror and silence and bones.

Now Carter knew from a certain source that he was in the vale of Pnoth, where crawl and burrow the enormous dholes; but he did not know what to expect, because no one has even seen a dhole or even guessed what such a thing may be like. Dholes are known only by dim rumour, from the rustling they make amongst mountains of bones and the slimy touch they have when they wriggle past one. They cannot be seen because they creep only in the dark. Carter did not wish to meet a dhole, so listened intently for any sound in the unknown depths of bones about him. Even in this fearsome place he had a plan and an objective, for whispers of Pnoth were not unknown to one with whom he had talked much in the old days. In brief, it seemed fairly likely that this was the spot into which all the ghouls of the waking world cast the refuse of their feasting; and that if he but had good luck he might stumble upon that mighty crag taller even than Throk's peaks which marks the edge of their domain. Showers of bones would tell him where to look, and once found he could call to a ghoulish creature to let down a ladder; for strange to say, he had a very singular link with these terrible creatures.

A man he had known in Boston — a painter of strange pictures with a secret studio in an ancient unhallowed alley near a graveyard — had actually made friends with the ghouls and had taught him to understand the simpler part of their disgusting meeping and gibbering. This man had vanished at last, and Carter was not sure but that he might find him now, and use for the first time in dreamland that far-away English of his dim waking life. In any case, he felt he could persuade a ghoulish creature to guide him out of Pnoth; and it would be better to meet a ghoulish creature, which one can see, than a dhole, which one cannot see.

So Carter walked in the dark, and ran when he thought he heard something among the bones underfoot. Once he bumped

into a stony slope, and knew it must be the base of one of Throk's peaks. Then at last he heard a monstrous rattling and clatter which reached far up in the air, and became sure he had come nigh the crag of the ghouls. He was not sure he could be heard from this valley miles below, but realized that the inner world has strange laws. As he pondered he was struck by a flying bone so heavy that it must have been a skull, and therefore realizing his nearness to the fateful crag he sent up as best he might that meeping cry which is the call of the ghouls.

Sound travels slowly, so that it was some time before he heard an answering glibber. But it came at last, and before long he was told that a rope ladder would be lowered. The wait for this was very tense, since there was no telling what might not have been stirred up among those bones by his shouting. Indeed, it was not long before he actually did hear a vague rustling afar off. As this thoughtfully approached, he became more and more uncomfortable; for he did not wish to move away from the spot where the ladder would come. Finally the tension grew almost unbearable, and he was about to flee in panic when the thud of something on the newly heaped bones nearby drew his notice from the other sound. It was the ladder, and after a minute of groping he had it taut in his hands. But the other sound did not cease, and followed him even as he climbed. He had gone fully five feet from the ground when the rattling beneath waxed emphatic, and was a good ten feet up when something swayed the ladder from below. At a height which must have been fifteen or twenty feet he felt his whole side brushed by a great slippery length which grew alternately convex and concave with wriggling; and thereafter he climbed desperately to escape the unendurable nuzzling of that loathsome and overfed dhole whose form no man might see.

For hours he climbed with aching arms and blistered hands, seeing again the grey death-fire and Throk's uncomfortable pinnacles. At last he discerned above him the projecting edge of the great crag of the ghouls, whose vertical side he could not glimpse; and hours later he saw a curious face peering over it as a gargoyle peers over a parapet of Notre Dame. This almost made him lose his hold through faintness, but a moment later he was himself again; for his vanished friend, Richard Pickman, had once introduced him to a ghouls, and he knew well their canine faces and slumping forms and unmentionable idiosyncrasies. So he had

himself well under control when that hideous thing pulled him out of the dizzy emptiness over the edge of the crag, and did not scream at the partly consumed refuse heaped at one side or at the squatting circles of ghouls who gnawed and watched curiously.

He was now on a dim-litten plain whose sole topographical features were great boulders and the entrances of burrows. The ghouls were in general respectful, even if one did attempt to pinch him while several others eyed his leanness speculatively. Through patient glibbering he made inquiries regarding his vanished friend, and found he had become a ghoul of some prominence in abysses nearer the waking world. A greenish elderly ghoul offered to conduct him to Pickman's present habitation, so despite a natural loathing he followed the creature into a capacious burrow and crawled after him for hours in the blackness of rank mould. They emerged on a dim plain strewn with singular relics of earth — old gravestones, broken urns, and grotesque fragments of monuments — and Carter realized with some emotion that he was probably nearer the waking world than at any other time since he had gone down the seven hundred steps from the cavern of flame to the Gate of Deeper Slumber.

There, on a tombstone of 1768 stolen from the Granary Burying Ground in Boston, sat the ghoul which was once the artist Richard Upton Pickman. It was naked and rubbery, and had acquired so much of the ghoulish physiognomy that its human origin was already obscure. But it still remembered a little English, and was able to converse with Carter in grunts and monosyllables, helped out now and then by the glibbering of ghouls. When it learned that Carter wished to get to the enchanted wood and from there to the city Celephais in Ooth-Nargai beyond the Tarnarian Hills, it seemed rather doubtful; for these ghouls of the waking world do no business in the graveyards of upper dreamland (leaving that to the red-footed wamps that are spawned in dead cities), and many things intervene betwixt their gulf and the enchanted wood, including the terrible kingdom of the Gugs.

The Gugs, hairy and gigantic, once reared stone circles in that wood and made strange sacrifices to the Other Gods and the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep, until one night an abomination of theirs reached the ears of earth's gods and they were banished to caverns below. Only a great trap-door of stone with an iron ring connects the abyss of the earth-ghouls with the enchanted wood, and this the Gugs are afraid to open because of a curse.

That a mortal dreamer could traverse their cavern realm and leave by that door is inconceivable; for mortal dreamers were their former food, and they have legends of the toothsome-ness of such dreamers even though banishment has restricted their diet to the ghastrs, those repulsive beings which die in the light, and which live in the vaults of Zin and leap on long hind legs like kangaroos.

So the ghoul that was Pickman advised Carter either to leave the abyss at Sarkomand, that deserted city in the valley below Leng where black nitrous stairways guarded by winged diarote lions lead down from dreamland to the lower gulfs, or to return through a churchyard to the waking world and begin the quest anew down the seventy steps of light slumber to the cavern of flame and the seven hundred steps to the Gate of Deeper Slumber and the enchanted wood. This, however, did not suit the seeker; for he knew nothing of the way from Leng to Ooth-Nargai, and was likewise reluctant to awake lest he forget all he had so far gained in this dream. It were disastrous to his quest to forget the august and celestial faces of those seamen from the north who traded onyx in Celephais, and who, being the sons of gods, must point the way to the cold waste and Kadath where the Great Ones dwell.

After much persuasion the ghoul consented to guide his guest inside the great wall of the Gugs' kingdom. There was one chance that Carter might be able to steal through that twilight realm of circular stone towers at an hour when the giants would be all gorged and snoring indoors, and reach the central tower with the sign of Koth upon it, which has the stairs leading up to that stone trap door in the enchanted wood. Pickman even consented to lend three ghouls to help with a tombstone lever in raising the stone door; for of ghouls the Gugs are somewhat afraid, and they often flee from their own colossal graveyards when they see them feasting there.

He also advised Carter to disguise as a ghoul himself; shaving the beard he had allowed to grow (for ghouls have none), wallowing naked in the mould to get the correct surface, and loping in the usual slumping way, with his clothing carried in a bundle as if it were a choice morsel from a tomb. They would reach the city of the Gugs — which is coterminous with the whole kingdom — through the proper burrows, emerging in a cemetery not far from the stair-containing Tower of Koth. They must

beware, however, of a large cave near the cemetery; for this is the mouth of the vaults of Zin, and the vindictive ghastrs are always on watch there murderously for those denizens of the upper abyss who hunt and prey on them. The ghastrs try to come out when the Gugs sleep and they attack ghouls as readily as Gugs, for they cannot discriminate. They are very primitive, and eat one another. The Gugs have a sentry at a narrow place in the vaults of Zin, but he is often drowsy and is sometimes surprised by a party of ghastrs. Though ghastrs cannot live in real light, they can endure the grey twilight of the abyss for hours.

So at length Carter crawled through endless burrows with three helpful ghouls bearing the slate gravestone of Col. Nepe-miah Derby, obit 1719, from the Charter Street Burying Ground in Salem. When they came again into open twilight they were in a forest of vast lichened monoliths reaching nearly as high as the eye could see and forming the modest gravestones of the Gugs. On the right of the hole out of which they wriggled, and seen through aisles of monoliths, was a stupendous vista of cyclopean round towers mounting up illimitable into the grey air of inner earth. This was the great city of the Gugs, whose doorways are thirty feet high. Ghouls come here often, for a buried Gug will feed a community for almost a year, and even with the added peril it is better to burrow for Gugs than to bother with the graves of men. Carter now understood the occasional titan bones he had felt beneath him in the vale of Pnoth.

Straight ahead, and just outside the cemetery, rose a sheer perpendicular cliff at whose base an immense and forbidding cavern yawned. This the ghouls told Carter to avoid as much as possible, since it was the entrance to the unhallowed vaults of Zin where Gugs hunt ghastrs in the darkness. And truly, that warning was soon well justified; for the moment a ghoull began to creep toward the towers to see if the hour of the Gugs' resting had been rightly timed, there glowed in the gloom of that great cavern's mouth first one pair of yellowish-red eyes and then another, implying that the Gugs were one sentry less, and that ghastrs have indeed excellent sharpness of smell. So the ghoull returned to the burrow and motioned his companions to be silent. It was best to leave the ghastrs to their own devices, and there was a possibility that they might soon withdraw, since they must naturally be rather tired after coping with a Gug sentry in the black vaults. After a moment something about the size of a small horse hopped

out into the grey twilight, and Carter turned sick at the aspect of that scabrous and unwholesome beast, whose face is so curiously human despite the absence of a nose, a forehead, and other important particulars.

Presently three other ghastrs hopped out to join their fellow, and a ghoul glibbered softly at Carter that their absence of battle-scars was a bad sign. It proved that they had not fought the Gug sentry at all, but had merely slipped past him as he slept, so that their strength and savagery were still unimpaired and would remain so till they had found and disposed of a victim. It was very unpleasant to see those filthy and disproportioned animals which soon numbered about fifteen, grubbing about and making their kangaroo leaps in the grey twilight where titan towers and monoliths arose, but it was still more unpleasant when they spoke among themselves in the coughing gutturals of ghastrs. And yet, horrible as they were, they were not so horrible as what presently came out of the cave after them with disconcerting suddenness.

It was a paw, fully two feet and a half across, and equipped with formidable talons. After it came another paw, and after that a great black-furred arm to which both of the paws were attached by short forearms. Then two pink eyes shone, and the head of the awakened Gug sentry, large as a barrel, wobbled into view. The eyes jutted two inches from each side, shaded by bony protuberances overgrown with coarse hairs. But the head was chiefly terrible because of the mouth. That mouth had great yellow fangs and ran from the top to the bottom of the head, opening vertically instead of horizontally.

But before that unfortunate Gug could emerge from the cave and rise to his full twenty feet, the vindictive ghastrs were upon him. Carter feared for a moment that he would give an alarm and arouse all his kin, till a ghoul softly glibbered that Gugs have no voice, but talk by means of facial expression. The battle which then ensued was truly a frightful one. From all sides the venomous ghastrs rushed feverishly at the creeping Gug, nipping and tearing with their muzzles, and mauling murderously with their hard pointed hooves. All the time they coughed excitedly, screaming when the great vertical mouth of the Gug would occasionally bite into one of their number, so that the noise of the combat would surely have aroused the sleeping city had not the weakening of the sentry begun to transfer the action farther and farther within the cavern. As it was, the tumult soon receded altogether

from sight in the blackness, with only occasional evil echoes to mark its continuance.

Then the most alert of the ghouls gave the signal for all to advance, and Carter followed the loping three out of the forest of monoliths and into the dark noisome streets of that awful city whose rounded towers of cyclopean stone soared up beyond the sight. Silently they shambled over that rough rock pavement, bearing with disgust the abominable muffled snortings from great black doorways which marked the slumber of the Gugs. Apprehensive of the ending of the rest hour, the ghouls set a somewhat rapid pace; but even so the journey was no brief one, for distances in that town of giants are on a great scale. At last, however, they came to a somewhat open space before a tower even vaster than the rest, above whose colossal doorway was fixed a monstrous symbol in bas-relief which made one shudder without knowing its meaning. This was the central tower with the sign of Koth, and those huge stone steps just visible through the dusk within were the beginning of the great flight leading to upper dreamland and the enchanted wood.

There now began a climb of interminable length in utter blackness: made almost impossible by the monstrous size of the steps, which were fashioned by Gugs, and were therefore nearly a yard high. Of their number Carter could form no just estimate, for he soon became so worn out that the tireless and elastic ghouls were forced to aid him. All through the endless climb there lurked the peril of detection and pursuit; for though no Gug dares lift the stone door to the forest because of the Great Ones' curse, there are no such restraints concerning the tower and the steps, and escaped ghouls are often chased, even to the very top. So sharp are the ears of Gugs, that the bare feet and hands of the climbers might readily be heard when the city awoke; and it would of course take but little time for the striding giants, accustomed from their ghoult-hunts in the vaults of Zin to seeing without light, to overtake their smaller and slower quarry on those cyclopean steps. It was very depressing to reflect that the silent pursuing Gugs could not be heard at all, but would come very suddenly and shockingly in the dark upon the climbers. Nor could the traditional fear of Gugs for ghouls be depended upon in that peculiar place where the advantages lay so heavily with the Gugs. There was also some peril from the furtive and venomous ghouls, which frequently hopped up into the tower during the sleep hour

of the Gugs. If the Gugs slept long, and the ghosts returned soon from their deed in the cavern, the scent of the climbers might easily be picked up by those loathsome and ill-disposed things; in which case it would almost be better to be eaten by a Gug.

Then, after aeons of climbing, there came a cough from the darkness above; and matters assumed a very grave and unexpected turn. It was clear that a ghost, or perhaps even more, had strayed into that tower before the coming of Carter and his guides; and it was equally clear that this peril was very close. After a breathless second the leading ghoul pushed Carter to the wall and arranged his kinfolk in the best possible way, with the old slate tombstone raised for a crushing blow whenever the enemy might come in sight. Ghouls can see in the dark, so the party was not as badly off as Carter would have been alone. In another moment the clatter of hooves revealed the downward hopping of at least one beast, and the slab-bearing ghouls poised their weapon for a desperate blow. Presently two yellowish-red eyes flashed into view, and the panting of the ghost became audible above its clattering. As it hopped down to the step just above the ghouls, they wielded the ancient gravestone with prodigious force, so that there was only a wheeze and a choking before the victim collapsed in a noxious heap. There seemed to be only this one animal, and after a moment of listening the ghouls tapped Carter as a signal to proceed again. As before, they were obliged to aid him; and he was glad to leave that place of carnage where the ghost's uncouth remains sprawled invisible in the blackness.

At last the ghouls brought their companion to a halt; and feeling above him, Carter realized that the great stone trap door was reached at last. To open so vast a thing completely was not to be thought of, but the ghouls hoped to get it up just enough to slip the gravestone under as a prop, and permit Carter to escape through the crack. They themselves planned to descend again and return through the city of the Gugs, since their elusiveness was great, and they did not know the way overland to spectral Sarkomand with its lion-guarded gate to the abyss.

Mighty was the straining of those three ghouls at the stone of the door above them, and Carter helped push with as much strength as he had. They judged the edge next the top of the staircase to be the right one, and to this they bent all the force

of their disreputably nourished muscles. After a few moments a crack of light appeared; and Carter, to whom that task had been entrusted, slipped the end of the gravestone in the aperture. There now ensued a mighty heaving; but progress was very slow, and they had of course to return to their first position every time they failed to turn the slab and prop the portal open.

Suddenly their desperation was magnified a thousand fold by a sound on the steps below them. It was only the thumping and rattling of the slain ghaſt's hooved body as it rolled down to lower levels; but of all the possible causes of that body's dilodgment and rolling, none was in the least reassuring. Therefore, knowing the ways of Gugs, the ghouls set to with something of a frenzy; and in a surprisingly short time had the door so high that they were able to hold it still whilst Carter turned the slab and left a generous opening. They now helped Carter through, letting him climb up to their rubbery shoulders and later guiding his feet as he clutched at the blessed soil of the upper dreamland outside. Another second, and they were through themselves, knocking away the gravestone and closing the great trap door while a panting became audible beneath. Because of the Great One's curse no Gug might ever emerge from that portal; so, with a deep relief and sense of repose, Carter lay quietly on the thick grotesque fungi of the enchanted wood while his guides squatted near in the manner that ghouls rest.

Weird as was that enchanted wood through which he had fared so long ago, it was verily a haven and a delight after those gulfs he had now left behind. There was no living denizen about, for Zoogs shun the mysterious door in fear, and Carter at once consulted with his ghouls about their future course. To return through the tower they no longer dared, and the waking world did not appeal to them when they learned that they must pass the priests Nasht and Kaman-Thah in the cavern of flame. So at length they decided to return through Sarkomand and its gate of the abyss, though of how to get there they knew nothing. Carter recalled that it lies in the valley below Leng, and recalled likewise that he had seen in Dylath-Leen a sinister, slant-eyed old merchant reputed to trade on Leng, therefore he advised the ghouls to seek out Dylath-Leen, crossing the fields to Nir and the Skai and following the river to its mouth.

This they at once resolved to do, and lost no time in loping off, since the thickening of the dusk promised a full night ahead for travel. And Carter shook the paws of those repulsive beasts, thanking them for their help and sending his gratitude to the beast which once was Pickman; but could not help sighing with pleasure when they left. For a ghoul is a ghoul, and at best an unpleasant companion for man. After that Carter sought a forest pool and cleansed himself of the mud of nether earth, thereupon reassuming the clothes he had so carefully carried.

It was now night in that redoubtable wood of monstrous trees, but because of the phosphorescence one might travel as well as by day; wherefore Carter set out upon the well-known route toward Celephais, in Ooth-Nargai beyond the Tanarian Hills. And as he went he thought of the zebra he had left tethered to an ash-tree on Ngranek in 'far-away Oriab so many aeons ago, and wondered if any lava-gatherers had fed and released it. And he wondered, too, if he would ever return to Baharna and pay for the zebra that was slain by night in those ancient ruins by Yath's shore, and if the old tavern-keeper would remember him. Such were the thoughts that came to him in the air of the regained upper dreamland.

But presently his progress was halted by a sound from a very large hollow tree. He had avoided the great circle of stones, since he did not care to speak with Zoogs just now; but it appeared from the singular fluttering in that huge tree that important councils were in session elsewhere. Upon drawing nearer he made out the accents of a tense and heated discussion; and before long became conscious of matters which he viewed with the greatest concern. For a war on the cats was under debate in that sovereign assembly of Zoogs. It all came from the loss of the party which had sneaked after Carter to Ulthar, and which the cats had justly punished for unsuitable intentions. The matter had long rankled; and now, or at least within a month, the marshalled Zoogs were about to strike the whole feline tribe in a series of surprise attacks, taking individual cats or groups of cats unawares, and giving not even the myriad cats of Ulthar a proper chance to drill and mobilise. This was the plan of the Zoogs, and Carter saw that he must foil it before leaving upon his mighty quest.

Very quietly therefore did Randolph Carter steal to the edge of the wood and send the cry of the cat over the starlit fields.

And a great grimalkin in a nearby cottage took up the burden and relayed it across leagues of rolling meadow to warriors large and small, black, grey, tiger, white, yellow, and mixed; and it echoed through Nir and beyond the Skai even into Ulthar, and Ulthar's numerous cats called in chorus and fell into a line of march. It was fortunate that the moon was not up, so that all the cats were on earth. Swiftly and silently leaping, they sprang from every hearth and housetop and poured in a great furry sea across the plains to the edge of the wood. Carter was there to greet them, and the sight of shapely, wholesome cats was indeed good for his eyes after the things he had seen and walked with in the abyss. He was glad to see his venerable friend and one-time rescuer at the head of Ulthar's detachment, a collar of rank around his sleek neck, and whiskers bristling at a martial angle. Better still, as a sub-lieutenant in that army was a brisk young fellow who proved to be none other than the very little kitten at the inn to whom Carter had given a saucer of rich cream on that long-vanished morning in Ulthar. He was a strapping and promising cat now, and purred as he shook hands with his friend. His grandfather said he was doing very well in the army, and that he might well expect a captaincy after one more campaign.

Carter now outlined the peril of the cat tribe, and was rewarded by deep-throated purrs of gratitude from all sides. Consulting with the generals, he prepared a plan of instant action which involved marching at once upon the Zoog council and other known strongholds of Zoogs; forstalling their surprise attacks and forcing them to terms before the mobilisation of their army of invasion. Thereupon, without a moment's loss, that great ocean of cats flooded the enchanted wood and surged around the council tree and the great stone circle. Flutterings rose to panic pitch as the enemy saw the newcomers and there was very little resistance among the furtive and curious brown Zoogs. They saw that they were beaten in advance, and turned from thoughts of vengeance to thoughts of present self-preservation.

Half the cats seated themselves in a circular formation with the captured Zoogs in the centre, leaving open a lane down which were marched the additional captives rounded up by the other cats in other parts of the wood. Terms were discussed at length, Carter acting as interpreter, and it was decided that

the Zoogs might remain a free tribe on condition of rendering to the cats a large tribute of grouse, quail, and pheasants from the less fabulous parts of their forest. Twelve young Zoogs of noble families were taken as hostages to be kept in the temple of Cats at Ulthar, and the victors made it plain that any disappearances of cats on the borders of the Zoog domain **would** be followed by consequences highly disastrous to Zoogs. These matters disposed of, the assembled cats broke ranks and permitted the Zoogs to slink off one by one to their respective homes, which they hastened to do with many a sullen backward glance.

The old cat general now offered Carter an escort through the forest to whatever border he wished to reach, deeming it likely that the Zoogs would harbour dire resentment against him for the frustration of their warlike enterprise. This offer he welcomed with gratitude; not only for the safety it afforded, but because he liked the graceful companionship of cats. So in the midst of a pleasant and playful regiment, relaxed after the successful performance of its duty, Randolph Carter walked with dignity through that enchanted and phosphorescent wood of titan trees, talking of his quest with the old general and his grandson whilst others of the band indulged in fantastic gambols or chased fallen leaves that the wind drove among the fungi of that primeval floor. And the old cat said that he had heard much of unknown Kadath in the cold waste, but did not know where it was. As for the marvellous sunset city, he had not even heard of that, but would gladly relay to Carter anything he might later learn.

He gave the seeker some passwords of great value among the cats of dreamland, and commended him especially to the old chief of the cats in Celephais, whither he was bound. That old cat, already slightly known to Carter, was a dignified maltese; and would prove highly influential in any transaction. It was dawn when they came to the proper edge of the wood, and Carter bade his friends a reluctant farewell. The young sub-lieutenant he had met as a small kitten would have followed him had not the old general forbidden it, but that austere patriarch insisted that the path of duty lay with the tribe and the army. So Carter set out alone over the golden fields that stretched mysterious beside a willow-fringed river, and the cats went back into the wood.

Well did the traveller know those garden lands that lie betwixt the wood of the Cerenerian Sea, and blithely did he fol-

low the singing river Oukranos that marked his course. The sun rose higher over gentle slopes of grove and lawn, and heightened the colours of the thousand flowers that starred each knoll and dingle. A blessed haze lies upon all this region, wherein is held a little more of the sunlight than other places hold, and a little more of the summer's humming music of birds and bees; so that men walk through it as through a faery place, and feel greater joy and wonder than they ever afterward remember.

By noon Carter reached the jasper terraces of Kiran which slope down to the river's edge and bear that temple of loveliness wherein the King of Ilek-Vad comes from his far realm on the twilight sea once a year in a golden palanquin to pray to the god of Oupkanos, who sang to him in youth when he dwelt in a cottage by its banks. All of jasper is that temple, and covering an acre of ground with its walls and courts, its seven pinnacled towers, and its inner shrine where the river enters through hidden channels and the god sings softly in the night. Many times the moon hears strange music as it shines on those courts and terraces and pinnacles, but whether that music be the song of the god or the chant of the cryptical priests, none but the King of Ilek-Vad may say; for only he had entered the temple or seen the priests. Now, in the drowsiness of day, that carven and delicate fane was silent, and Carter heard only the murmur of the great stream and the hum of the birds and bees as he walked onward under an enchanted sun.

All that afternoon the pilgrim wandered on through perfumed meadows and in the lee of gentle riverward hills bearing peaceful thatched cottages and the thrones of amiable gods carven from jasper or chrysoberyl. Sometimes he walked close to the bank of Oukranos and whistled to the sprightly and iridescent fish of that crystal stream and at other times he paused amidst the whispering rushes and gazed at the great dark wood on the farther side, whose trees came down clear to the water's edge. In the former dreams he had seen quaint lumbering buo-poths come shyly out of that wood to drink, but now he could not glimpse any. Once in a while he paused to watch a carnivorous fish catch a fishing bird, which it lured to the water by showing its tempting scales in the sun, and grasped by the beak its enormous mouth as the winged hunter sought to dart down upon it.

Toward evening he mounted a low grassy rise and saw before

him flaming in the sunset the thousand gilded spires of Thran. Lofty beyond belief are the alabaster walls of that incredible city, sloping inward toward the top and wrought in one solid piece by what means no man knows, for they are more ancient than memory. Yet lofty as they are with their hundred gates and two hundred turrets, the clustered towers within, all white beneath their golden spires, are loftier still; so that men on the plain around see them soaring into the sky, sometimes caught at the top in tangles of cloud and mist, and sometimes clouded lower down with their utmost pinnacles blazing free above the vapours. And where Thran's gates open on the river are great wharves of marble, with ornate galleons of fragrant cedar and calamander riding gently at anchor, and strange bearded sailors sitting on casks and bales with the hieroglyphs of far places. Landward beyond the walls lies the farm country, where small white cottages dream between little hills, and narrow roads with many stone bridges wind gracefully among streams and gardens.

Down through this verdant land Carter walked at evening, and saw twilight float up from the river to the marvellous golden spires of Thran. And just at the hour of dusk he came to the southern gate, and was stopped by a red-robed sentry till he had told three dreams beyond belief, and proved himself a dreamer worthy to walk up Thran's steep mysterious streets and linger in the bazaars where the wares of the ornate galleons were sold. Then into that incredible city he walked; through a wall so thick that the gate was a tunnel, and thereafter amidst curved and undulant ways winding deep and narrow between the heavenward towers. Lights shone through grated and balconied windows, and the sound of lutes and pipes stole timid from inner courts where marble fountains bubbled. Carter knew his way, and edged down through darker streets to the river, where at an old sea tavern he found the captains and seamen he had known in myriad other dreams. There he bought his passage to Celephais on a great green galleon, and there he stopped for the night after speaking gravely to the venerable cat of that inn, who blinked dozing before an enormous hearth and dreamed of old wars and forgotten gods.

In the morning Carter boarded the galleon bound for Celephais, and sat in the prow as the ropes were cast off and the long sail down to the Cerenerian Sea begun. For many leagues

the banks were much as they were above Thran, with now and then a curious temple rising on the farther hills toward the right, and a drowsy village on the shore, with steep red roofs and nets spread in the sun. Mindful of his search, Carter questioned all the mariners closely about those whom they had met in the taverns of Celephais, asking the names and ways of the strange men with long, narrow eyes, long-lobed ears, thin noses, and pointed chins who came in dark ships from the north and traded onyx for the carved jade and spun gold and little red singing birds of Celephais. Of these men the sailors knew not much, save that they talked but seldom and spread a kind of awe about them.

Their land, very far away, was called Inquanok, and not many people cared to go thither because it was a cold twilight land, and said to be close to unpleasant Leng; although high impassable mountains towered on the sides where Leng was thought to lie, so that none might say whether this evil plateau with its horrible stone villages and unmentionable monastery were really there, or whether the rumour were only a fear that timid people felt in the night when those formidable barrier peaks loomed black against a rising moon. Certainly, men reached Leng from very different oceans. Of other boundaries of Inquanok those sailors had no notion, nor had they heard of the cold waste and unknown Kadath save from vague unplaced report. And of the marvellous sunset city which Carter sought, they knew nothing at all. So the traveller asked no more of far things, but bided his time till he might talk with those strange men from cold and twilight Inquanok who are the seed of such gods as carved their features on Ngranek.

Late in the day the galleon reached those bends of the river which traverse the perfumed jungles of Kled. Here Carter wished he might disembark, for in those tropic tangles sleep wondrous palaces of ivory, lone and unbroken, where once dwelt fabulous monarchs of a land whose name is forgotten. Spells of the Elder Ones keep those places unharmed and undecayed, for it is written that there may one day be need of them again; and elephant caravans have glimpsed them from afar by moonlight, though none dares approach them closely because of the guardians to which their wholeness is due. But the ship went on, and dusk hushed the hum of the day, and the first stars above blinked answers to the early fireflies on the banks

as that jungle fell far behind, leaving only its fragrance as a memory that it had been. And all through the night that galleon floated on past mysteries unseen and unsuspected. Once a lookout reported fires on the hills to the east, but the sleepy Captain said they had better not be looked at too much, since it was highly uncertain just who or what had lit them.

In the morning the river had broadened out greatly, and Carter saw by the houses along the banks that they were close to the vast trading city of Hlanith on the Cerenerian Sea. Here the walls are of rugged granite, and the houses peakedly fantastic with beamed and plastered gables. The men of Hlanith are more like those of the waking world than any others in dream-land; so that the city is not sought except for barter, but is prized for the solid work of its artisans. The wharves of Hlanith are of oak, and there the galleon made fast while the captain traded in the taverns. Carter also went ashore, and looked curiously upon the rutted streets where wooden ox carts lumbered and feverish merchants cried their wares vacuously in the bazaars. The sea taverns were all close to the wharves on cobbled lanes salted with the spray of high tides, and seemed exceedingly ancient with their low black-beamed ceilings and casements of greenish bull's-eye panes. Ancient sailors in those taverns talked much of distant ports, and told many stories of the curious men from twilight Inquanok, but had little to add to what the seamen of the galleon had told. Then at last, after much unloading and loading, the ship set sail once more over the sunset sea, and the high walls and gables of Hlanith grew less as the last golden light of day lent them a wonder and beauty beyond that men had given them.

Two nights and two days the galleon sailed over the Cerenerian Sea, sighting no land and speaking but one other vessel. Then near sunset of the second day there loomed up ahead the snowy peak of Aran with its gingko-trees swaying on the lower slope, and Carter knew that they were come to the land of Ooth-Nargai and the marvellous city of Celephais. Swiftly there came into sight the glittering minarets of that fabulous town, and the untarnished marble walls with their bronze statues, and the great stone bridge where Naraxa joins the sea. Then rose the green gentle hills behind the town, with their groves and gardens of asphodels and the small shrines and cottages upon them; and far in the background the purple ridge of the Tanarians, potent

and mystical, behind which lay forbidden ways into the waking world and toward other regions of dream.

The harbour was full of painted galleys, some of which were from the marble cloud-city of Serannian, that lies in ethereal space beyond where the sea meets the sky, and some of which were from more substantial parts of dreamland. Among these the steersman threaded his way up to the spice-fragrant wharves, where the galleon made fast in the dusk as the city's million lights began to twinkle out over the water. Ever new seemed this deathless city of vision, for here time has no power to tarnish or destroy. As it has always been is still the turquoise of Nath-Horthath, and the eighty orchid-wreathed priests are the same who builded it ten thousand years ago. Shining still is the bronze of the great gates, nor are the onyx pavements ever worn or broken. And the great bronze statues on the walls look down on merchants and camel drivers older than fable, yet without one grey hair in their forked beards.

Carter did not at once seek out the temple or the palace or the citadel, but stayed by the seaward wall among traders and sailors. And when it was late for rumours and legends he sought out an ancient tavern he knew well, and rested with dreams of the gods on unknown Kadath whom he sought. The next day he searched all along the quays for some of the strange mariners of Inquanok, but was told that none were now in port, their galley not being due from the north for full two weeks. He found, however, one Thorabonian sailor who had been to Inquanok and had worked in the onyx quarries of that twilight place; and this sailor said there was certainly a descent to the north of the peopled region, which everybody seemed to fear and shun. The Thorabonian opined that this desert led around the utmost rim of impassable peaks into Leng's horrible plateau, and that this was why men feared it; though he admitted there were other vague tales of evil presences and nameless sentinels. Whether or not this could be the fabled waste wherein unknown Kadath stands he did not know; but it seemed unlikely that those presences and sentinels, if indeed they existed, were stationed for nought.

On the following day Carter walked up the Street of the Pillars to the turquoise temple and talked with the High Priest. Though Nath-Horthath is chiefly worshipped in Celephais, all the Great Ones are mentioned in diurnal prayers; and the priest

was reasonably versed in their moods. Like Atal in distant Ulthar, he strongly advised against any attempts to see them; declaring that they are testy and capricious, and subject to strange protection from the mindless Other Gods from Outside, whose soul and messenger is the crawling chaos, Nyarlathotep. Their jealous hiding of the marvellous sunset city showed clearly that they did not wish Carter to reach it, and it was doubtful how they would regard a guest whose object was to see them and plead before them. No man had ever found Kadath in the past, and it might be just as well if none ever found it in the future. Such rumours as were told about that onyx castle of the Great Ones were not by any means reassuring.

Having thanked the orchid-crowned High Priest, Carter left the temple and sought out the bazaar of the sheep-butchers, where the old chief of Celephais' cats dwelt sleek and contented. That grey and dignified being was sunning himself on the onyx pavement, and extended a languid paw as his caller approached. But when Carter repeated the passwords and introductions furnished him by the old cat general of Ulthar, the furry patriarch became very cordial and communicative; and told much of the secret lore known to cats on the seaward slopes of Ooth-Nargai. Best of all, he repeated several things told him furtively by the timid waterfront cats of Celephais about the men of Inquanok, on whose dark ships no cat will go.

It seems that these men have an aura not of earth about them, though that is not the reason why no cat will sail on their ships. The reason for this is that Inquanok holds shadows which no cat can endure, so that in all that cold twilight realm there is never a cheering purr or a homely mew. Whether it be because of things wafted over the impassable peaks from hypothetical Leng, or because of things filtering down from the chilly desert to the north, none may say; but it remains a fact that in that far land there broods a hint of outer space which cats do not like, and to which they are more sensitive than men. Therefore they will not go on the dark ships that seek the basalt of Inquanok.

The old chief of the cats also told him where to find his friend King Kuranos, who in Carter's latter dreams had reigned alternately in the rose-crystal Palace of the Seventy Delights at Celephais and in the turreted cloud-castle of sky-floating Serannian. It seemed that he could no more find content in those places,

but had formed a mighty longing for the English cliffs and downlands of his boyhood; where in little dreaming villages England's old songs hover at evening behind lattice windows, and where grey church towers peep lovely through the verdure of distant valleys. He could not go back to these things in the waking world because his body was dead; but he had done the next best thing and dreamed a small tract of such countryside in the region east of the city where meadows roll gracefully up from the sea-cliffs to the foot of the Tanarian Hills. There he dwelt in a grey Gothic manor-house of stone looking on the sea, and tried to think it was ancient Trevor Towers, where he was born and where thirteen generations of his forefathers had first seen the light. And on the coast nearby he had built a little Cornish fishing village with steep cobbled ways, settling therein such people as had the most English faces, and seeking ever to teach them the dear remembered accents of old Cornish fishers. And in a valley not far off he had reared a great Norman Abbey whose tower he could see from his window, placing around it in the churchyard grey stones with the names of his ancestors carved thereon, and with a moss somewhat like Old England's moss. For though Kuranos was a monarch in the land of dream, with all imagined pomps and marvels, splendours and beauties, ecstasies and delights, novelties and excitements at his command, he would gladly have resigned for ever the whole of his power and luxury and freedom for one blessed day as a simple boy in that pure and quiet England, that ancient, beloved England which had moulded his being and of which he must always be immutably a part.

(to be continued)

BOOKS OF THE QUARTER

GHOSTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

NOT EXACTLY GHOSTS, by Sir Andrew Caldecott. Longmans, Green & Company, New York. 213 pages, \$2.50.

THE TRAVELING GRAVE AND OTHER STORIES, by L. P. Hartley. Arkham House, Sauk City, Wisconsin. 235 pages, \$3.00.

GHOSTS IN IRISH HOUSES, by James Reynolds. Creative Age Press, New York. 283 pages, with illustrations. \$12.00.

It has often and repeatedly been said that the English have a way with ghosts in their fictions which quite escapes most American practitioners of the art. Despite such occasional approaches to the English manner as those made by the late Edith Wharton, I am inclined to think that the statement is not subject to dispute. Perhaps there is reason for it, as adduced by Mr. Reynolds in his book of true ghost stories, in that the British, as a people, have lived among ghosts for so long that their perspective may be said to be the superior to ours.

But quite apart from this propinquity, there is a writing knack which American writers cannot imitate or, on the whole, equal. This may well rise from the fact that the British public, taken as a whole, relishes a good ghost story well told, and the vast majority of the American public holds itself aloof from all such fictions with a kind of unwarranted superiority which is the mark of the amateur in literature, the one who has not yet developed a sense or feeling for good work regardless of its genre. Sir Andrew Caldecott's collection of stories illustrates very well that flair for the telling of macabre stories which is peculiarly British.

His collection is not, precisely speaking, of ghost stories. This is so, however, only in the sense that you do not actually meet ghosts face to face, for they are there, no doubt of it, and one knows very well that the disquieting events which occur in these stories are maneuvered from another than this terrestrial plane. The psychic force which occupied that locked chamber in *A Room in a Rectory* and the peculiar disarrangement of time and place in *Branch Line to Benceston*, no less than the events of the other ten tales which go to make up this volume are clearly motivated by a supernatural hand of one kind or another. The telling of these stories is in the tradition of J. Sheridan LeFanu and M. R. James, a venerable tradition and certainly one of the

best. Moreover, the stories have that quality, so delightful in a ghost story, of lingering insistently in mind long after the book has been shut and shelved. This many a reader will reflect, also distinguishes many of the stories of LeFanu, James, Wakefield, and Dean R. H. Malden.

Mr. L. P. Hartley is not in this tradition, however. That is not to say that he is not quite as good, but only to suggest that his is a more recently tapped vein, for his stories are quite as likely to linger in your mind for a good long time. This is especially true of such a well-known tale as that of the dead man's vengeance which is *A Visitor From Down Under*, perhaps the most anthologized tale in the book, and the horror story, *Podolo*, which proceeds with such casualness that its shock comes with double effect upon the unsuspecting reader.

The stories in this book include a delightful fantasy which is in effect also a satire on fairy tales, though told "straight," and also two tales of crime which, because they are told so skillfully and with such emphasis on atmosphere and suspense, quite properly belong in this collection. Mr. Hartley is manifestly particularly fond of the theme of the return of the dead, not necessarily in ghostly form, but in corpse-form, for this theme occurs in fully a third of the tales here represented. But each time it is handled so subtly and well, that one does not mind the repetition of theme. Indeed, the whole collection has an excellent unity, for all that it was selected in part from two earlier books published in England alone, NIGHT FEARS and THE KILLING BOTTLE, and among unpublished manuscripts.

Mr. Hartley's book can be recommended especially to those readers who like to be led casually into a setting and story and brought up short, face to face with terror and horror. Mr. Hartley succeeds in doing this time after time, and doing it so well that I cannot offhand think of any other contemporary writer who manages this effect quite so memorably. The title story, *The Island*, *The Thought*, and others—all are such dramatic stories, and those *aficionados* to whom Mr. Hartley's work is new have a treat in store for them.

Mr. Reynolds' book is perhaps the handsomest volume in the genre that we have ever come upon. For one thing, it is beautifully printed and bound; for another, it is richly illustrated, not only with drawings in black and white by Mr. Reynolds, but in full color plates by the same author-artist; for yet another,

it has a striking end-paper map—the first map of ghostland we can remember seeing. The book is a compilation of true ghost stories of Ireland, as melodramatic and unforgettable a lot as any reader is likely to come upon in many moons.

Mr. Reynolds tells his “true” tales without striving for any particularly dramatic effect, and perhaps because he does so he achieves so notably dramatic an impact. But, of course, one must reflect that his work is so tastefully presented that it attracts eye and ear, which goes to help Mr. Reynolds achieve his effect. The simplicity and directness of these stories will help them to linger, and even the reader who, as a rule, scorns the “true” tale of the spectral will find many things to enjoy in this book, among the tales of *The Weeping Wall* and *The Bridal Barge of Aran Roe*, *The Bloody Stones of Kerrigan’s Keep* and *Red Eva’s Lepp*, and all the others.

The introduction is by Padraic Colum, and the preface by the author, who says that he spent many years looking for the material which went into this fine book. Like its predecessors reviewed here, Mr. Reynolds’ book can be recommended without reservation to all lovers of the weird and macabre.

THE MACABRE IN PICTURES

ADDAMS AND EVIL, by Charles Addams. Introduction by Wolcott Gibbs. Random House, New York. \$2.75.

WHAT AM I DOING HERE? by Abner Dean. Introduction by Clifton Fadiman. Simon & Schuster, New York. \$3.00.

Lovers of the outre in cartoons will not need to be introduced to Charles Addams, whose first book, *DRAWN AND QUARTERED*, was recently made available in a pocket-book. *ADDAMS AND EVIL* is another book of cartoons, many of them featuring the peculiar Addams people—the vampire, the ghoul, the changeling, the Frankenstein monster. Readers of the macabre in fiction will delight in these morbid pictures, which are far more closely related to the fiction in *Weird Tales*, for example, than to the customary contents of *The New Yorker*, in which most of them initially appeared.

Mr. Dean’s work is likewise *sui generis*. Mr. Fadiman comes closest to explaining him when he writes, “His pictures are trick mirrors in which we catch sight of those absurd fragments of ourselves that we never see in the smooth glass of habit. . . . It jolts you into sudden awareness of your own pathos,

your own plight, your own unending and gigantic laughableness." Mr. Dean's hero is a naked little man running aimlessly about among other naked men and women, all engaged in various conventional and/or stupid habit-patterns which symbolize the frustration and hopelessness afflicting most sensitive people in this machine age, in which time and events seem to move with ever more rapid pace toward an increasingly uncertain destination.

The result of Mr. Dean's work—as in his earlier book, *IT'S A LONG WAY TO HEAVEN*, published two years ago—is an element of profound disturbance, because, however absurd Mr. Dean's little man is, there are moments beyond denial when you recognize yourself in him. The pictures are frankly psychiatric representations; they represent translations into visible terms of states of mind, particularly those interval states between convictions, fleeting consciousness of guilt, of inadequacy, of loneliness, despair, frustration, personal lack of some kind or other, of being lost or isolated, of being apart from other people, and the like. They are stark and dramatic pictures, guaranteed to linger on the rim of awareness for a long time.

Both books are well worth owning, well worth returning to after an initial reading. Quite apart from their special interest, they are the two best books of cartoons published during the calendar year of 1947.

—AUGUST DERLETH

TOP-NOTCH SCIENCE-FICTION

THE KEY TO THE GREAT GATE, by Hinko Gottlieb. Simon and Schuster, New York. \$2.75.

THE LOST CAVERN AND OTHER STORIES OF THE FANTASTIC, by H. F. Heard. Vanguard Press, New York. \$3.00.

STRANGE PORTS OF CALL: 20 MASTERPIECES OF SCIENCE-FICTION, edited by August Derleth. Pellegrini & Cudahy, New York. \$4.00.

A TREASURY OF SCIENCE-FICTION, edited by Groff Conklin. Crown Publishers, New York. \$3.00.

THE WORLD OF NULL-A, by A. E. Van Vogt. Simon and Schuster, New York. \$2.50.

Any temperate consideration of these five books, all going under the label of science-fiction, suggests that August Derleth is right when he mentions in his introduction to his anthology that many of the most vocal adherents of the genre "do not themselves seem to know how to define it." I suspect on the basis of his anthology, though he cannot by any stretch of the imag-

ination be called one of the vocal adherents, that August Derleth is not any more sure than any other writer or anthologist, even though he sets forth as a definition "all imaginative fiction which grows out of scientific concepts," which is broad enough to include a very large body of work.

Mr. Gottlieb's fine little novel strikes me as one of the best things in science-fiction for decades. It is manifestly not offered as a "science-fiction novel" but as an exercise in the imagination which has certain definite allegorical meanings which do not in any way interfere with the narrative. It is the story of one Tarnopolski, a scientist, who is imprisoned by the Nazis in a cell with a rabbi, a lawyer, and the narrator. Tarnopolski embarks on an adventure which turns the novel into a delightful Gulliveresque allegory of man's search for freedom, because Tarnopolski has mastered the expansion and contraction of space, and he promptly begins to do strange and wonderful things in his cell before he walks out of it.

It is impossible to convey the actual flavor of this novel. Certainly it is excellent science-fiction; it is also fantasy, but then, August Derleth holds that all science-fiction is but a branch of fantasy; perhaps so. The book is also illustrated in a fashion designed to complement the spirit of the story. Though it may not come to the attention of addicts by way of the ordinary channels, this fine novel ought not to be neglected.

I am a little hard put to it to know what to say of H. F. Heard's second collection of stories. Actually there are four novelettes in his new book, two of them straight fantasy—about a haunted chapel and a horrible ritual cup—and two are science-fiction, the title story concerning the strange inhabitants of an extinct volcano, and *The Thaw Plan* telling a pair of related stories about the future of earth, begun with a plan to thaw the snow and ice at the poles. Mr. Heard has an enviable reputation among writers of stories in the genre, however minor his position may be among the elect, because his stories have primarily an intellectual appeal, and he is not concerned how much time or space he takes in which to tell any given story.

The result is not always happy. *The Thaw Plan*, which was originally published as a detective story—of all things!—is loosely written and poorly constructed, though intrinsically it offers the most interesting theme of the four in this book. What ought to be said, perhaps, comes down to this: a) readers who

do not mind Mr. Heard's prolixity and who enjoy his philosophy, should certainly not pass by this book; b) those who expect a book as good as THE GREAT FOG AND OTHER WEIRD TALES are likely to be disappointed.

I would assume on the basis of available evidence of the present popularity of such collections, that all *aficionados* will want to own the two anthologies newly published in the genre. Both are good collections, though Mr. Derleth has set out to produce a collection of science-fiction which has literary value, and Mr. Conklin has not any primary concern with literary value as such, but is interested principally in story readability as apart from good writing. While the majority of the stories in Mr. Derleth's anthology are excellently-written and intelligently-told, not all are; while the majority of the stories in Mr. Conklin's collection are not particularly well-written, in some of them there is very definite literary value.

Probably because of the literary value of the stories in STRANGE PORTS OF CALL is so markedly uneven, some readers will take issue with Mr. Derleth's decisions. All his selections are good stories; one is delighted to find available again H. P. Lovecraft's complete novel, *At the Mountains of Madness*, and Nelson Bond's memorable creation allegory, *The Cunning of the Beast*; one is pleased to find here Ray Bradbury's *The Million Year Picnic*, Philip Wylie's *Blunder*, and Theodore Sturgeon's *Thunder and Roses*, but what, one must ask, is Henry Kuttner's *Call Him Demon*, or George Allan England's *The Thing from Outside* doing here? Surely these stories are primarily fantastic fiction as apart from science-fiction? Good tales, surely; one does not dispute that, but science-fiction?

But the inclusion of such tales as Lard Dunsany's *Mars on the Ether*, Howard Wandrei's *The God-Box*, Donald Wandrei's *The Crystal Bullet*, and Harry S. Keeler's *John Jones' Dollar*, as provocative an essay into mathematics as was ever written, is enough to overbalance this anthology on the side of science-fiction. On the other hand, Mr. Conklin's thirty tales include among them two notable examples of the best in science-fiction—H. F. Heard's *The Great Fog*, and Lewis Padgett's *Mimsy Were the Borogoves*, which previously found Mr. Derleth's favor also, appearing in his anthology, THE NIGHT SIDE. For the rest of Mr. Conklin's selections, they are all good, readable

tales which most science-fiction fans will take much pleasure in finding once again in print.

For, like the tales in Mr. Derleth's anthology, most of those in Mr. Conklin's have long been out of print and unavailable to the *aficianado*. Mr. Conklin has divided his thirty tales into groups under such heads as "Atom and After", "Wonders of the Earth," "Superscience of Man," "Dangerous Inventions," "Adventures in Dimension," "From Outer Space," and "Far Traveling." Among his selections are such fine tales as Chan Davis's *Nightmare*, P. Schuyler Miller's *Chrysalis*, Jack Williamson's *With Folded Hands*, Raymond F. Jones' *Person from Porlock*, Murray Leinster's *Ethical Equations*, and Clifford D. Simak's *Tools*. Also represented are L. Sprague deCamp, C. L. Moore, Cleve Cartmill, Malcolm Jameson, D. D. Sharp, A. E. Van Vogt, Robert A. Heinlein, Polton Cross, Robert Moore Williams, and Lester del Ray. There is a great deal of variety in this book, even if it does not approximate the skillful arrangement of the stories in *STRANGE PORTS OF CALL*, begun with an allegory on the creation, and ended with the destruction of earth. Both anthologies can be recommended as successful anthologies within their self-imposed limitations.

Mr. A. E. Van Vogt's *THE WORLD OF NULL-A*, at first announced by Arkham House but released to Simon and Schuster so that publishing house could inaugurate a projected series of science-fiction novels with it, is in a class by itself. Mr. Van Vogt seems to be hopelessly enamoured of one basic pattern in his novels, such as I have seen. He is the swashbuckling adventure-story writer in terms of contemporary science-fiction gambits; except that he cannot write as well, as he is a science-fiction Rafael Sabatini.

One must concede at once that he always tells an interesting story, one with plenty of movement and action, and there is always sufficient science-fiction jargon to appease the initiate. But, stripped of the science-fiction trappings, Mr. Van Vogt's novels fall inevitably into the same classification as those of any writer of adventure stories. There is the conventional hero, the heroine, the plot and the ultimate victory. Gilbert Gosseyn of *THE WORLD OF NULL-A* is a challenging hero, it is true, for he exists on three planes, being three people at once—past,

present, and future Gilbert Gosseyn. It is he who is destined to save his world from the plotters, the world of the Machine, which rules everything with justice and rigid truth. He speedily gets killed, is reincarnated and carries on on Venus against the galactic gang he has been chosen to fight.

Once one accepts the fact that Mr. Van Vogt is no science-fiction giant but merely a teller of interesting tales—and that in itself is an achievement, surely—one can settle down to enjoy a rousing, swashbuckling adventure tale in the genre of science-fiction. That is what *SLAN* was; that is what *THE WORLD OF NULL-A* is, and thousands of readers are going to like it with all the enthusiasm they have lavished on Edgar Rice Burroughs and A. Merritt.

—JOHN HALEY

· *DELIVER US FROM EVIL*

THE BOOK OF PTATH, by A. E. Van Vogt. Fantasy Press, \$3.00.

CARNACKI, THE GHOST-FINDER, by William Hope Hodgson. Arkham House, \$3.00.

Once upon a time there was a handsome young American (of good clean Aryan stock, naturally) who, for reasons never quite explained, was suddenly transported to another world. Here he encountered many marvels. He flew across strange continents on the back of a winged monster. He met people who had the ability to read minds and even change bodies at will. There was a mysterious prophecy about his coming, and although he was a prisoner at first, he battled his way to the top of the Empire. During the course of his thrilling adventures, he fell in with a beautiful Princess (good) and a beautiful High Priestess (evil)

Does the above narrative sound vaguely familiar? Readers of Edgar Rice Burroughs' Martian and Pellucidar books of thirty years ago should have no difficulty recognizing the plot, characters, and situations. The same holds true for younger fantasy addicts who have applied themselves to any of hundreds of pulp tales based on this formula. But for some strange reason the Fantasy Press blurbists are either totally unfamiliar with their field or else find it diplomatic to ignore the facts when they blurb A. E. Van Vogt's novel, "Here is something new in the realm of imaginative fiction . . . written to delight and entertain seekers of the unusual . . . so vast is the sweep of Van Vogt's imagination that he has had to create a brand new world."

Although this reviewer has a great deal of personal respect for Van Vogt's efforts in his chosen field of science-fiction, it is necessary to record that *THE BOOK OF PTATH* is in almost every facet a duplication of the familiar Burroughs romance of "other worlds." The narrative is laid in the far-distant future when the earth's continents have completely re-formed, but presumably everyone still converses in good old hack *cliche* English, despite the usual sprinkling of exotic proper nouns beginning with "Zh" and "Pt". And, notwithstanding the "mind-staggering" (sic.) changes in geography, zoology, science, and technology, one finds the same weary H. Rider Haggard "priestcraft" in power, with the usual "princes" and "armies" and "peasants". No attention is paid to the economic situation or the daily life of ordinary citizens; only the nobility figure as characters, with the exception of a few stooges. One finds neither the cosmic vision of a Stapledon nor the clinical observation of Aldous Huxley's *BRAVE NEW WORLD*. There is only the spectacle of stock characters parading through stock situations, despite much talk of cryptic "mysterious forces" which are left conveniently unexplained.

As a run-of-the-mill adventure story for boys between 12 and 16, this can be recommended; it has no appeal for adult readers, who will find themselves much happier with Van Vogt's science-fiction.

Turning from *THE BOOK OF PTATH* to *CARNACKI, THE GHOST-FINDER*, is like turning from one pattern to another. Burroughs is still very much alive and may take whatever umbrage he sees fit to take from *THE BOOK OF PTATH*, but Arthur Conan Doyle is dead and has no recourse but to revolve in his grave when he considers the Hodgson version of the Sherlock Holmes pattern. For Hodgson's Carnacki, the psychic investigator, is a sort of Holmes watered down with ectoplasm. Sherlock, as all good Holmesians know, was a bit of an oral sadist, forever teasing and browbeating and belittling poor Watson. At times he withheld information from him and openly tricked him. Even the most ardent devotee of the Master is apt to deplore his irritating mannerisms and his rather smug complacency and superiority.

But Carnacki can give the maestro of 221-B cards and spades when it comes to rudeness, presumptuousness and conceit. Holmes as least was willing to let Watson in on a good thing—"Come,

Watson, the game's afoot!"—but do you think Carnacki gives anyone a peek at what he's up to? Not on your life! After a case is closed, he issues a brusque and formal invitation to a few sycophants for dinner, feeds them, and then sits back and launches upon a monologue in which he triumphantly describes how he solved a mystery in the field of psychic research. Once he concludes, he regally dismisses his listeners. That is the routine structure of the individual tales in this Hodgson collection.

A more irritating specimen of hero is difficult to imagine, but it is to Hodgson's credit that his stories of ghost-hunting rise above the unsympathetic characterization. With the exception of a long, metaphysical *tour-de-force*, *The Hog*, the element of suspense in the tales is based upon an "is he or isn't he?" formula. That is to say, the reader is left in doubt until the last moment as to whether a ghost or a mundane trickster is responsible for the phenomena. The explanations are ingenious enough to keep Carnacki's guests coming back for more, despite the rudeness of their host, and the same fascination will undoubtedly grip the reader interested in tales of haunts and hauntings.

Perhaps we are becoming a bit jaded and crotchety—whatever the cause, we cannot help but come away from these two efforts with a pious prayer that future fantasy writers deliver us from evil high-priestesses, symbols of cosmic power, eccentric detectives, mysterious rappings in empty rooms, and the haunting conviction that we've read it all somewhere before.

—ROBERT BLOCH

SHORT NOTICES

THE LURKING FEAR AND OTHER STORIES, by H. P. Lovecraft. Avon Book Company, New York. 223 pages, \$.25. This most recent pocket-book collection of Lovecraft stories brings back into print several of the titles which have not been available since the two Arkham House omnibuses went out of print. Fanciers of the weird and terrible will need no urging to add this book to their shelves. It contains *The Lurking Fear*, *The Colour Out of Space*, *The Nameless City*, *Pickman's Model*, *Arthur Jermyn*, *The Unnamable*, *The Call of Cthulhu*, *The Moon-Bog*, *Cool Air*, *The Shunned House*.

PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES OF FAMOUS PEOPLE, by Sylvan Muldoon. Aries Press, Chicago. 201 pages, \$2.10. Various volumes of such experiences of these have been offered the reading public in the past few years. The present collection is more or less a summing-up; many of the accounts are retold from earlier publications, some are summarized, some few new accounts are added. It is not a major book of its kind, but it does present some challenging adventures in its accounts of spectres, telepathic messages, and the like experienced by famous people, among them: Sir Harry Lauder, Arthur Schopenhauer, Louis Adamic, Ignace Paderewski, Joan Crawford, David Belasco, George Washington, and so on. Those readers who are interested in this kind of book may quite readily find much provocative entertainment within its covers.

THE WELL OF THE UNICORN, by George U. Fletcher. William Sloane Associates, New York. 338 pages, \$3.50. This imaginary fiction—a paradoxical description, surely—is one of those rare, richly exciting adventure tales set in a country of the author's imagination, reminiscent of James Branch Cabell. We quote from the publishers' foreward: "The reader enters the Well through the county of Vastmanstad inhabited by the Dalecarles, a race of independent, self-reliant prosperous yeomen. As the story opens, Vastmanstad has recently been overrun and conquered by the Vulkings, a stern and warlike people who have laid much of the civilized world under their power and who are proceeding ruthlessly and brutally to make over their conquests in accordance with their own rigid ethic. Young Airar Alvarson, the central character of the story, has just been dispossessed of his family property by the Vulkings and is confronted with the choice of submitting tamely to the kind of half-life he will be able to lead in the Vulking world or of joining one of the smoldering but scattered and poorly organized elements of revolt." The world of *The Well* is indeed a "strange and haunting" one, and the reading of this novel will bring back memories of King Arthur and his court, of Cabell, as aforementioned, of the old Icelandic Sagas, of many a tale of high adventure when the world was young. For those lovers of fantasy who relish the work

of such men as H. G. Wells, Cabell, Robert E. Howard, and others in their genre, this book will be an enduring delight. We recommend it unconditionally.

UNHOLY RELICS, by M. P. Dare. Longmans Green & Company, New York. 184 pp., \$2.50. Twelve conventionally-handled ghost stories. The author, says the blurb, "is not prepared to laugh at Egyptian curses." The reader will be justly irritated that, having evolved several good themes and ideas, Mr. Dare does so badly by them.

EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

W. Paul Cook: 1881-1948

In our last column we had melancholy occasion to mention the death of one of the great figures in the world of the macabre, and now we want to set down something about another, less-known figure on the perimeter of that world who, like Arthur Machen, has also passed on. We have reference to the late W. Paul Cook, who was born on August 31, 1881 and died January 22, 1948.

Perhaps a great many of our readers may not know, unless they have read our publications with assiduous care, that W. Paul Cook was long actively association with amateur press association work, having been former official editor and president of the National Amateur Press Association. In that capacity he was one of the first readers to recognize the genius that was H. P. Lovecraft's, and, though never in any sense of the word a slavish admirer of Lovecraft—preferring always to retain a judicial and properly critical attitude—he did encourage certain aspects of Lovecraft's work, and it is not too much to say that had it not been for his specific request, it is entirely possible that we should never have had H. P. Lovecraft's study, *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, which Cook asked Lovecraft to write for one of his amateur magazines, *The Recluse*, over twenty years ago.

Cook, who was an ardent amateur journalist, having entered the ranks of amateur journalism in 1897, had moved to Athol, Massachusetts in January, 1913. There he was foreman of the pressroom of the *Transcript*, and from there he issued the final number of the *Monadnock Monthly* and fifteen issues of *The Vagrant*. There, too, he issued the rare number of *The Recluse*, containing not only Lovecraft's essay, but also work by Donald Wandrei, Frank Belknap Long, Clark Ashton Smith, and H. Warner Munn, among others; the date of this issue, now a collector's item, was 1927.

After the death of his wife, his happy years in Athol came to an end; he left Athol early in 1931. In his last years he had been issuing a fine large amateur magazine of distinctly limited circulation entitled *The Ghost*, while he was editing *The Driftwind*, one of the oldest poetry magazines being published today. W. Paul Cook, while not a great figure in writing or publishing, was nevertheless representative of those valiant souls who have sturdily continued to publish prose and poetry which they liked regardless of all the difficulties which beset them. In his time, Cook brought to print a great many works meriting the attention of discriminating readers; his loss is not only a grievous blow to amateur journalism, but it will be regretted by all who knew him personally and all who appreciated his contributions to American letters through his activities in publishing.

The Status of Stanton & Lee

Some of our readers—that is, more specifically, the readers of Arkham House publications—have written in from time to time suggesting that the Stanton & Lee publications detract from time and effort we have to put in on Arkham House books and questioning the advisability of such activities. We recognize that these queries have come to us motivated by the best of intentions, and they merit an answer.

When we established Arkham House in 1939, we did so against the advice of many seasoned publishers. Many of the same publishers advised, with more cogent reasons, against the establishment of Stanton & Lee. We no longer need to explain or make excuses for the establishment of Arkham House. We set up Stanton & Lee primarily because we believe that a goodly percentage of the patrons of Arkham House were not people who were interested solely in fiction dealing with fantastic subjects;

we felt that many of them were people who liked good reading, in no matter what field, even though their preference was clearly for macabre fiction.

We therefore tried them out with our favorite novel, *EVENING IN SPRING*, at the \$1.49 price, and learned immediately that price was not a specific object. After two years, we discovered that we were correct in assuming that there were many of our readers who liked good reading, for something like 15% of our patrons bought and liked not only *EVENING IN SPRING*, but also our other publications, *BILL'S DIARY* and *OLIVER, THE WAYWARD OWL*, and sales thus far of *A BOY'S WAY* indicate that the percentage will hold good. It took us six years to establish Arkham House to the extent that we could feel confident of further publications; we believe it will take us as long to do the same thing for Stanton & Lee against the much greater competition of the general publishing field, for in Arkham House we did manage to establish a kind of corner in the field of the supernatural by contracting for the work of all the best-known writers in the genre here and abroad.

So we are going on with Stanton & Lee, and we have this year published an omnibus of the best of our writings in *WISCONSIN EARTH: A SAC PRAIRIE SAMPLER* (which contains three full-length books—*SHADOW OF NIGHT*, *VILLAGE YEAR*, and *PLACE OF HAWKS*) at \$5.00 the copy, and we will publish at least two other books. One, *IT'S A BOY'S WORLD*, will be a sequel to *A BOY'S WAY*, and will again feature Clare Victor Dwiggin's charming pictures of boy-life (\$2.00). The other will be *SAC PRAIRIE PEOPLE* (\$3.00), our second collection of serious short stories, a book of about 320 pages on which, we do not hesitate to confess, we expect to take a whopping loss, since publishing expenses are way up above our hopes of sales. This will be true quite regardless of the fact that the stories in *SAC PRAIRIE PEOPLE* originally appeared in such magazines as *Scribner's*, *The American Mercury*, *Redbook*, *Coronet*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Household*, *Life Story*, *Good Housekeeping*, *University Review*, *New Stories*, *Pagany*, *Tomorrow*, and others. And we are going to continue to count upon the support of those Arkham House patrons who take pleasure in readable short stories, whether or not they are weird, though it should be admitted that one of the stories in

this collection, the novelette *Where the Worm Dieth Not*, is supernatural.

On Price Complaints

We have from time to time received complaints from our friends about the service of bookstores. These complaints follow several distinct directions with fairly regular patterns repeated endlessly. Only one of them concerns major and established bookstores, and that is the complaint that "the clerk tells me he cannot get any service from Arkham House." We have only one answer to that: any bookstore clerk who tells a patron that is a liar, for Arkham House gives prompt service on all orders for books in print. Arkham House customarily ships books within three hours of the arrival of an order, always provided the books are in stock and not out of print. The truth of the matter is that the clerk who tells any patron that Arkham House does not give service is probably under orders; the store in question does not want to bother to order just one book because of short discount rates which apply to small orders. We urge all such patrons to carry their trade to other bookstores or to order directly from Arkham House and sample our service for themselves.

The other complaints come in about more-or-less "fan" booksellers, and they are about price-variations. Some of these dealers, unaware that Arkham House books are price-protected as long as they are in print, offer them at discounts; most of our friends quickly send us lists of such offers, so that we can deal with the offenders at once, as we always do. We urge all our patrons to report to us without delay any sale of a book in good condition, one that is not out of print or in damaged condition, at less than the published price. The other complaint about "fan" dealers is the exorbitant prices asked for out-of-print books; we cannot control this, of course; once books are out-of-print, dealers are at liberty to ask what prices they like. The only alternative is for patrons to buy the books before they go out-of-print, and Arkham House has always made every effort to keep our friends informed of the status of our titles.

We have had the experience of seeing lists from some of these price-cutting dealers. One which came to hand most recently offered 10c discount on current titles, and then offered *THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD* at \$2.90, which represents a clear profit of 30c over the combined published price. The

buyer who bit was the sucker; he bought a copy of DARK CARNIVAL at \$2.90, and paid the same price for THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD, a total of \$5.80 for two books which could have been bought from any legitimate dealer or direct from us at a total of \$5.50. We quote this solely to indicate that many times so-called "bargains" are "sucker-bait" instead.

The Machen Collection

As our readers know, we have made reference now and then in our catalogs and lists to an impending collection of stories by Arthur Machen. The book at last has been announced for July publication under the title of TALES OF HORROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL. The collection was edited by Philip Van Doren Stern, and will contain an introduction by him, as well as a note on Machen by Robert Hillyer (to which we made reference and from which we quoted in our column in the first *Sampler*). We are in receipt of a letter from Dr. Stern, who tells us that the contents of the omnibus will be as follows: *The Novel of the Black Seal*, *The Novel of the White Powder*, *The Great God Pan*, *The Inmost Light*, *The White People*, *The Shining Pyramid*, *Out of the Earth*, *the Happy Children*, *The Terror*, *The Bowmen*, *The Children of the Pool*, *The Bright Boy*, *N*, and *The Great Return*. It should be noted that two of these titles were published as separate books during Machen's lifetime. The price will probably be \$5.00.

The Readers Write

A good many of our readers have taken advantage of our invitation to let us know their reaction to *The Arkham Sampler*. The majority of those letters were of unqualified approval, but a few of them contained constructive criticism. One point of issue was the dark color of the cover of the first issue; we have rectified that herewith, but we should point out that, while we are not able to hold to one color for every year of the magazine, and while we hope to keep to lighter stock, we are to a certain extent bound to use stock our printer has available rather than suffer publishing delays. A second complaint was about the space given to book reviews. We believe that the book reviews in integral part of such a magazine as this, though we would prefer to hold them down to 12 pages instead of 18; but some seasons are richer in books than others, and the size of

this section, *Books of the Quarter*, will inevitably vary. Finally, we had some vociferous complaint from a handful of our science-fiction friends, primarily about the ideas in the introduction to STRANGE PORTS OF CALL. We have asked one of the most vocal of the science-fiction adherents to write a scholarly article for us under the general head of *The Case for Science-Fiction*, and we hope to publish it in an early issue. We continue happy to hear from our readers, though we cannot undertake to answer all the letters we receive.

Olla Podrida

We want our readers to know that romance is not dead in the world of fantasy, despite the vociferous insistence of some writers, who seem to hold that all is for nought in this modern, technological civilization. The following advertisement appeared in a recent issue of the *Washington Times-Herald*.

Anyone, anywhere, who saw a man become invisible eight years ago, on May 3, 1940, please write immediately to Virginia Davenport Hunt, 74 T St., NW., Washington, D. C., as an invisible man has been with me for almost eight years.

We hesitate to advise our readers about what course to follow in regard to this tantalizing bit, since we are not quite sure whether it is a matter for the Fortean Society or the Society for Psychical Research, and we are hesitant to write ourselves lest it turn out to be only an advertisement for a movie or something akin. So we are electing to carry on happily as before, somewhat exhilarated at the thought of the invisible companion who has been sharing the lady's days. We are just a little perplexed, however, about the *raison d'etre* of the advertisement. Could it be that the invisible man has been holding out details of his age, height, or name? Or is it that his more visible companion has, after these almost eight years, become just a little bored with him and wants a change of invisible companionship?



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